

ADVANCES *in Aging*

Grandparent Family Connections Supports Grandparent-Led Families in Baltimore

Grandparent Family Connections (GFC) is a family-strengthening program of the University of Maryland School of Social Work's Ruth H. Young Center for Families and Children that helps grandparent-led families in Baltimore city meet their grandchildren's needs and prevent neglect.

"GFC accomplishes this goal by employing a comprehensive community-based model," says program director Fred Strieder, Ph.D., L.C.S.W. "We work with the family to identify its strengths, overcome its challenges, and bolster its resiliency."

According to Strieder, approximately 9,700 grandparent-led families reside in Baltimore. "Thirty-three thousand children live with their grandparents or other relatives. That's 22 percent of the city's children and as many as 30 percent in some neighborhoods—double both the state and national percentages," Strieder says. "Being a parent is a changing role for the grandparents, most of whom have not raised children in 20 years.

It is also a challenging one. "In Baltimore, the majority of the grandchildren come to their grandparents from homes where there is substance abuse or abuse and neglect, so the kids come to their grandparents already in crisis, many with behavioral problems or learning difficulties," Strieder explains.

To make matters worse, most of the grandparents are poor even before the grandchildren arrive. "It's a double whammy for the grandparents, whose average household income is \$15,400 a year," Strieder notes. "But they take the grandchildren into their homes anyway to keep them in the family and out of foster care."

Each year, GFC helps more than 100 families obtain food, clothing, furniture, school supplies, presents at holidays, and numerous other services. GFC social workers and interns meet with the grandparent-led families weekly, usually in their homes, and help them solve any problem the family is facing—such working with the



GrandPOWER Class Graduate and GFC Staff

Department of Social Services, obtaining energy assistance, or accessing health care or special education services. "They also help the family address issues related to intergenerational conflict and managing reactions due to exposure to trauma," Strieder says.

Grandparents hear about GFC from other service providers or through grandparents who've already been helped by the program.

By the time they find GFC, the grandparents have typically had unsatisfying and frustrating encounters with numerous agencies and are feeling defeated, notes Strieder.

"These families often fall through the cracks in the system. The grandparents generally do not receive support from the children's parents or social services, and they struggle to keep the family together," Strieder says. "At that point, a key issue for them is trusting that someone can help. But once they realize we're committed and sincere, they are willing to put faith in us and consequently to revitalize belief in themselves."

Roxann McKoy, who works as a nurse and has four grandchildren living with her,

says she heard about GFC from a therapist who provides in-home services to her grandchildren. She says the program gave her confidence to be a parent again. "It taught me how to get us what we need, what we are entitled to. It also taught me not to lose sight of my own needs in the process," McKoy says.

One of GFC's new services is the GrandPOWER empowerment group, a support group for GFC grandparent clients, which was developed by Qiana Cryer, a second-year social work student. The GrandPOWER group meets for two hours a week for four months and focuses on building grandparents' confidence and self-esteem, creating fellowship, improving relationships with their grandchildren, *[continued pg. 7]*

inside

Research News, 2

Education Highlights, 4

Student News, 5

Faculty and Staff News, 6

UMB at AGHE Conference, 8

Pharmacy School Research Examines How Does Herbal Extracts Benefits Alzheimer's Patients



Dr. Luo (second from left, first row) with her laboratory staff

Yuan Luo, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and her laboratory scientists are focusing on aging, age-related neurodegenerative diseases and neuroprotective mechanisms. Age-related diseases such as Alzheimer's disease (AD) are the most prevalent and devastating disorder in the growing population of the elderly. Dr. Luo indicates that finding strategies to prevent or delay the onset of AD has become one of the important challenges and is a high priority for medical research.

