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MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION
SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY

ELDERHOSTEL: HOSTING A PROGRAM TO INCLUDE THE
ENROLLMENT OF LOCAL RESIDENTS

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE MASTER OF ARTS (EDUCATION)

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ENROLLMENT OF LOCAL RESIDENTS**

Donna S. Graham

April, 1989

ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to examine the idea of offering the Elderhostel program to senior residents of the area where the host institution is located. It was thought that such a program would be of interest to those senior citizens who are either unwilling or unable to travel several hundred miles in order to participate in an Elderhostel program. Such a program - the university atmosphere, "no stress" courses of interest, and social contact with others who have travelled from various parts of Canada and the United States - might have an appeal to those for whom travel is a limiting factor.

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to 217 senior residents of the Halifax area. A study of the information received from the returned questionnaires was made in order to determine the amount of interest in a local Elderhostel program, the main reasons for such an interest, and the priorities and preferences of the respondents regarding courses and activities offered, attendance, accommodations, cost, and scheduling of courses.

An examination of relevant literature looks at the increasing need for educational programs for the elderly, and current trends in such programs, including participation. Conclusions and recommendations are provided.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 An Aging Society

We are faced with an aging population. In 1921, Canada, a country of youth, had 52% of its population under the age of 25 and only 5% over the age of 65. By 1981, the figures had changed to 41.7% under 25 and 9.7% over 65 (Ray, 1983). It is estimated that by the turn of the century, the population in the peak ages of retirement (ages 65 and over) will be approximately 3-1/2 million, or 12% of the Canadian population (Stone, 1983), that between the years 1976 and 2001, the Canadian population 65 years and over will increase by 75%, and that between 2001 and 2051, the Canadian population aged 65 and over will double in size (Marshall, 1980).

Why this increase in population of people in the years of retirement? One reason is that we are considering a segment of the population termed the "Baby Boomers", those born shortly after the Second World War and up to 1968. During this period there was a significant increase in the birth rate.

Also, life expectancy is increasing. Those who are 65 years of age may expect to live another thirteen to sixteen years, or

approximately 23% of their life in postretirement (Friedman, 1964; Riley, Riley, & Johnson, 1969). By improving diet, getting sufficient exercise, eliminating smoking, and reducing alcohol consumption, the individual can retard the onset of debilitating diseases and extend a healthy, vigorous life until at least the age of 85 (Peterson, 1983). A new period of life has been created, a time after the employment years, but before debilitating health conditions cause severe restrictions in mobility and involvement.

Biological aging is an uneven process which may have little, if any, relationship to chronological aging (Eklund, 1969). Some people are physically older at 45 years of age than are others at 65. An individual of 85 may have a cardiovascular system functioning as well as that of an average 50 year-old.

Research presents no evidence that, after a person enters adulthood, age per se is a barrier to learning. There is a growing body of knowledge which indicates that the ability to learn many kinds of materials increases with age (McClusky, 1972). There are changes in aspects of learning, such as speed, but there is the same ability and range of ability within older age groups as within other age groups (Elkind, 1970).

Verbal and allied abilities do not decline with age; some abilities improve with age (Botwinik, 1967). Research continues to verify the longevity of intellectual abilities

(Barton, Plemons, Willis, & Baltes, 1975; Shale, 1980; Shale and Parr, 1981).

With all the evidence of the older person's continued ability to exercise cognitive skills, the older population no longer needs to accept the out-dated myth of "old dogs" and "new tricks". They bring "new tricks" to the experience of learning. From their lifetime of experience, they have learned how to organize their powers of imagination, information storage, and creativity. Simply because the retirement years are ahead of them does not mean that they are ready to retire from activity and involvement. A poll conducted by Harris and Associates (1975) revealed that the majority of the elderly people in the United States wished to continue contributing to society and to work to their potential. They viewed themselves as being most useful to their community. A further study by Penny A. Ralston (1980) re-emphasizes the argument that as a heterogeneous group, older people need and are involved in diverse educational endeavours. Also, the results of a study by William F. Price and Lesley B. Lyon (1982) revealed that 70% of the senior citizens who responded to the questionnaire saw themselves as having educational needs. The notion that older people believe that education is for the young is not substantiated by this finding. As Demko (1982) states, many older people do not see themselves as being "old".

