

ILC USA ANNUAL UPDATE: 2014-2015

ILC-USA at the Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center

With a mission to explore and better understand the aging process and its societal implications, Columbia University has established a university-wide, interdisciplinary aging center, named The Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center. Its inaugural director is Ursula M. Staudinger, Ph.D. The new Center, sited at the Mailman School of Public Health, reflects the University's recognition that the study of aging is inherently multi-disciplinary. The Center is the home of the International Longevity Center – USA, led by CAC Associate Director, Ruth Finkelstein, ScD, to pursue translational research, policy education, and engagement, as well as the Aging Lab, led by Dr. Staudinger, to pursue research. For details visit www.aging.columbia.edu.

Staffing Updates

Dr. Ursula M. Staudinger continues in her role as ILC-USA President, **Ruth Finkelstein** as Director, and **Kavita Sivaramakrishnan** continues in her role as Associate Director, though she is on leave for this academic year to finish her book at the end of her tenure process. In addition **Dr. Linda Fried** and **Dr. Jack Rowe** continue as faculty in CAC.

Dorian Block, Senior Staff Associate, continues to lead program work. **Vegard Skirbekk** and **Esteban Calvo** join the CAC as new faculty members. **Caiti Adams** joins ILC-USA as a Staff Associate in October to work on both translational research, policy, and program activities. We are also joined by **Stephanie Grah**, Research Assistant. Both Robert Fiero and Neesha Roy have accepted other positions.

Research

ILC-USA is very pleased to report that the **Retirement Project** (Staudinger & Börsch-Supan) suggested during the 2013 Annual Meeting in Singapore has been received very well and a majority of the ILCs are participating. Last March 11 ILCs participated in a very successful panel presentation at the Berlin Demography Forum. The panel was well attended and raised interesting discussions about country differences in retirement policies. The organizers have invited the project group back for the 2016 Forum. In parallel, ILC USA (Staudinger & Calvo) were successful to recruit funds from the President's Global Innovation Funds to start a project on the timing of retirement including ILCs as well as some of Columbia University's Global Centers.

Advocacy

On October 15, 2015, the ILC-USA launches its digital narrative of 20 New Yorkers living meaningful lives past the average life expectancy here, age 81. The project, called "Exceeding Expectations" launches at www.exceedingexpectations.nyc and in four NYC community newspapers. Each newspaper will carry six sequential essays and photos of a New Yorker in their neighborhood who is exceeding expectations. Twenty people are

followed in depth for a year – chronicling their dreams, challenges, joys, and transitions. The people come from the amazing array of backgrounds that is New York: meet recent immigrants from Guyana and Pakistan, established residents who hail from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, China and who are life long New Yorkers. Read about artists, theater directors, educators, models, engineers, community leaders, and advocates all of whom are actively pursuing their passions as well as recent retirees looking for new ones. See New Yorkers who are in life long relationships, grieving the loss of same, dating, or focusing on friends. Subscribe to updates to watch the 20 stories unfold over the next months at www.exceedingexpectations.nyc.

The ILC USA continues to advise national and international organizations seeking to refine Age Friendly Communities strategies. Among this year’s engagements was Dr. Finkelstein’s participation in a summit on the Value Proposition for Age Friendly Communities, sponsored by the Regional Planning Association in Atlanta in June;; participation in the Leadership Summit hosted by **Grantmakers in Aging** in Washington DC in September to produce “Guiding Principles for the Sustainability of Age Friendly Communities Efforts,” a policy document which is the culminating product of Grantmakers in Aging Community AGEnda projects, funded by the Pfizer Foundation for the last three years; and presenting at the final meeting of the **Age Friendly Communities-USA** initiative funded by the Tides Foundation/Atlantic Philanthropies. Dr. Fried has been re-appointed to the **Age-Friendly New York City Commission**, public and private sector leaders from a wide range of industries, organizations and institutions in NYC who are dedicated to making the city a better place for older adults and to encouraging healthy and active aging for every New Yorker. The first meeting of the new Commission was held in September, 2015.

Policy

The ILC-USA component of the Columbia Aging Center led the Age Smart Employer Awards program for its second year, with the partnership of The New York Academy of Medicine with major funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The Age Smart Employer Awards program, under the leadership of Dr. Ruth Finkelstein, recognizes employers – for profit and not for profit, large and small – who value the contributions of their older workers and so adopt policies and practices that encourage recruitment, retention, productivity, and satisfaction for workers of all ages. This year, the program added a particular focus on small businesses, which are such important economic drivers and employers of the majority of the work force. In March, we launched five new industry-specific guides for small businesses (see www.agesmartemployer.org) and earned significant media coverage for the initiative. (samples listed below). 52 companies applied for the Award and an expert Selection Committee (including ILC-USA President, Dr. Ursula M. Staudinger) selected 13 finalists, including household brands ranging from Brooks Brothers to Amy’s Breads and neighborhood legends as diverse as Ben’s Best Kosher Deli and the *Queens Tribune*. Winners will be announced at an Awards Ceremony on December 9.

