



# OSHER NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Produced by the National Resource Center for Osher Institutes



## Greetings from the NRC

May 2022

As Osher staff and volunteer leaders return from another inspirational National Conference, collaboration is top of mind. From keynotes about raising funds for your OLLI to breakouts focusing on growing membership, conference attendees had the opportunity to engage with colleagues from across the network. Staff and volunteer leaders were also able to network at events geared toward bringing together programs from the same region or serving the same membership size. In the end, attendees left with new ideas and new or renewed relationships with fellow colleagues from all across the country. In this month's newsletter, you will find highlights from the conference events.

In this issue, you will find out even more about the ways OLLIs collaborate with their host universities. OLLI at North Carolina State is partnering with the University's ESL Program to create conversation partners between international students and OLLI members. OLLIs at Western Michigan University, University of Richmond, and University of Nevada, Las Vegas each hosted a "Giving Day" in partnership with their host university to raise funds for programming and events. This collaboration not only brought in funds to sustain their work but also brought awareness about their OLLI to their campus communities.

As staff and volunteer leaders return to their OLLIs, we hope you all bring home renewed energy, fresh ideas and a stronger connection to the Osher network. We are grateful to all who presented sessions, led table topics, and shared their knowledge and experience with others across the network!

With thanks from the Osher NRC team,



Amanda Rhodes, Associate Director

**Osher NRC**

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# OLLI NEWS

OLLI AT NORTH CAROLINA STATE

**Conversations and Coffee - International Style**



Members of OLLI at North Carolina (NC) State are partnering with international students for coffee and conversations. This not only allows for learning and interactions for both parties but also serves as an opportunity for international students to practice their conversational skills!

Robin Kube, senior lecturer in foreign languages and literature at NC State, coordinates the [ESL Program](#) which plays a vital role in providing support and resources to international students whose first language is not English. In fall 2021, she was inspired to partner with OLLI after watching *Finding You*, a movie about an American student in Ireland who is matched with a retired community member for the semester abroad. Robin's ask to the OLLI members was a commitment to meeting one-on-one with an international student one hour a month for one semester to help them improve their conversational skills. The result was amazing! Within a week, more than 20 students had been matched up with an OLLI conversation partner.

As the program took off, Robin said that she was grateful that OLLI members and students were able to be matched so quickly and, for many students, these weekly meetings were the highlight of the semester!

OLLI member Denise noted in her experience with her partner, "I do sometimes help her with vocabulary or pronunciation, and it's totally okay. She's also asked some questions about our culture that have been interesting, since expectations can be different in the US than in China! I am a safe person to ask those questions."

For some duos, the conversation extends beyond coffee. One OLLI member invited his conversation partner and a few other international students to his home for a Thanksgiving meal. Another couple hosted their conversation partners for a home cooked Italian dinner.

This successful collaboration is one that OLLI at NC State highly recommends! They have high hopes it will continue for many years at NC State.

Submitted by: Joan Hardman-Cobb, Assistant Director, [OLLI at NC State](#)

## OLLIs ACROSS THE USA Giving Days 2022



Osher Institutes are jumping on the bandwagon of University Giving Days. April is a big month for these fundraising events. OLLIs at University of Oklahoma, Kentucky, South Florida, Pittsburgh, Alabama in Huntsville, and West Virginia all found success and demonstrated their school pride while mobilizing members in good-natured challenges. Three Institutes stood out from the dozens who participated in these university organized events: Western Michigan, Richmond, and Nevada, Las Vegas.

OLLI at Western Michigan University director Toni Woolfork-Barnes notes, "This year, we were more intentional with a stronger communication plan including information in two monthly newsletters, sharing OLLI member testimonials as part of our social media plan, and communicating directly with the entire Advisory Board on how to invite others in their networks to participate. Including a direct email to all OLLI members inviting their participation, we built various challenges throughout the day – a Kick-off Challenge, the Redeye Challenge, and the Lunchtime Crunch. In the end we celebrated a significant increase in giving with nearly \$5,500 raised."

Peggy Watson, Director of Osher at University of Richmond says, "Our Institute has participated in 'UR HERE' for two years. We put our toe in the water last year, and this year we were full participants. We definitely improved our giving from our first year, but we're still new to the game. Members are excited to give during the event, especially if there are matches or incentives that will double their gifts. We will continue to refine our messaging, to avoid confusion. But we already see this event creates a jump-start to our annual Osher giving campaign." Osher at University of Richmond tallied just under \$11,000 in total gifts this year.