1.2 Effect of an Aging Society on Education

Cross (1980) points out that the shifting of the median age of the population has a noticeable impact on education, just as it has on consumer markets. In 1978, Victor M. Agruso, Jr. wrote that approximately half of the older population had no formal high school education, but that the majority of those who would be retiring in 10 - 15 years will have had at least high school training. Each generation will be better educated. There is a direct relationship between prior education and continued interest in higher education in old age (Graney & Hays, 1976; Havighurst, 1976). As large portions of the population have experience with higher education in youth, larger proportions of this population will seek university learning experience in old age (Dellmann-Jenkins, Papalia-Finlay, & Hennon, 1985). All surveys show that the more education people have, the more interested they will be in further education, the more they will know about available opportunities, and the more they will participate (Cross, 1982).

Looking at both the past and the future, David A. Peterson (1983) reminds us that, since adult education was not widely available and since their involvement with schooling was less, many members of the current older population did not have the opportunity or the inclination to begin their adult education early, and were progressively less likely to begin with each succeeding decade. People who are currently in young adulthood are much more likely to begin their continuing education today,

and continue that involvement throughout adulthood and old age. Thus, the percentage and number of older participants can be expected to increase substantially in the future. Persons who are retiring and entering later maturity are typically younger, better educated, and with higher levels of adult education participation than those who are already old. Hence, we can expect instructional participation to increase, simply because of the change occurring in the older population.

There are several theories with regard to aging, but one which has been considered as one of the most promising is the continuity theory (Cumming & Henry, 1961). This theory maintains that old age is not a separate period of life, but a continuation of patterns set earlier. Therefore, if an interest in education has existed all along, that interest will continue into the later years as well.

As a result of the increase in number of older adults, early retirement for some, increased life expectancy, and higher educational level, a new leisure class has been created. More people will reach retirement in good health and with high educational levels, and will become a more notable group of education consumers than their predecessors (Drotter, 1981). This new leisure class of senior adults can be viewed as potential untapped consumers of education (Romaniuk & Romaniuk, 1982; Covey, 1983). With the responsibilities of job and family behind them, senior adults have more time and freedom to take care of themselves and pursue their own interests, seeking

new avenues and learning what they want to learn (Covey, 1983; Leclerc, 1985).

With retirement, there is a loss of the work which might have provided the individual with a sense of achievement. Adult education classes, as well as hobbies, may provide the opportunity for a continued feeling of achievement, and educational programs should reflect the need (Jarvis, 1983). Senior adults are becoming better educated, more sophisticated, and more discriminating consumers of education than their predecessors (Jacobowitz & Shanan, 1982; Peterson & Orgren, 1982). As Richard Peterson (1980) states, their learning needs will have to be met.

1.3 Education for the Elderly: Justification & Responsibility

We are becoming a learning society, wherein education is viewed as a lifelong activity. This realization provides a firm foundation for the support of instructional programs for senior adults. The net consequence of the youth orientation has been a neglect of the educational needs of senior adults (Covey, 1983). Although adult educators have become more responsive to these needs in recent years, a void still exists. As David A. Peterson (1983) notes, we have invested huge sums of money for the education of children and young people, but not done the same for middle-aged and older adults. Peterson states that this inequity must end, and its removal will result in a major improvement in the lives of individuals and future

prospects for society.

Much evidence has been provided which indicates that involvement in education is beneficial to the elderly. Education has an important function because it diminishes disengagement, giving the ability to take part in new interests and activities, as well as occupying the time which the senior adult has in abundance (Havighurst, 1976). Continuing education aids in the prevention of obsolescence among the elderly and in the enhancement of a storehouse of knowledge (Agruso, 1978). The insights and understanding, as well as the skills, learned through education can serve to enhance a sense of self-worth in old people, offering interests and outlets for engagement in useful activity, of which fulfilling one's own potentials must surely be included among the most rewarding (Eklund, 1969). Also, if there is a link between active minds and holistic well-being, learning is the key which will de-escalate the problems now being recognized in the fields of health, pensions, employment, and appropriate life style for senior adults (Pitman, 1984; Southall, 1984). The role of education in personal development, as in health development or financial security, is proactive, that is, it offers a means by which the initiative can be taken to help older learners both optimize their potential for continued growth and prevent psychological decline (Peterson, 1983).

A study by Mary M. Dellman-Jenkins and Diane Papalia-Finlay (1983) examined attitudes of seniors towards age-related items.