The use of herbal medicine has increased substantially in the last decade in the United States, but the action mechanisms of herbal extracts are poorly understood. Dr. Luo and her team apply contemporary neuroscience theories and methodologies to provide a better understanding of the neuroprotective mechanisms of herbal extracts, such as a standardized extract of ginkgo biloba (EGb 761) for the treatment and prevent Alzheimer's disease. EGb 761 is a top selling dietary supplement taken by the general public to enhance mental focus and by the elderly to delay onset of age-related loss of cognitive declines. Numerous clinical

data has demonstrated possible improvement of dementia by EGb 761 in Alzheimer's patients. Two large-scale AD prevention trials by EGb 761 in a normal aging population are ongoing and expected to finish by 2009, which may offer evidence-based therapy for protecting the elderly population against dementia.

In the past years, the lab's studies funded by NIH (R21 and RO1) provided evidence for multi-target neuroprotective mechanism of EGb 761. They have used the simple invertebrate model *C. elegans* to evaluate pharmacological effects of EGb761 on aging. They demonstrated that treatment of the worms with EGb761 extended their median life span. Subsequently, they also reported that lipoic acid and green tea extract EGCG delayed decline of age-associated behaviors. Further results suggest that these natural antioxidants extends the life span and health span by increasing resistance to oxidative stress via augmentation of body's antioxidant defenses.

These results led Dr. Luo and her team members to hypothesize that age-associated tissue degeneration can be modulated by

EGb 761. It has been demonstrated that sarcopenia accompanies the age-dependent functional decline in the nematode, similar to those longer-lived vertebrates. Using a combination of fluorescent and transmission electronic microscope techniques as well as behavioral assays, they demonstrate that both EGb 761 and ginseng delay age-dependent muscle cell degeneration. These data support their hypothesis that age-associated sarcopenia can be modulated by certain life span- extending drugs, suggesting that pharmacological extension of life span is a consequence of maintaining functional capacity of the tissue. The insights from using EGb761 and Wisconsin ginseng extract on muscle deterioration in the nematodes may provide a basis for developing pharmacological interventions for human sarcopenia.

EGb 761 has being well characterized as an antioxidant, which may underlie its life span extension and sarcopenia alleviation properties. However, others and Dr. Luo's team described a specific inhibitory effect of EGb 761 on amyloid beta. In a follow up study, they use the transgenic *C. elegans* model of AD which expresses human amyloid and exhibits several pathological behaviors. They demonstrated that EGb 761 and one of its components, ginkgolide A, alleviated Ab-induced pathological behaviors in the AD worms. They also showed that EGb 761 inhibited Ab-oligomerization and Ab deposits in the worms, both are know to be toxic for the human brain. Moreover, their lab revealed that antioxidants such as vitamin C was not effective in suppressing paralysis in the transgenic *C. elegans*. This study further supports multi-potent function as mechanisms of EGb 761 protection. It is likely that the pharmacological efficacy manifested in the transgenic worms shares similar mechanisms with the cognitive impairment in mammals. these results were published in *Journal of Neuroscience* and highlighted as news of the week by the journal' editor.

Considering the beneficial effects of EGb 761 on cognitive impairment in AD patients and AD mice, and its ability to inhibit amyloid toxicity in the worms, they further examined the neurogenic potential of EGb 761 in the hippocampus of a mouse model of AD. EGb 761 significantly

increases cell proliferation in the AD mice hippocampus, a brain region responsible for memory. These findings suggest that stimulation of neurogenesis by EGb 761 may contribute to its beneficial effects in AD patients and EGb 761 has therapeutic potential for the prevention and treatment of AD. Neurodegenerative declines seen in

AD are believed to start with synaptic dysfunction those progresses to widespread loss of neuronal cells.. Evidence of neurogenesis in the adult rodent's brain raised the hope that the replacement of lost neurons could represent a therapeutic approach for the management of AD.