At OLLI at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, members were given a challenge grant before their "Rebels Give" Day began. For every \$2 a member gave, an anonymous donor pledged an additional dollar. OLLI director Rob Levrant mentions that "While not our biggest fundraiser, we join in support of our university and demonstrate to the UNLV Foundation that OLLI members participate at a significant level. In fact, our members always place OLLI in the top ten units for number of gifts, comparable to our law school

and colleges of engineering and hospitality.” OLLI raised just under \$8,000 this year. Rob reminds us that when people donate to other areas of the university, they often choose to donate to OLLI as well. Recent donors to their OLLI have included the university president and UNLV’s CFO.

*For more information:* Rob Levrant, Director, [OLLI at University of Nevada, Las Vegas](#); Peggy Watson, Director, [Osher Institute at University of Richmond](#); Toni Woolfork-Barnes, Director, [OLLI at Western Michigan University](#)

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## OLLI AT AQUINAS COLLEGE

# Happy birthday to a lifelong learning pioneer!



We would like to send a special birthday wish to Sister Mary Aquinas Weber, Chancellor Emerita at Aquinas College, who celebrated her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. She has dedicated her life to serving others and is a pioneer in lifelong learning. She started the lifelong learning program at Aquinas College in 1973 and continues to serve the Aquinas College community to this day in her role as Chancellor Emerita.

Sister Aquinas was integral in bringing Aquinas College into the network of Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes in 2008. Upon hearing that she was celebrating her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday, Bernard Osher noted what an inspiration she is to the program at Aquinas and thanked her for her service to others in making the world a better place. We would like to join Mr. Osher in sending well wishes for another year of providing inspiration and service to others. Happy birthday Sister Aquinas!

# NRC UPDATES

## 2022 Osher Institutes National Conference



The 14<sup>th</sup> Osher Institutes National Conference returned to an in-person event for 2022. It was held April 25th through 27th in Broomfield, Colorado. The national conference, held every 18 months, has not been in-person since 2018. Although a virtual conference was held in 2020, it was a wonderful experience to see old friends and meet new friends. We were fortunate to have pleasant

Colorado weather and wonderful presenters. The conference provided ample opportunities to network, learn, and celebrate the mission of lifelong learning. Osher Institute directors, staff, and member leaders from all over the country attended. Nearly all the 125 Osher Institutes sent two representatives: one staff member and one volunteer leader. This year, we saw about 250 attendees: including participants, guests, and speakers. Programming for 2022 included a keynote session, four plenary sessions, 15 breakout sessions, and facilitated discussions. Additionally, there were numerous opportunities for networking, collaborations, and conversations. The Colorado weather, while windy at times, afforded morning walks, beautiful views and some outdoor meals.

Plenary sessions included a presentation on fundraising by author and co-founder of Evergreen Philanthropic Solutions, Diane Lebson, and a presentation from numerous Osher Institute directors and volunteer leaders on collaborative efforts across the network. The keynote address was presented by noted geriatrician, professor, and New York Times bestselling author Dr. Louise Aronson. She presented on her research on aging related matters including cultural perception, medicine, and ageism. The numerous breakout workshops included content on distance learning, technology, instructional methods, marketing, strategic planning, fundraising, diversity, leadership, volunteerism, recruitment, wellness, and research. Attendees repeatedly expressed their gratitude to The Bernard Osher Foundation for their generous support of the National Conference. Overall, 2022 provided another great conference; the topics were relevant, the food was fantastic, and it was great to network and hear from others in-person once again. A special thanks goes to the volunteers and assistance from Colorado State University and University of Denver.

The Osher Institutes National Conference is a sesquiannual, multi-day meeting that has been held at varied locations throughout the country since 2003. The Conference is fully funded by The Bernard Osher Foundation and produced by the National Resource Center for Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes at Northwestern University in collaboration with leaders throughout the network of Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes.

## THE OLLI INSIDER

**QUICK TIPS FOR HELPING OPERATE AN OSHER INSTITUTE**

**Quick Tip - Osher Institute Swag Ideas**



Check out these fun swag items from Osher Institutes across the nation.

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## CAREER OPENINGS IN THE OLLI NETWORK Job Board

Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute  
[North Carolina State University](#)

Program Manager, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute  
[Widener University](#)

Director, OLLI and Community Education  
[University of California, Riverside](#)

Administrative Assistant I, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute  
[Washington University in St. Louis](#)

Is there a staff opening at your Osher Institute? Please send it to us at [oshernrc@northwestern.edu](mailto:oshernrc@northwestern.edu)

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