Interviews were conducted with 21 married couples, 55 years of age or older, with one spouse attending university classes, and 33 married couples, 55 years of age or older, with neither spouse participating in continuing education. The student couples reported significantly more positive attitudes towards growing older. Of the student couples, 93% showed a positive attitude concerning the issue (age-related satisfaction items), and of the non-student couples, 71% showed a positive attitude towards the issue. In response to the statement that little things bothered them more that year, 90% of the student couples disagreed, and 68% of the non-student couples disagreed. It was concluded that the participants' levels of life satisfaction may have been due to their positive feelings of intellectual stimulation since returning to school.

Malcom S. Knowles (1970) remarks that psychologists and psychiatrists are coming to see the need to grow as perhaps the most basic and universal drive of all. Even in old age, there is an apparent need to keep growing. The urge for growth is an especially strong motivation for learning, since education is, by definition, growth - in knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes, interests, and appreciation. The mere act of learning something new gives one a sense of growth.

Marilyn D. Jacobson (1976) states that those older individuals who do return to the classroom, discover for themselves and illustrate to others that learning is a joy and a fulfillment, that age enhances rather than inhibits learning, and that the

existential state of being that includes discovering and growing can and should continue through the entire extent of one's life.

Because of its faith in the learning ability of older people and because of its confidence in the improvement that results from learning, education, in contrast with other areas in the field of aging, can be invested with a climate of optimism (McClusky, 1972). Peterson (1974) emphasizes that the field of adult education has the opportunity to respond in a more positive way to the condition of older people than do some other professional service areas - those which tend to be concerned with the decline which accompanies old age, stress the importance of problem solving, or provide protective, rehabilitative, and custodial care for the elderly. Thus, he concludes, gerontology provides adult education with the challenge to accept a new role, one which has been generally overlooked in the past, but which is becoming more urgent as we move into the future. This role is to provide the education needed for successful growth and adjustment in the later stages of life. As Groney and Hays (1976) state, education is a lifelong endeavour, and educational gerontology is a natural extension of previously recognized concerns.

Robert J. Havighurst (1976) provides two arguments which support expenditures on education for the elderly. One argument is that the elderly have already contributed to the growth of the economy by giving their work, at wages and

salaries that allowed the employer to keep high profits and put this money into research and improved production facilities. Thus, they have an investment in the productive plant of the economy, for which they deserve repayment. Another argument he provides is that all people have a right to the good things in life, and a society which is concerned with the quality of life should provide the necessities for good living to all people in relation to their needs, as far as possible.

Oscar Fishstein and Claudette D. Feier (1982) point out that as new constituents in the United States have sought learning, education has become more responsive to their needs. They state that this responsiveness should now be directed to older citizens. This should definitely apply to all countries, not just the United States. Governments should justify costs in education for all groups of citizens. Fishstein and Feier emphasize that citizens of advanced years can enrich their lives through education and, in turn, enrich society.

It has been maintained that educators have a special obligation to the aged as well as to the young (Eklund, 1969). Thomas R. McDaniel (1984) states that educating the elderly is a responsibility of the entire community - public schools, colleges, churches, social agencies, libraries, etc. Above all, what is required is a commitment by educators in all service agencies to finding better ways to work together to provide a comprehensive and coordinated system for educating the elderly. He also advises that colleges and universities

continue to offer courses, programs, and Elderhostel sessions.

Reiko W. Sekiguchi (1985) indicates that Japan, a country which is moving into an aging society at a greater speed than any other country in the world has ever experienced, is recognizing the need to provide education programs for the elderly. He states that in Japan, as people grow old, they want to learn something new in order to enrich their lives after they have retired from work and are free from the pressures of family life. He mentions the Central Committee on Education's recommendation that different types of learning opportunities are required to enable the individual to choose what is suitable for his or her own needs or interests. The Committee also recommended that not only community centers, but all other facilities run by local governments and communities, should be involved to offer suitable learning opportunities to aged citizens in order to assist them in their individual learning. Sekiguchi mentions that the White Paper published annually by the Ministry of Health and Welfare used, until 1983, the term, aging society , to describe the characteristics of the present society. From 1984, however, the Ministry changed its view and began to refer to the era of 80 years' life. As the reason for the change of terms, it was explained that the term, aging society , evoked a gloomy image.

1.4 Conclusion

The literature reviewed indicates a substantial increase in the number of elderly people seeking further education after retirement. Increase in participation in education among the elderly has already occurred, and is predicted to continue at a significant rate into the future. It is therefore necessary to provide appropriate programs for this relatively new and expanding group of education consumers.