A better understanding of the mecha-

nisms of neuroprotection by EGb761 will be important for designing therapeutic strategies that target age-related neurodegenerative disorders, for basic understanding of the underlying neurodegenerative processes, and for a better understanding of the effectiveness and complexity of this herbal medicine. ■

Gerontology Researcher Studies Inflammation and Pro-Thrombotic Modulators in Older Adults

Alice Ryan, Ph.D., an Associate Professor in the Division of Gerontology Department of Medicine and the Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC), is currently leading a four-year Veterans Affairs (VA) Merit Award grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs to investigate how inflammation in the body, which increases a persons risk for the development of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, changes after aerobic-exercise training and weight loss. Dr. Ryan's current research focuses on the mechanisms by which weight loss and exercise interventions affect cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk by modifying changes in skeletal muscle and adipose tissue metabolism, insulin signaling and gene expression and insulin action in sedentary and overweight elderly and those with chronic disease.

Inflammatory markers are increased in obesity, associated with insulin resistance and predict the development of diabetes in the elderly. Physical activity plays a role in inflammation such that more active individuals have lower circulating inflammatory levels, and exercise training decreases several markers of inflammation. Weight loss also decreases inflammatory markers in the blood. Dr. Ryan is interested in using this VA Merit Award to learn more about the effects that exercise and weight loss have on glucose, fat and muscle metabolism in overweight men and women. "We currently know that aerobic-exercise training improves insulin sensitivity" says Dr. Ryan. "In the general sense, this study is investigating how lifestyle changes including weight loss or physical activity, which are advocated for the treatment of chronic

diseases, may be beneficial in part due to their anti-inflammatory effects in muscle and in adipose tissue."

The prevalence of obesity is increasing at an alarming rate in the US population and this promotes the development of type 2 diabetes. Dr. Ryan explains that previous research has shown that the adipose tissue is a major source of cytokine production and contributes to an inflammatory state associated with insulin resistance. Moreover, inflammatory and anti-inflammatory skeletal muscle receptor activation affects intra-cellular signaling and ultimately, insulin sensitivity in muscle.

"Interventions such as aerobic-exercise training and weight loss may reduce inflammation and improve insulin sensitivity thus, reducing an individuals risk for heart disease, stroke and diabetes" says Dr. Ryan. "It is our goal to test whether aerobic-exercise or weight loss alone can increase insulin sensitivity and reduce inflammation."

Each of Dr. Ryan's study participants undergoes clinical tests before and after the exercise training or weight loss intervention. These tests evaluate cardiovascular risk factors (lipids/cholesterol, blood pressure, heart rhythm by electrocardiogram, diabetes and inflammation), exercise capacity (cardiac fitness), and glucose and muscle metabolism. The intervention includes either six months of aerobic-exercise training in the Baltimore VA Medical Center's Senior Exercise Research Center or six months of weight loss/nutrition classes designed to teach behavior modification and weight loss strategies. There are several potential benefits for the individuals participating in the study, says Dr. Ryan. "We

expect the intervention to improve the study participants' glucose metabolism, cardiac fitness level and reduce their risk factors for cardiovascular disease."

Interventions that reduce inflammation and improve insulin resistance have important clinical implications, especially with aging veterans since they are at greater risk for obesity and associated cardiovascular disease, says Dr. Ryan. To enroll in the study, a potential participant needs to be either a male or female (post menopausal for at least one year) between the ages of 45 to 80 that is a non-smoker and in general good health. Individuals who are interested in learning more about the study can contact the GRECC at 410-605-7179 and mention CODE: RYAN. ■



Study Participant

GGEAR Education Activities Reach a Statewide Audience

The Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research Program (GGEAR) is sponsoring a series of educational activities for health professional students, health professionals and family caregivers throughout Maryland this spring.

In addition to the **16th Annual Southern Maryland Caregivers Conference** slated for April 18th in St. Mary's County in partnership with the St. Mary's County Department of Aging and other Southern Maryland agencies and organizations serving older adults, GGEAR is sponsoring an array of new programs as a result of its partnership with the Johns Hopkins Geriatrics Education Center Consortium (JHGECC) and continuing its long standing educational partnerships with the Western Maryland and Eastern Shore Area Health Education Centers.

