

Oasis celebrates 40 years serving seniors, fulfilling mission; “To Do Better for Older Adults”

A Vision, a Mission, a Revolution for the livelihood of older adults

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES, April 28, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Oasis Institute](#), a national nonprofit educational organization headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, dedicated to enriching the lives of older adults, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. At the time of the organization’s inception, little effort was put into programs dedicated to maintaining the livelihood of aging adults and appreciating them as valuable members of society. What began with a few visits to St. Louis senior centers in the late

1970s—observing older adults sitting idly around, working on rudimentary crafts, and playing bingo—ignited an idea in Oasis founder Marylen Mann. After tours that day, Marylen remarked, “We can do better for older adults.” In 1982, with a small grant, a starter program rapidly transformed into a national nonprofit organization that would revolutionize our concept of successful aging—changing the course of how Americans view and value an older population. 40 years later, through Oasis’ national presence, post-retirement adults retain a sense of purpose and worth and remain active contributors to society while expanding their knowledge through recreational classes of personal interest.

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40 years ago, Oasis was the first of its kind. Today, the organization acknowledges there is ‘competition’—what they see as evidence of progress, and a need being met that went unnoticed for too long. However, there is still much work to be done. United States Census projections anticipate that by 2060, the ratio of adults under 49 to

adults over 50 will shift from 70/30 to 50/50, with a 300% increase in adults ages 65 and over.



Oasis: 40 Years of Lifelong Adventure

Additionally, the average American lifespan is expected to be nearly 20 years longer by 2060. With these predictions, there is an even greater need for organizations dedicated to supporting older adults. Oasis hopes that as the experience and longevity of aging changes, so too will the self-limiting ageist perception of older adulthood.

“Oasis has laid the groundwork for navigating the next four decades of this shift in balance of the population,” said Paul Weiss, PhD, president of Oasis. “Having spent the past 40 years as leading experts on the topic of meaningful aging, we're ahead of the curve in preparing for the future of a longer-living society. The Oasis model of engagement, cognitive stimulation, active lifestyle promotion, and purposeful volunteering can only get better through new research, partnerships, and specialized programs.”

Today, Oasis programs reach more than 200 communities, through 9 education centers and a national network of over 800 partners in 33 states. Since 1982 Oasis has served over 587,000 older adults with more than 7,600 lifelong learning classes and more than 3,500 health classes offered nationwide each year. Evidence-based programs include fall prevention, chronic disease self-management, and peer-led discussion groups. Oasis also provides exercise, fitness, nutrition, healthy living, and wellness classes.

More than 6,200 adults volunteer through Oasis each year and have provided a combined 13.7 million volunteer hours, worth more than \$400 million since 1982. The organization's largest program, Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring, connects retired individuals with opportunities to serve as literacy tutors in school districts across the country, and has supported more than 525,000 K-12 students who struggle with reading comprehension skills.

Oasis Connections, the organization's award-winning technology training program, has offered over 25,000 classes since 2000. The program is designed specifically for older adult learners and taught by fellow older adults, with over 30 courses covering a wide range of basic to intermediate skills on mobile devices and PCs.

Launched in 2020, Oasis Everywhere is the newest program addition, offering virtual classes via Zoom from Oasis centers across the country led by top instructors and subject matter experts. Oasis Everywhere Virtual Learning has reached 153 communities with 11,547 participants and growing.

“When I started Oasis, I wanted to support older adults in an active and positive way. And now I am one of those older adults,” said Marylen Mann, Oasis founder and inaugural president. “First-hand, I am able to experience some of the issues my peers are facing and it gives me an even better understanding and appreciation for the things older adults are dealing with.”

As part of the 40th anniversary celebration, Oasis is hosting a free virtual panel discussion on the past, present, and future of aging adults' place in society and the years of work the organization has put forth to transform a culture's philosophy of what constitutes productive and meaningful

aging. The event will be streamed live via Zoom video on Wednesday, May 11, from 1–2 p.m. CT. Presenters include Oasis founder and inaugural president Marylen Mann, former president Marcia Kerz, and current president Paul Weiss, moderated by Ida Early of Washington University. Those interested in attending can register through Oasis Everywhere at <https://store.oasiseverywhere.org/product/40th/>. If new to the Oasis website, simply create a free account with a username and password.

To view other available classes and find out more about The Oasis Institute and its programs, visit <https://www.oasisnet.org>.

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About The Oasis Institute

The Oasis Institute is a national nonprofit organization in St. Louis, Missouri, founded in 1982, centered on a mission to serve adults ages 50 and over, during a time when many programs for older adults were oriented around childish games and passive activities. Today, 40 years later, The Oasis Network includes the Oasis headquarters in St. Louis, a national network of nine educational centers, spanning the country coast to coast, and program partners in nearly 250 communities across the country. Oasis' tutoring program serves older adults interested in teaching or mentoring through partnerships in education and school districts. Volunteer programs help older adults fulfill the satisfaction of joy that comes with giving back to their communities. Find more information about the Oasis Institute on Facebook at @OasisInstitute, on Twitter at @OasisInstitute, on LinkedIn at The Oasis Institute, or via their website www.oasisnet.org.

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