As Elinor Greenberg (1982) notes, we have the potential of building a truly learning society. This learning society is a culture which values recurrent and continuing learning not just for developing skills necessary to cope with the future, but also as a means of enhancing the quality of life.

1.5 A Brief Description of Elderhostel

Elderhostel is an educational program for older adults who want to continue to expand their horizons and to develop new interests and enthusiasms. Elderhostel is committed to the belief that retirement can mean a new beginning filled with opportunities and challenges.

The concept of Elderhostel originated with Marty Knowlton, in 1974. He had returned to the United States from an extended sabbatical in Europe, and found that his faculty position at a university in New Hampshire was no longer available to him. He

took advantage of this time to formulate the idea of a hostelling program for elders, similar to the traditional youth hostel idea, but combining travel, education, and the experience of living on campus. Convinced that one of the major problems of aging lies in the self-image of uselessness, which very often leads to the withdrawal syndrome after retirement, Knowlton believed that there could be a solution to this problem. He felt that a week of classes on a college campus, in a no stress environment, would provide mental stimulation and a new, positive self-image. Thus, the first Elderhostel program was started at the University of New Hampshire in September, 1974.

Elderhostel allows participants to enjoy inexpensive, short-term programs at educational institutions around the world. The courses are not for credit, and there are no exams, grades, or, except for what the program refers to as Intensive Studies, required homework. No previous knowledge of a particular subject is required. The courses are in the liberal arts and sciences, each institution selecting the courses it wishes to offer. Each participating institution must provide courses which have an intellectual content and quality equal to the average offering of that institution. They are not permitted to offer any course specifically designed for the elderly.

Most Elderhostel programs are one week in length, beginning on a Sunday afternoon and ending the following Saturday morning. During the week, participants are offered three courses which

meet for one to one and one-half hours each week day. While participants are required to attend only one course, the courses are scheduled so that attendance at all three is possible. Also, since Elderhostelers live on campus, they have access to the cultural and recreational facilities and resources located there. The cost of Elderhostel is intentionally held at a modest level. The typical charge for a program is \$200 - \$300. "Hostelships" are available to those requiring financial assistance.

Since Elderhostel is specifically created for older adults, those who wish to participate in the program must be sixty years of age or older. However, a companion who is fifty years of age or older may attend with a participant.

The Elderhostel program has been judged an enormous success by both educators and participants. In 1988, over 190,000 people had enrolled in Elderhostel programs throughout fifty states in the United States, ten provinces in Canada, and over forty countries overseas. Over 1,200 colleges, universities, and other educational institutions offered courses to these participants.

Marty Knowlton had expressed an idea for which there was a great need - an intellectually stimulating, short-term residential program for people in their later years, combining travel, education, and adventure, all at a reasonable cost. The growth of Elderhostel has been referred to as the most dramatic

story of the decade, with regard to education for the elderly (Yoe, 1982). It is helping to bury the myth that older people cannot learn.

1.6 The Role of Elderhostel

Elderhostel is viewed as an important direct opportunity for colleges and universities to serve the educational needs of the aging (McDaniel, 1984). Such a program is needed so that cost or stigma are not barriers which restrict access of the elderly to a wide variety of new learnings (Ostwald & Williams, 1985).

In the summer of 1982, a study was conducted to examine the personal, social, and general intellectual growth perceived by older students participating in Elderhostel programs (Brady, 1983). One of the strongest themes to emerge from these perceptions of growth was that of learning which took place by way of interaction with other Elderhostelers. People made new friends, learned of different cultures, and generally widened their perspective via the social aspect of the program. They talked of how the courses they took and the people they met in Elderhostel broadened their perspectives on life and the world in general.

Another theme which prevailed was that of keeping current with contemporary issues and staying active. Some people who attend Elderhostel want to keep "on the move", to be with other alert, active retirees. Besides the intellectual learning that takes

place which allows people to keep current, some older persons enjoy being in a youthful environment (i.e. college or university campus) with active people.

Romaniuk and Romaniuk (1982) suggest that an Elderhostel program on campus could be viewed as a cornerstone strategy to attract older learners to avail themselves of other educational opportunities. Because of the popularity and acceptance of Elderhostel, it could serve as the basis for initially getting people on campus and introducing them to the education system. A successful Elderhostel experience could dispose of the barriers and alleviate some of the threats and fears associated with being a student. The older learner might be more favorably disposed to other educational programs and activities.