Through the JHGECC partnership, a new series of lectures for internal medicine residents will begin this spring at the University of Maryland Medical System with two presentations. **Kris Ann Oursler, MD** will present "Sexuality in Aging" and **Perry Colvin, MD** will provide a session entitled, "Challenges in Diagnosing Dementia." This series, organized by **Marianne Shaughnessy, PhD**, Director of Education, Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) will continue through the 2008-09 academic year.

In addition to the Geriatric Assessment Interdisciplinary Team (GAIT) Training programs for University System of Maryland students scheduled for the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland—in partnership with the Area Health Education Centers in those two regions of Maryland—GGEAR is sponsoring a GAIT Project in Baltimore this spring with GECC funding. The GAIT rotation, which combines didactic and clinical inter-professional training experiences, will be located at the Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital. The rotation will have health professional students from UMB, JHU and Towson University participating in this Baltimore based opportunity. The theme of the two day rotation is dementia

care. **Nicole Brandt, PharmD**, UM School of Pharmacy and **Susan Levy, MD**, Medical Director of Levindale will provide two of the didactic sessions for the students.

The UMB and JHU student chapters of the American Geriatrics Society will have their first joint dinner meeting this spring as well. The event will be held at Keswick Multicare Center and will feature a program entitled, **Dilemmas of Prescribing for an Older Population**. **Nicole Brandt, PharmD** and **Thomas E. Finucane, MD**, Professor, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine are the speakers that evening.

On May 21, the 19th semi-annual geriatrics conference, **Clinical Challenges in Geriatrics** sponsored with the Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center (ESAHEC) and the JHGECC. Speakers will include **Lynn McPherson, PhD**, UM School of Pharmacy, **Barbara Resnick, PhD**, UM School of Nursing, **Ann Morrison, PhD**, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, **Stephen Vozzella**, The Copper Ridge Institute and **Diana Givens, MS, LCADC**, a consultant. The program will take place in Easton at the Krystal Q. For further information, contact Jeanne Bromwell, ESAHEC, 410-221-2600.

GGEAR funding is instrumental in providing several conferences in Western Maryland this spring as well. Through a small grant program funded by GGEAR and sponsored by the Western Maryland Area Health Education Center (WMAHEC). This spring's programs are:

- April 17: **Culture Change in Long Term Care**, Allegany County HRDC/Area Agency on Aging
- April 25: **Depression in the Aging Populations**, Hagerstown Community College
- April 25 and 26: **Safe Yoga for Skeletal Health**, Allegany College of Maryland
- June 13: **Providing a Positive Environment for Persons with Dementia**, Hagerstown Community College.

For further information about these programs, contact Terri Socha, 301-777-9150 x 107.

GGEAR Director, **Reba Cornman, Nicole Brandt** and **Marianne Shaughnessy** are also involved in developing a new educational web site using GECC funding. The web site will include a series of geriatric cases and Video Press geriatric film productions. The web site will also include a calendar of GGEAR-GECC educational programs.

For further information about GGEAR and the GECC activities, please write Reba Cornman, rcornman@umaryland.edu. ■

Advances in Aging is published by the University of Maryland Center for Research on Aging, the University of Maryland Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research program, the Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center, and the Geriatrics Research, Education and Clinical Center of the VA Maryland Health Care System, Baltimore, Maryland. For further information about the newsletter and gerontology programs at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, call 410.706.4567, or visit our web site, gerontology.umaryland.edu

CONTRIBUTORS

Laura Causey
Reba Cornman
Karen Klinedinst
Kara Longo
Yuan Luo
Danielle Sweeney

GGEAR Research Awards Presented at UMB Graduate Research Conference

The Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research Program (GGEAR) sponsored research in aging awards this year at UMB's Graduate Research Conference held on April 3, 2008.

