Greetings from the NRC

Helping one another is a cultural norm for the Osher Institute Network. There is no other large group of lifelong learning institutes that can match the advantages we have with our 125 united programs from all across the country. Helping defines the ethos of our network – with a collaborative spirit, volunteerism as a core value, and the practice of offering ideas, counsel, and support to our peers on a daily basis.

Throughout the pandemic, it has been gratifying to see Osher Institutes work more closely together than ever before. Many of you have partnered with one another at even higher levels, finding innovative ways to be mutually beneficial. Many of you have expanded your engagement within your own university communities using suggestions and ideas from your Osher peers at other institutions. Now, as we work to regrow and, in many OLLIs, redefine our Institutes, we continue to rely on each other for feedback, effective techniques, and advice. I am so proud when I hear directors directly state that the solidarity of the Osher Network is the most valuable resource we have – even beyond the financial and operational assistance we enjoy due to the Osher Foundation’s generosity.
The three articles we feature this month all point to our deep commitment to helping one another. We hope you can relate to the ways these Institutes are sharing with one another and celebrate the collective values we uphold.

With gratitude for all you do for the Osher Institute Network,

Steve Thaxton, Executive Director

Osher NRC
National Resource Center
for Osher Institutes
A different sort of summer storm formed over the great plains and mountain west for six Osher Institutes in July. It was a tornado of collaboration as six OLLIs joined to offer a series of free online classes to their members with each Institute bringing one unique and engaging offering to the effort.

The OLLIs from Montana to Minnesota committed to explore a summer session of thought-provoking historical topics and perspectives: Native American boarding schools, women who served in WWII, the nation's energy resources, American baseball and pop culture, the history of Mariska Karasz's art, and learning how the Northern Plains were mapped. The series began on July 12th and concluded on July 28th. Each OLLI “sponsored” a unique class, showcasing and honoring one of their popular instructors.

“OLLI at University of South Dakota Director, Thea Ryan and her team have taken on the huge share of the responsibilities for this learning opportunity – keeping us on task to turn in dates, presentation descriptions, and bios, taking in the registrations, putting together content for us to share, and overseeing all of the Zoom presentations. We are all now looking forward to what we can do together in the future,” commented OLLI at Iowa State University director Jerilyn Logue.

Winter weather inspired this summer collaboration. USD director Ryan experimented with “OLLI Shorts,” a series of 20-minute lunch-hour Zoom classes in February 2022. The series featured “Weather Reports” from 15 different OLLIs across the country – a

- Map appeared in English Atlas
- Map confirms growing recognition of Great Plains as distinct entity
- Map omits any reference to Dakota
- Map confuses Missouri with Platte River

Louis Hennepin’s 1698 Map
“A Map of a Large Country Newly Discovered in the Northern America situated between New Mexico and the Frozen Sea”
fun way to compare the differing winter climates while celebrating their engaging cultures and greeting peer members from across the Osher Network.

South Dakota member, Mildred Hottmann-Roesch was enthused about participating in the summer series, “Zoom is amazing and sharing information with interesting adults from all over the country between regularly scheduled programming is a bonus to help make cold winters shorter and hot summers cooler.”

The participating Osher directors agree, “Collaborating with other OLLI directors has been a golden lining of the pandemic. Then finally meeting everyone in person at the spring conference inspired even more collaboration schemes. I am inspired weekly by the caliber of presenters our fellow OLLI directors and their member volunteers arrange,” said OLLI at Montana State University director Bobbi Geise.

Six OLLIs worked together to create this program: South Dakota - Wyoming - Minnesota - Montana - Iowa - North Dakota

In October of 2021, the Osher NRC introduced a marketing toolbox for use across the network. This effort arose from a frequent request to the NRC, “Why doesn’t the NRC do a national marketing campaign on behalf of the Osher network?” While that may seem like a reasonable request, a one-size-fits-all approach would not be feasible for the greater network’s advertising needs. However, the NRC recognized the network’s need for marketing tools and promotional materials, and so the marketing toolbox was born. For this effort, the NRC collaborated with the marketing team of Erin Sarris
& Leighton Guerrero to create a wealth of marketing materials. The toolbox provides print, audio, video, and other assets for Institutes to use in their promotional efforts.