1.7 Elderhostel in Halifax

In recent years, four Halifax universities - Saint Mary's University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Dalhousie University, and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design - have been involved with the organization and hosting of Elderhostel programs. In fact, during the summer of 1988, Elderhostel programs were held at three of these universities - Saint Mary's, Mount Saint Vincent, and Dalhousie. A wide variety of courses was offered - from researching family history to introduction to computers; from writing and staging of participants' memoirs to discovering "untourist" Halifax; from

the Acadians of the Maritimes to the problem of world hunger. In keeping within the guidelines of Elderhostel, no course was designed specifically for the elderly, or technical in nature.

With the success and growth of Elderhostel in the Halifax area, the universities are definitely experiencing a "greying" of the campus. These educational institutions are participating in what has been described as the newest and most wide spread uniform program of adult education specifically geared toward integrating the older adult into a larger society (Kennedy, 1978).

1.8 Statement of the Problem

Although enrollment in continuing education classes by senior citizens has increased in recent years, it remains low. Statistics Canada reported that in 1983, approximately 3.2 million Canadians were enrolled in some form of adult education, but only about 3% of these participants were aged 65 and over.

One of the factors which contribute to low participation among the elderly is travel. Travel is seen as a major barrier, as many older people are reluctant to travel for long times or long distances (Cross, 1982; Hoyt, 1975). The location and accessibility of the sponsoring organization are also critical to the aged (Cross, 1980, 1982; Peterson, 1981). A study conducted by Hiemstra (1972) revealed that transportation and a

hesitancy to go out at night were factors affecting participation and non-participation of senior adults in classes.

Course content is another important factor which affects class participation among the elderly. In a study reported by Peterson (1981), the most important reason for participation was the need for or interest in the content of the lecture series. A statewide survey of 496 Elderhostelers in Virginia revealed that the foremost single reason for attending Elderhostel was course description (Romaniuk & Romaniuk, 1982). Results of a survey of elderly college and university students in Georgia showed that interest in a certain subject was one of the major reasons for enrolling (Kingston, 1982).

If course content is such an important factor and attendance among the elderly remains very low, then more courses should be offered which are of interest to that part of the population. Peterson (1978) asserts that the major reason for lack of participation by older persons in continuing education activities is program design, and both McClusky (1974) and Goodrow (1975) claim that enrollment rates would increase if, among other suggestions, adult educators would provide experiences concerning the interests of older participants. Other suggestions are: those who are providing programs for the elderly should be guided by the felt needs and expressed interests of the older people themselves, rather than by "expert" opinion (Graney & Hayes, 1976); universities make the

mistake of planning for seniors rather than responding to the seniors' own planning, and need to work with seniors in determining delivery method and content (Gifford, 1983); programming could be enhanced if gerontologists, continuing educators, and older people would collaborate (Waskel, 1982); rates of participation would increase by the development of curricula designed to meet the learning styles and interests of the target population of elderly (Dellmann-Jenkins, Papalia-Finlay, & Hennon, 1985). If we wish to attract more senior adults to our education programs, we must offer them courses which are of interest to them, and we must find out from them where their interests lie.

Lack of information is also a hindering factor. In a California study of postsecondary education alternatives for adults, the authors concluded that the most critical need was information on existing programs (Hefferlin, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1975). The unmet need for information is especially great among disadvantaged would-be learners, such as those with low educational attainment (Cross, 1980). This would include a high percentage of the senior population who left school at an early age (Peterson, 1983). Therefore, it is imperative to inform the older population of the various programs available. McClusky (1974) indicates that it is necessary to secure from older people their very own perceptions of their educational needs and the best way to meet these needs, and also to acquaint them with existing and prospective programs.

The purpose of this study was to examine the idea of offering the Elderhostel program to senior residents of the same area where the host institution is located. Perhaps such a program would be of interest to those for whom travel is a barrier, because they are either unwilling or unable to travel great distances to participate in an Elderhostel program.

Another question this research is concerned with is that of the older population's preference with regard to course content. This has been mentioned as another important factor determining enrollment.