Reba Cornman, GGEAR director presented first place awards to **Melissa Rice**, a Doctoral Program in Gerontology student for her poster entitled, *Absence of Relation of Depressive Symptoms to Diabetes Diagnosis, and Glycated Hemoglobin in the HANDLS Study* and to **Lauren Jones-Lush**, a Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science student for her poster, *Magnetic Cortical-Stimulation and Arm Movements in a Robotic Environment*. Ms. Rice won her award in the social science category and Ms. Jones-Lush in the basic/bio-medical science categories. Two honorable mention awards were also presented in the social science category: **Shayna Rich**, a MD/PhD student for her poster, *Race and Health Care Professional Recommendations for Colorectal Cancer Screening* and **Zhiqiang Lu**, a Pharmaceutical Health Services Research Doctoral student for *Role of Cerebrovascular Disease and the Association Between Diabetes Mellitus and Dementia Among Aged Medicare Beneficiaries*.



Dr. John Sorkin, Associate Professor Department of Medicine, Division of Gerontology and his students from Research Practicum, **Katrina Rhodes** (PGY-3 Preventive Medicine) and **Lisa Gardner** (doctoral student, Epidemiology) won three awards (outstanding resident/student poster, outstanding scientific poster, and outstanding poster presentation) for their poster, *Changes in Cardiovascular Risk over Time: A Comparison of Framingham Risk Scores, 1988-1994 to 1999-2004* presented at the annual Preventive Medicine 2008 meeting Feb 20-24 held in Austin, Texas.



Shayna Rich, a School of Medicine MD/PhD student has been selected for the American Geriatrics Society's 2008 Edward Henderson Student Award. **Mona Baumgarten, PhD, Ann Gruber-Baldini, PhD, and Ram Miller, MDCM, MS, FRCPC** all of whom are faculty members of the Division of Gerontology, Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, nominated Ms. Rich for her outstanding achievements as a medical student "who has demonstrated significant interest in geriatrics development and leadership."

The Henderson award is presented to a student interested in pursuing a career in geriatrics, who has demonstrated excellence in the field. In order to be eligible for the award, Ms. Rich had to demonstrate her commitment to the field of geriatrics "through leadership in areas pertinent to geriatrics; initiation of new information or programs in geriatrics; or scholarship in geriatrics through original research or reviews."

Drs. Baumgarten, Gruber-Baldini and Miller all noted her exceptional abilities as a motivated and able scholar who has already been an author on a couple of peer reviewed publications and has presented her work at several national meetings.

Ms. Rich has an interest in a combined clinical and research career in geriatrics with a specific interest in palliative and end of life care.

The American Public Health Association awarded Ms. Rich an Honorable Mention Award for the 2007 Laurence G. Branch Doctoral Student Research Award for her paper, "Policy Issues Related to the Six-Month Prognostic Standard for Eligibility in the Medicare Hospice Benefit," which she wrote while taking the Law and Health Care Program's course, "Legal and Policy Issues in End-of-Life Care."

Ms. Rich recently completed and passed her comprehensive exams in Epidemiology. ■

Doctoral Program in Gerontology student **Susan Hannum** is a co-author for three journal articles:

- Rothstein, W.G. & Hannum, S.M. 2007. Profession and Gender in Relationships Between Advanced Practice Nurses and Physicians. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 23(4): 235-240.
- Black, H.K., White, T., & Hannum, S.M. 2007. The Lived Experiences of Depression in Elderly African American Women. *Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 62(6): S392- S398.
- Black, H.K., Schwartz, A., Caruso, C., and Hannum, S.M. 2008. The lived Experiences of Male Caregivers. *Journal of Men's Studies*. In press.

Student Dissertations

A number of dissertations have been completed this academic year on topics related to geriatrics and gerontology. Students from the Doctoral Program in Gerontology, Graduate School and Schools of Nursing and Social Work are to be congratulated on completing their dissertations and graduating this academic year.