Dr. Finkelstein is a member of the **World Health Organization’s Advisory Group on the Global Network of Age Friendly Communities**. In this capacity, and as a reviewer of one of the chapters of WHO’s World Report on Aging and Health, she is invited to attend the **Consultation on the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health**. The WHO Report and Global Strategy and Action Plan represent an opportunity for WHO to establish concrete goal and metrics to track accomplishment on an aging agenda.

Dr. Finkelstein attended ILC-Brazil’s launch of the new Active Aging Framework in July, as well as the UN’s meeting of the Sixth Open Ended Working Group on Ageing.

Selection of Dr. Staudinger presentations

- In December 2014, Dr. Staudinger delivered the plenary speech at the Nobel Week Dialogue entitled, “Demographic Change and Growth: A Paradox?”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAQdG0CVZSQ&feature=youtu.be&t=27m38s>
- German Center for Research and Innovation- “Cognitive Plasticity in Adulthood”
 - <https://vimeo.com/118187751>
- CCTV America- World Bank Panel on Worldwide Aging Policies
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpyA_Hp97Ew&feature=youtu.be
- Staudinger, U.M. (2015, January). *What are the secrets of positive aging?* Public Health Power Hour, New York
- Wisdom Research Forum at University of Chicago- “Improving Wisdom”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtNvyD3eaGk>

Training

One of Dr. Butler’s signature initiatives, the Age Boom Academy was once again offered by the Columbia Aging Center. **Age Boom Academy 2015**, entitled Global Ageing: Danger Ahead? addressed four myths about Global Aging between June 11 and June 13 at Columbia University. A global press corps (from every continent) heard from experts from international agencies including the United Nations, The World Bank, the World Health Organization, and the International Federation on Aging. Scholars and experts from ILC-Brazil/ILC-Canada (Dr. Louise Plouffe), ILC-USA (Drs. Staudinger, Fried, Finkelstein, and Sivaramakrishnan), Rockefeller University and Berkeley addressed four myths. Journalist-moderators, led by Jack Rosenthal, recently of the New York Times Foundation, helped the journalist Fellows who participated in Age Boom Academy to translate the new information they received from the expert speakers into ideas for reporting. This was apparently successful as more than 80 stories on aging have already been produced by the journalist Fellows who participated. (see www.AgeBoomAcademy.columbia.edu).

The Columbia Aging Center-ILC-USA has been working with the **National Coalition on Aging (NCOA)** on the development of an innovative **Aging Mastery Program** being piloted in more than 80 communities around the US, as well as a digital version of the

curriculum specifically being piloted with people with no more than high school education and low to moderate incomes. The ILC-USA staff are leading the evaluation design and implementation toward a rapid cycle of innovation, scale and spread. The program provides older adults with information, skills, and encourages daily practices for successful aging.

Publications and Media (selected).

- Dr. Staudinger and Dr. Finkelstein co-authored an article in the **AARP International Journal** on how to maximize human potential in later life
 - <http://aging.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/Maximizing%20Our%20Aging%20Potential-The%20Journal.pdf>
- In “Senior’s Take Manhattan” published in **Politico Magazine**, Dr. Finkelstein discusses collaborative efforts to create a more age-friendly New York
 - http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/01/senior-living-initiatives-ill-take-manhattan-114227#.VMEugNLF_00
- Dr. Fried discusses the future of Medicare in “Increasing Medicare’s Impact as it Turns 50” for **The Huffington Post**
 - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/linda-p-fried/increasing-medicares-impact_b_7848738.html
- **Global Aging: 4 Myths Debunked**
“Population growth will come to a halt by the end of the 21st century, give or take 10 or 20 years,” says Ursula Staudinger in **Forbes**, 16 June 2015.
- Dr. Finkelstein is quoted in an article in **The New York Times** about providing housing for older adults
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/11/your-money/making-decisions-on-elder-housing-may-take-a-team-effort.html>
- In “The Millennial Retirement Plan”, **Time** features Dr. Staudinger and discusses how workplaces can become more flexible to keep older adults
 - <http://time.com/3512661/millennial-retirement-plan/>
- Dr. Finkelstein talks to **Crain’s New York Business** about how businesses can employ an eager, older workforce
 - <http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20150318/SMALLBIZ/150319860/how-to-hire-and-keep-8212-older-workers>

Additional media and complete publications can be found on the Columbia Aging Center website: <http://aging.columbia.edu/media>