Also, this study is concerned with the problem of lack of information about programs. By providing information about the Elderhostel program to local senior residents, many of whom were not familiar with the program, and by indicating the possibility of a future program which would include the enrollment of local residents such as themselves, it was hoped to encourage participation.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Questions

The following research questions have been considered:

- (1) Does this idea - making an Elderhostel program available to residents of the same area where it is held - in any way contradict or conflict with the Elderhostel philosophy?
- (2) Is there an interest among local senior residents of the Halifax area in participating in an Elderhostel program in this area?
- (3) If there does exist such an interest, how great is it?
- (4) Why or why not would such a program be appealing to local senior residents?
- (5) What are the priorities and preferences of the respondents regarding courses and activities offered, attendance, accomodations, and scheduling of courses?
- (6) Is cost a barrier? Would there be an interest in taking advantage of a "hostelship", to help with the cost of attending Elderhostel?
- (7) From the university's perspective, would it be financially feasible to "reserve" a certain number of positions in an Elderhostel program for local residents?

The answers to these questions are determined by the literature

reviewed (question #1), from the results and responses to the questionnaire provided (questions #2, 3, 4, 5, & 6), and from the information offered by the people involved with the organization of Elderhostel programs (questions #1 & 7).

2.2 Subjects

The subjects involved in this study were 87 senior citizens in the Halifax area who were enrolled at Mount Saint Vincent University or Saint Mary's University (1987-88), had attended Summer for Seniors or Elderhostel at Saint Mary's University, or were members of Spencer House Senior Citizens Centre.

2.3 Instrument

A questionnaire (Appendix I) was designed, consisting of questions pertinent to this study. The design of the questionnaire was to determine the respondents' familiarity with Elderhostel programs, to examine their interest in attending a local Elderhostel program, to obtain their opinions on aspects of Elderhostel, such as cost, and to gather their suggestions and ideas on program offerings and organization. Also, the last three questions were concerned with the respondents' educational backgrounds, ages, and sex.

2.4 Procedure

Through the co-operation of the Continuing Education Department

at Saint Mary's University and the Centre for Continuing Education at Mount Saint Vincent University, 187 copies of the questionnaire were mailed to senior citizens in the Halifax area who were enrolled at either university (1987-1988), or who had previously attended the Summer for Seniors program or Elderhostel program at Saint Mary's University. Also, 30 copies of the questionnaire were left at Spencer House Senior Citizens Center in Halifax. A total of 217 questionnaires were distributed. Accompanying each questionnaire was a letter explaining the purpose of this study, information about Elderhostel, and a stamped, addressed envelope for the return of the questionnaire.

2.5 Correspondence

To gain the university's perception of the feasibility of including the enrollment of local residents in an Elderhostel program, it was necessary to contact those involved with the organization of such programs. Correspondence was conducted with Linda MacDonald, Assistant Director of Continuing Education at Saint Mary's University, and Dr. Mairi Macdonald, Director of the Centre for Continuing Education at Mount Saint Vincent University.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of the questionnaire and answers to the research questions (i.e. conclusions) follow. These conclusions will be based upon the findings of the study, which include the results of the questionnaire, information from the literature reviewed, and comments from individuals involved with the organization of Elderhostel programs in Halifax.

3.1 Return Rate

The return rate from each group was: Saint Mary's University - 47 of the 137 questionnaires (34.3%); Mount Saint Vincent University - 26 of the 50 questionnaires (52%); Spencer House Senior Citizens Centre - 14 of the 30 questionnaires (47%). Of the 217 questionnaires distributed, 87 were returned - an overall return rate of 40%

Bova (1981) reported a return rate of 75% from a survey of Elderhostel participants at the University of New Mexico and the College of Santa Fe. Romaniuk and Romaniuk (1982) reported a return rate of 82% from a state wide survey of Elderhostelers in Virginia. Rice (1986) reported a return rate of 89.2% from a survey of Elderhostel participants in Atlantic Canada. The high return rate in each of the surveys conducted by Bova, Romaniuk and Romaniuk, and Rice, could be attributed to the

fact that the subjects were involved in Elderhostel programs at the time the questionnaires were presented to them, and were therefore motivated to complete and return the questionnaires. Cross, Valley, and associates (1976) reported a return rate of 67% for a study based on a survey conducted by a commercial survey organization. McCarthy, Shapiro, and Perreault (1986) report that the response rate for consumer surveys is usually about 25%.

3.2 Demographic Data for Prospective Elderhostel Participants

Information on educational backgrounds, ages, and sex of the respondents who expressed an interest in attending Elderhostel at a local university was obtained through their replies to questions # 13, 14, and 15 of the questionnaire.

Question #13

Briefly explain your educational background - grade school, high school, college, university, technical or other specialized training (specify).