The creative idea behind the toolbox is to build on a theme and value that all Institutes share: a commitment to curiosity. Thus, the tag line, and theme of the toolbox, was set as Stay Curious. In addition, the toolbox features photographs and video of real OLLI learners as a part of this campaign. This was a collaborative effort, not only between the marketing team and the NRC, but many photos, video, and feedback were generously provided by The University of Utah, Coastal Carolina University, Northwestern University, and others. One of the defining features of the materials in the toolbox, is that it provides templates that have a consistent look and feel while allowing for numerous customizable aspects. They include the graphic element of the distinctive curved Osher “O”. As Ara Rogers, director of OLLI at University of South Florida, states “We are (now) self-reliant in regard to our marketing, while being able to represent USF positively and professionally.” Additionally, the toolbox allows individual Institutes to make these marketing materials their own, use photos of their own members, and edit for their promotions. It is best summarized by Jennifer Disano, executive director of OLLI at George Mason University who stated, ”The designs are so eye catching and vibrant. The slogans are creative and on point…We like the flexibility of substituting the images with folks from our own membership.”

Now, these materials are being used across the network. From Sonoma State University on the west coast to Tufts University on the east coast: from print ads (Left image shown here from George Mason University) to digital ads (Top middle image shown here from the University of South Florida) to digital video from Louisiana State University - Stay Curious is making its mark.

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OLLI AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

A Lifesaving Friend
As part of the College of Professional Studies, OLLI at The University of Alabama in Huntsville shares space in Wilson Hall on campus with other departments, including Health Services. This could not have been more fortunate back in 2017 when OLLI member, Patricia “Miss Patti” was attending an OLLI class. On that fateful day, Miss Patti went into cardiac arrest but was saved by quick thinking friends who summoned Amber McPhail, Director of Student Health Services for emergency assistance.

“She was barely breathing, and I couldn’t feel a pulse,” McPhail says after examining Miss Patti on the floor of the lobby in front of the Wilson Hall Theatre. “So I immediately applied the AED pads to her chest and turned on the device.”

What some might call an astonishing series of fortunate circumstances working for her survival, Miss Patti sees as nothing short of miraculous set of events. “There were so many factors that happened!” she says. “The wife of the then president of UAH was a member of our group, and she was there and saw what had happened. That was miracle number 1! She had just toured the medical facilities on the third floor of Wilson Hall, so she ran upstairs and brought the nurse down, which was miracle number 2! The fact that they had the paddle thing [AED] in the hall, that was miracle number 3!”

McPhail and her patient have forged a special bond…Fast forward to 2022, almost exactly five years after the incident, and Miss Patti showed up recently at the clinic for her COVID booster shot. “It was so great to see her again, and she is as sharp as ever,” McPhail reports.

Read the full story in UAH News.
What is a Woo-Hoo? A Woo-Hoo is one of those wonderful, amazing, out of the box experiences at an OLLI. All Osher Institutes have the opportunity to submit and showcase their Woo-Hoo for the Osher National Conference. The Woo-Hoos are shared during general sessions at the conference, and attendees vote on their favorites. The following is one of the winners from the 2022 Osher Institutes National Conference.

**Iowa State University and Braver Angels**

OLLI at Iowa State University worked with the Braver Angels on two different learning opportunities for its members. The first was "How to Speak Civily to Reds and Blues – Building a United America" in spring 2021. The second was "Skills for Bridging the Divide" in fall of 2021. The sessions were to assist members in learning and practicing skills around having respectful conversations. In the class evaluations, one participant said, "I learned the importance of staying calm, of listening, and still stating your position based on facts as you know them."
CAREER OPENINGS IN THE OLLI NETWORK

Job Board

Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Arizona State University

Executive Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
University of Nevada, Reno

Director of Lifelong Learning
Coastal Carolina University

Coordinator, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Arizona State University

OLLI Administrative Assistant
Coastal Carolina University

Administrative Assistant, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
University of Texas at El Paso

Is there a staff opening at your Osher Institute? Please send it to us at oshernrc@northwestern.edu