

Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging celebrates decade serving seniors

BY MATHER LIFEWAYS

It has been 10 years since the creation of Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging, but the original mission statement still rings true.

The mission of the MLIA is to serve as a thought leader in the field of aging. The focus of institute initiatives is to improve the well-being and vitality of seniors in their communities.

"When Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging was created in 1999 it was a natural extension of Mather LifeWays," said Linda Hollinger-Smith, MLIA vice president. "Now, as we look back over a decade of growth and achievement, it's gratifying to celebrate the positive contributions MLIA has made to older adults and the professionals who serve them."

MLIA works throughout Mather LifeWays to create programs, conduct research and test new concepts and ideas.

"Many of our research concepts and educational programs are pilot tested with our Community Initiatives and Senior Living areas of focus," Hollinger-Smith said. "We are fortunate to have one of the best environments possible for advancing our ideas. Our wellness and workforce programs, including Age Well Coaching and LEAP, are great examples."

Caregiver support programs have evolved into online offerings as technology and access have proliferated.

The first online program, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, was offered in 2002.

"Now, in addition to IBM, we are working with other Fortune 100 companies, including

Exxon Mobile and Texas Instruments, to provide online education for working caregivers," Hollinger-Smith said.

MLIA has become an educational resource among senior living organizations as well as the research community.

"We extend the MLIA message through numerous speaking opportunities and through publication of articles in industry and research journals," Hollinger-Smith said.

Early in its history, MLIA established the Institutional Review Board, which reviews all proposed research taking place at Mather LifeWays. The IRB includes representation from all Mather LifeWays areas of focus, including senior living residents.

Comprised of eight to 12 members, the IRB acts as an independent sounding board as each member has an equal opportunity to review potential research projects.

"With more emphasis being placed on research, and growing need for effective wellness and workforce programs, MLIA will continue to focus on developing innovative solutions for senior living providers as well as for other organizations," Hollinger-Smith said. "We are proud of what MLIA has accomplished and look forward to the future."

Based in Evanston, Mather LifeWays works to enhance the lives of older adults through a variety of programs.

For more information about Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging, or Mather LifeWays senior residences and community initiatives, call 847-492-7500 or go to www.matherlifeways.com.