All of the 69 respondents who expressed an interest answered this question. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Educational Background

Level of Education	N	%
Grade school	1	1.4
High school	9	13.0
College or University	32	46.4
Technical/specialized training	27	39.1

The majority of the respondents (85.5%) had some form of higher education - college or university (46.4%); technical or specialized training (39.1%). Studies by Devereaux (1985), Rice (1986), Peterson (1981), Cross (1980), Tough (1979), and Knox (1979) indicate that those who have some level of higher education tend to participate in education in later years.

Question #14

Please indicate your age category.

Of the 69 respondents who expressed an interest, 67 answered this question. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Age

Age Category (years)	N	%
55-60	2	2.9
61-65	25	37.3
66-70	24	35.8
71-75	7	10.4
75+	9	13.4

The majority of the respondents who answered this question (73.1%) were between the ages of 66 and 70 : 61-65 years of age (37.3%); 66-70 years of age (35.8%). This finding is in agreement with Kidd's (1973) conclusion that older education participants are under the age of 75, and with Rice's (1986) survey which shows the typical Elderhosteler in Atlantic Canada to be between the ages of 65-69.

Question #15

Please indicate either: MALE _____ or FEMALE _____

All of the 69 respondents who expressed an interest answered this question. The majority of the respondents were female - 58 of the 69 respondents, or 84%. This finding is in agreement

with studies by Rice (1986), Devereaux (1985), and Cross (1980) which concluded that older women are more likely to enroll in educational programs than are older men.

3.3 Familiarity and Previous Experience with Elderhostel

The respondents' replies to questions #1, 1(a), and 1(b) of the questionnaire provided information as to their familiarity and previous experience with Elderhostel programs.

Question #1

Have you ever heard of ELDERHOSTEL programs before?

Of the 87 replies, 75 (86%) answered "YES" and 12 (14%) answered "NO".

Question #1 (a)

If yes, have you ever participated in the ELDERHOSTEL program?

Of the 87 replies, 12 (14%) answered "YES" and 75 (86%) answered "NO".

Question #1(b)

If yes, please tell where and when.

Of the 12 respondents who had previously attended Elderhostel, 11 indicated where and when. All but one had attended more than one Elderhostel program. The locations and years are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Previous Elderhostel Experience

Location	Year	N	%
Saint Mary's University	1985	5	45.4
Holland College	1987	3	27.2
Saint Mary's University	1986	2	18.2
Saint Mary's University	1984	2	18.2
Normaway Inn (Cape Breton)	1984	2	18.2
Bay Saint George College	1986	2	18.2
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College	1986	2	18.2
University of Victoria	1987	2	18.2
Dalhousie University	1983	1	9.1
Acadia University	1983	1	9.1
University of Prince Edward Island	1984	1	9.1
Nova Scotia Teachers College	1984	1	9.1
Nova Scotia Teachers College	1985	1	9.1
Carleton University	1985	1	9.1
University of New Brunswick	1984	1	9.1

3.4 Research Question #1

Does this idea - making an Elderhostel program available to residents of the same area where it is held - in any way contradict or conflict with the Elderhostel philosophy?

There are no indications that offering an Elderhostel program to local residents would contradict or conflict with the philosophy of Elderhostel. Lawson (1975) emphasizes that, in general, a program is justified by reference to the needs of the individual or the community which the program is meant to serve. Therefore, if there is a need, a genuine interest among residents of a certain area in attending an Elderhostel program in that area, then their needs should be served. Cross (1982) suggests flexibility to those working with elderly learners, which includes flexibility in program design. Greenberg (1980) states that the wide diversity of the learners' motivations and backgrounds require flexible approaches to how, when, where, and with whom learning takes place. Kaplan (1981) states that Elderhostel will modify itself to adjust to new situations and adopt a stance of flexibility. Therefore, allowing local senior residents to enroll in an Elderhostel program would be part of this modification, and an example of Elderhostel's stance of flexibility.

3.5 Research Questions #2 & 3

Is there an interest among the senior residents of the Halifax

area in participating in an Elderhostel program in this area?

If there does exist such an interest, how great is it?

The answers to both research questions can be found in the results of the questionnaire, question #2.

Question # 2

If you had the opportunity to participate in the ELDERHOSTEL program at a local university, and take the course(s) you preferred, would you do so?

Of the 87 replies, 69 (79.3%) answered "YES" and 18 (20.7%) answered "NO". A majority of the respondents indicated an interest in attending an Elderhostel program at a local university, if they could take the courses in which they were interested.

