



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Evergreen—Stretch Your Wings

“We met new friends and traveling companions through the Evergreen Forum. In addition to great classes, Evergreen has become an important part of our social life in our retirement.”

“Sorry it’s over! And I very much appreciate the opportunity to keep my brain in gear.”

“As I grow older, the Evergreen Forum courses mean more to my everyday life—expanding insights, sending my thinking in new directions.”

As we prepare to launch registrations for the Fall 2019 semester of Evergreen Forum, these comments from past Evergreen Forum participants help to highlight the value of our Evergreen program—as well as other aspects of the Princeton Senior Resource Center’s lifelong learning initiatives. There is little doubt, a comprehensive lifelong learning program is one of the critical pieces in helping us carry out our mission to help older adults thrive!

Lifelong learning, notably the importance of continuing learning for adults in their post-retirement lives, has entered the national conversation on holistic well-being for older adults. Marquette University professor Lenore Weinstein’s article, “Lifelong Learning Benefits for Older Adults,” discusses the significant contributions of adult learning towards health and vitality.

Most notably, Professor Weinstein points to the positive contribution of continuing one’s

education on mental well-being. She argues that lifelong learning programs “will stimulate the brain.... And so, to improve one’s mental functioning and mental health, one needs to get out of one’s rut and change one’s routine, try new things and experience the unfamiliar.”

PSRC’s lifelong learning offerings provide just that—an opportunity to stretch one’s horizons, to learn new things, to discover the “inner artist” that has been waiting to emerge. One of the most exciting aspects of the Evergreen Forum is that the course offerings cover a broad range of subjects and are not limited to topics on aging. In Evergreen Forum you can encounter Shakespeare, discover opera, dive into political discourse, and so much more. Through our other enrichment programs, you can pick up a paint brush for the first time since you were a child, or learn to draw using a variety of new techniques. The point is to take a chance—stretch your wings—step out and try something new!

Professor Weinstein also notes other benefits of lifelong learning for older adults. She highlights the positive effects continuing education has on overall quality of life, memory and recall, and overcoming depression/loneliness. The socialization benefits alone, she argues, contribute to thriving and vitality. The most engaged retirement is one where people take risks, get involved, and discover new possibilities through lifelong learning.

Additionally, she points out that older adults who participate in lifelong learning programs and engage in classes that stretch their wings report an overwhelming sense of joy and contentment. One of the Evergreen participants put it this way, “Thank you so much for Evergreen! Stimulating, enlightening, and a lot of fun.”

*Drew A. Dyson, PhD
Executive Director*