Graduate School, Doctoral Program in Gerontology

Rebecca Peron, MPH (graduating May '08), *Determining Predictors of Nursing Home Admission and Sub-Populations of Skilled Nursing Facility Residents Using the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey* (MCBS)

Andrea Rubin, PhD (graduated December '07), *Keeping the Back Door Closed: Barriers to Community Reintegration for Working Age and Older Adults with Disabilities*

Magdalena Tolea, PhD (graduated December '07), *A Comparison of Hospital Discharge Rates for Old Order Amish Living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania with Non-Amish Caucasians*.

School of Nursing

Pia L. Inguito, PhDc, RN (graduated December '07), *Factors Related to Long-Term Adherence to Regular Exercise in Older Women Post Hip Fracture*

School of Social Work

Joohee Yum, MSW. Ph.D. (graduated December '07), *Factors Associated with Elderly Mobility: Examination of Immigrant Status and Access to Public Transit*.

Annual GGEAR Student Awards in Clinical Excellence Winners Announced

The GGEAR Program will be holding its annual Student Award Ceremony on Monday, May 12, 2008 to honor students who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to the field of gerontological studies. This commitment can be evidenced by contributions in one or more of these areas of accomplishments: Innovations in direct practice with older persons; scholarly work which has implications for improving clinical practice with older persons.; leadership in developing or sustaining educational programs for students, other practitioners and/or consumers; positive impact on health care, social or legal policies and/or legislation relating to older persons.

The students chosen for the award this year are:

Dental School: **Dawn Merguerian**

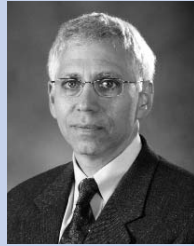
School of Nursing: **Lois Schramek**

School of Pharmacy: **Kathryn Dincher** and
Julie Hahn

Department of Physical Therapy &
Rehabilitation Science, School of
Medicine: **Chaz L. Wiggins**

School of Social Work: **Rebecca Ann Steen**

Jay Magaziner Named Chair of Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine



Jay Magaziner, PhD, MSHyg has been named chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, School of Medicine. Dr. Magaziner, has been a faculty member of the School of Medicine since 1982 and has been Director of its Division of Gerontology. In addition to directing the Division, Dr. Magaziner is co-director of the University of Maryland Center for Research on Aging and co-director of the Doctoral Program in Gerontology.

Dr. Magaziner's area of research focuses on the consequences of hip fracture, health and long-term care and methods for studying older populations. The major focus of his work is to identify ways to enhance function and improve the quality of life for older persons. His work on hip fracture focuses on issues related to hip fracture recovery and has earned him the almost unprecedented honor of receiving two consecutive National Institutes of Health Method Extend Research in Time (MERIT) Awards, a program which provides long-term support to investigators whose research competence and productivity are distinctly superior. ■

Dr. Mary Rodgers, Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science has announced that **Dr. Mark Rogers** will be joining the PTRS faculty May 1, 2008. Dr. Rogers will be the department's Vice Chair for Research and Director of the PhD program in Physical Rehabilitation Science.

Dr. Rogers will be coming to the University of Maryland Baltimore from Northwestern University, where he has provided multiple contributions to the Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences (PTHMS) over the last 20 years. In the area of physical therapy education, he has introduced the concept of the "motor control framework", an approach that allows clinicians to analyze movement disorders based on motor control principles. He also designed an integrated neuroscience course incorporating neuroanatomy, neurophysiology and neurology related to the sensorimotor system in a two trimester course. In research, Dr. Rogers is a well-known investigator in the area of postural control in aging. His research has been both basic and applied and is now expanding in the area of interventions research for the preservation of posture and balance in the aging. He has also been expanding his research in the area of Parkinson's Disease, using posture assisted locomotion (PAL), and Stroke. At the administrative level, Dr. Rogers has

served as director of research, interim chair of the department, and currently as the associate chair of post professional education during his tenure at PTHMS.

