



# CATHOLIC ELDERCARE

## News Release

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### **March 3 Art Exhibit at Walker Art Center Brings Aging and Elder Wisdom into the Mainstream**

***NIH Study: "Creativity increases with age."***

Minneapolis, Minn. -- Older adult artists from Catholic Eldercare will participate in an innovative art exhibit, March 3 at the Walker Art Center, designed to bring the wisdom and creativity of elders into the broader community.

The innovative art program is based upon National Institutes of Health research which found that creativity increases with age.

It's all part of the two day *Minnesota Creativity and Aging Get-Together* event, a community collaboration organized by the Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network (MNCANN).

From 5:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., March 3, the Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis, will host *Tending and Mending*, a multi-media exhibit created by Catholic Eldercare residents under the expert guidance of Sandra Menefee-Taylor. Author Gene Cohen, who has written several books on aging and creativity, will offer his insights at 8:00 p.m. and sign copies of his books.

On Saturday, March 4, Catholic Eldercare will participate in an all-day conference on creativity and aging from 8:15 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College. The day will include a keynote address by author Gene Cohen about the health benefits to older adults from participating in high quality arts programs.

#### **Aging Artists**

Elizabeth is a gifted painter. Not bad for a woman who is 102 years young. What's more remarkable is that she never lifted a paint brush until she was 99 and a resident at *Catholic*

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*Eldercare on Main* in Northeast Minneapolis, an all-faiths elder residence known for its acclaimed *Creativity & Spirituality Program*. The innovative program is drawing attention from other eldercare organizations interested in replicating the idea as a way to help elders create a fulfilling life and cope with chronic pain, depression, or other health challenges.

The *Creativity & Spirituality Program*, led by artist and Pastoral Care Director Peggy Thompson is designed to help elders nourish their spirit by discovering new talents and gifts, regardless of age.

The program is based, in part, on research conducted at the National Institutes of Health. “Researchers have found that the older we get, the more creative we get,” Thompson said. “This research is a splash of cold water in the face of those who may feel life has little value in the autumn of life,” Thompson adds. “We are breaking down stereotypes that tend to marginalize people as they age. We routinely have residents discovering new creative gifts in their 80’s or 90’s, avocations like painting, woodcarving, or writing poetry.”

“The elder artists embody the belief at Catholic Eldercare that learning is a life-long process, regardless of age, and that the best life is one that fulfills mind, body and spirit,” said Thompson.

### **Every Day is a Work of Art**

“We believe elders should determine the course of their lives, to have self-determination. Even when someone has physical or cognitive challenges, the essence of their spirit remains ageless. We recognize the value to the individual of nurturing the mind, body and spirit,” said Mary Broderick, Catholic Eldercare president and chief executive officer.

**Media Advisory:** For more information, or to arrange a story on a particular elder artist, please call Peggy Thompson, founder of the Catholic Eldercare Creativity & Spirituality Program, at 612-379-1370.

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*Established in 1982, not-for-profit Catholic Eldercare is a community resource which has a long tradition of meeting the diverse needs of elders of all faiths in a caring atmosphere of support, respect, dignity and self-determination.*