Lamy Center Receives Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant

Drs. Bruce Stuart, Amy Davidoff, Françoise Pradel and **Ruth Lopert** have received a \$264, 047 grant entitled, "Medicare Spending, Disparities, and Returns to Healthy Behaviors." Dr. Stuart is the Executive Director of the Peter Lamy Center for Drug Therapy and Aging. Dr. Davidoff and Dr. Pradel, as well as Dr. Stuart, are members of the School of Pharmacy's Department of Pharmaceutical Health Services Research. Dr. Lopert is a Medical Advisor for the Australian Department of Health and Ageing in the Regulatory and Policy Division. She was previously a Harkness Fellow at the Lamy Center before returning to Australia.

The goal of the project is to identify which behaviors and preventive measures have the greatest potential for major program savings and then to devise insurance-based interventions by which these savings can be realized.

This project has three specific aims:

1. To estimate cost savings in traditional Medicare spending associated with persistently good health behaviors and

preventive measures. Although there is an enormous literature on the returns to healthy behaviors and preventive measures, relatively little has focused on the elderly, and no study the investigators are aware of provides policy makers with comparisons of potential Medicare savings from alternative preventive measures or differences in persistence in behaviors over time.

2. To identify population characteristics that can be used to optimally target preventive interventions. Based on previous work the Lamy group expect to find that selective targeting to low spenders, minorities, and beneficiaries with low socioeconomic status will provide the greatest returns in program savings over time and will also serve to significantly reduce disparities in health and well being within the beneficiary population.
3. To focus on the mechanisms by which behavior can be changed. The Lamy team propose to develop simulation models to show how selectively reducing beneficiary cost sharing for primary and secondary prevention measures can achieve significant cost offsets in reduced spending on traditional Medicare services. This approach, characterized as “value based insurance design” or VBID is being analyzed by policy researchers for the private insurance market, but applications using VBID have yet to be explored with regard to traditional Medicare services or for Medicare Part C or Part D contractors.

The background to the proposal recognizes that health policy makers are concerned with explosive growth in US Medicare expenditures typically look for solutions among the highest cost beneficiaries. Despite considerable research devoted to identifying the characteristics of high cost Medicare beneficiaries, a recent CBO report cautions that prospectively identifying such individuals for purposes of intervention will be very difficult. Moreover, focusing on costly patients and expensive services may divert attention from potentially significant savings from relatively inexpensive interventions designed to improve beneficiary health behaviors and utilization of proven preventive measures.

Ann Gruber-Baldini Receives R01 Funding from NIA



Ann Gruber-Baldini, PhD, Division of Gerontology, Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine has been awarded funding for her study entitled, “FOCUS Hip Fracture Transfusion

Trial: Delirium and Other Cognitive Outcomes.” The three year study was funded for \$2,058,301 and is an ancillary study to a large clinical trial (the Transfusion Therapy Trial for Functional Outcomes in Cardiovascular Patients Undergoing Surgical Hip Fracture Repair, known as FOCUS). The main study looks at different levels of blood transfusion to treat blood loss after hip fracture surgery. This ancillary study adds delirium as an outcome, and examines whether transfusion helps prevent short-term (post-randomization) and long-term (30 day) changes in delirium. Data will be collected in a sample of 200 subjects (100 per randomization group) across approximately 17 clinical sites in the U.S. and Canada. This ancillary study will extend the understanding the effects of transfusion thresholds on delirium.

Grandparents, cont.

[from pg. 1] bridging the generation gap, and teaching self-advocacy.

On Jan. 22, 2008, GFC celebrated the graduation of its first GrandPOWER “class.” Of the fifteen members in the empowerment group, nine grandmothers and one grandfather attended the event, which featured caps and gowns, an award ceremony, and refreshments. GFC provided transportation to enable all the grandparents and their grandchildren to attend the event, which was held at the University of Maryland School of Nursing auditorium.

Sharon McKnight, a GrandPOWER graduate, says she was ready to give up her grandchildren before she found GFC. “I was ready to let them go, but the program and the support I received from the other grandparents built up my self esteem, which was pretty much destroyed. It also helped me deal with the ‘system,’ which is often a failure for people like us,” McKnight says.

GrandPOWER graduate Barbara Belcher says friends and family had told her for years to give up taking care of her grandchildren. “They told me, ‘You did your job. You raised your kids,’” she says. “But I just can’t throw my grandchildren away. Now I feel a sense of well-being and I feel that we have so much potential.”

Carrie Johnson, another GrandPOWER graduate, credits GFC and GrandPOWER with teaching her how to go out and advocate for her kids and support other seniors raising their grandchildren.

“The program taught me how to stand up for my kids. Today, I have the services I need, and now I help other grandparents with advocacy,” Johnson says. “GFC helped me to stand on my own two feet. But they are still there for me if I need backup, and that’s nice too.”

Grandparent Family Connections has been recognized for its effectiveness and innovation and continues to expand its range of services. In 2007, with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Isabelle and Zanvyl Krieger Fund, and the Helena Foundation, it became the lead agency in developing a plan to initiate a grand-family housing and services model in Baltimore City. ■

UMB at Association for Gerontology in Higher Education Conference

Beginning with the local arrangements committee and continuing through the opening plenary session and subsequent paper and workshop sessions, the University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB) administration, faculty and students played a significant role at the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education conference held in Baltimore from February 21- 24, 2008.

The opening plenary session honored **Malinda B. Orlin, PhD**, UMB's Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School and **Scott Bass, PhD**, Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, UMBC for their outstanding contributions as administrators in supporting interprofessional programs in geriatrics and gerontology at the two local UM campuses. In addition to being honored for their ongoing support of the Doctoral Program in Gerontology, which is an interprofessional and intercampus program, Dr. Orlin was also honored for her unwavering support of the Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research Program (GGEAR) and the University of Maryland Center for Research on Aging. **Jay Magaziner, PhD, MSHyg**, Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and

Preventive Medicine and co-director of the Doctoral Program in Gerontology presented the awards with Leslie Morgan, PhD, co-director of the Doctoral Program and Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at UMBC. Dr. Marie Bernard, President of AGHE officiated at the award ceremony.

Faculty, staff, students and doctoral program alumni provided a series of presentations during the conference. **Reba Cornman**, Director of the GGEAR Program, **Nicole Brandt**, School of Pharmacy, **Terri Socha**, Western Maryland Area Health Education Center and **Donna Wilson**, Eastern Shore Area Health Education presented a workshop entitled, *The Geriatric Assessment Interdisciplinary Team Project: Introducing Interprofessional Geriatric Training with No Time to Spare*. Doctoral Program students, **Leanne Clark**, **Katherine Giuriceo** and **Thomas Shaffer** led a discussion entitled, *The Second Milestone: Getting on Track, Staying the Course and Completing the Dissertation Process*. Doctoral Program alumni led several presentations: **Kate De Medeiros, PhD**, *A Model for Practical Training in Dementia Research for Undergraduate Students*; **Kelley**



From left to right: Leslie Morgan, Scott Bass, Malinda Orlin, Jay Magaziner.

Niles-Yokum, PhD, *The Write Stuff and Collaboration in Action: Gerontology Studies and the Consortium Model*; and **Dan Van Dussen, PhD** led a resource exchange entitled, Community Educational Partnership Needs and Job Prospects Project. **Mary Palmer, PhD**, former faculty member of the UM School of Nursing and now on the faculty at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and **Joseph Proulx, EdD**, UM School of Nursing presented, *Time Travelers: An Intergenerational Writing Experience*. This project was made possible by an education grant provided by the GGEAR Program to Dr. Palmer while she was on faculty at UMB.

The Local Arrangements committee was co-directed by **Leslie Morgan** with participation by **Reba Cornman**, **Justine Golden**, and **Leanne Clark**. ■

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
BALTIMORE

GGEAR Program
660 West Redwood Street, Room 021
Baltimore, MD 21201

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Baltimore, MD
Permit No. 6955