3.6 Research Question #4

Why or why not would such a program be appealing to local senior residents?

The answer to this research question can be found in the results of the questionnaire, questions 2(a) & (b).

Question #2(a)

If yes, what would be your main reason(s) for attending? (type of course(s), meeting other people from different parts of Canada and the U.S.A., enjoying the university "atmosphere", etc.)

Replies from the 69 respondents who indicated that they would be interested in participating in the Elderhostel program at a local university were considered. Many gave more than one reason. The reasons given are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Reasons For Attending

Reason Given	N	%
Courses offered	33	47.8
Meeting people	32	46.4
Broadening horizons	16	23.2
University atmosphere	9	13
General interest	4	5.8
Social aspect	2	2.9
Exposure to other cultures	2	2.9
Relaxation	1	1.4
Pleasure	1	1.4

The main reasons for attending were stated as course content (47.8%) and meeting people (46.4%). Previous studies have shown similar results in determining motivational factors which affect participation in educational programs by senior adults: Boshier and Riddell (1978) cited cognitive interest and social contact as strong motivators; Peterson (1981) found that the most important reason for participation was the need for or interest in the content of the lecture series; Bova (1981) stated cognitive interest; Romaniuk and Romaniuk (1982) rated factors relating to learning content (learn something new, course content) and meeting new people as the highest motives to attend; Cross (1984) cited subject matter; Rice (1986) mentioned learning content and meeting new people as among the highest motivators for participation in Elderhostel in Atlantic Canada.

Question #2(b)

If no, please tell why you would not attend.

Replies from the 18 respondents who indicated that they would not be interested in participating in the Elderhostel program at a local university were considered. One person gave more than one reason. Their reasons for not attending are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Reasons For Not Attending

Reason Given	N	%
Too many committments already	6	33.3
Currently studying	5	27.8
Prefer Elderhostel away from Halifax	3	16.7
Not interested in taking courses	2	11.1
Already enrolled in the 60+ program	1	5.6
Do not want to take courses with seniors	1	5.6

The two main reasons which were given for not wanting to participate in an Elderhostel program locally were already having too many committments (33.3%) , and currently studying (27.8%). Therefore, for 61.1% of the respondents who were not interested in attending Elderhostel locally, lack of time was the determining factor.

3.7 Research Question #5

What are the priorities and preferences of the respondents regarding courses and activiies offered, attendance, accomoda-, tions, and scheduling of courses?

The answer to this research question can be found in the

results of the questionnaire, questions #3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9.

Question #3

Please indicate any courses you would be interested in taking, such as local history, art, computers, etc.

Replies from the 69 respondents who indicated that they were interested in participating in the Elderhostel program at a local university were considered. Each respondent indicated more than one course. The results of their course preferences are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Course Preference

Course	N	%
Local History	40	57.9
Art/Art History	19	27.5
Computers	18	26.0
Literature	12	17.4
Geology	7	10.1
Music/Music History	5	7.2
Political Science	5	7.2
Drama/Theatre	5	7.2
Folk Lore	5	7.2

Course	N	t
Religion/Bible Studies	4	5.8
Psychology	4	5.8
Local Arts & Crafts	4	5.8
English	3	4.3
Creative Writing	3	4.3
Geology	3	4.3
Astronomy	3	4.3
Nature/Biology	3	4.3
Sociology	3	4.3
Economics	3	4.3
Archeology	3	4.3
Public Speaking	3	4.3
Geography	2	2.9
Current Events	2	2.9
Photography	2	2.9
Architecture	2	2.9
French	2	2.9
Local Culture	2	2.9
Humanities	1	1.4
Handling Investments	1	1.4
Aesthetics	1	1.4
Folk Music/Dancing	1	1.4
Purpose of Life	1	1.4
Gerontology	1	1.4
Word Processing	1	1.4

Course	N	%
Irish History	1	1.4
Water Colour	1	1.4
Tole Painting	1	1.4
Managing Change	1	1.4
Nuclear Energy	1	1.4
Local Birds	1	1.4
Environmental Studies	1	1.4
Travel	1	1.4
Tai Chi	1	1.4
UFO'S	1	1.4
Governmental Procedure	1	1.4
World War II	1	1.4

Question #4

If you were to participate, would you attend :

(a) alone (b) with a spouse (c) with a friend

Several of the 69 respondents indicated more than one answer.
The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Attendance

Choice	N	%
Alone	49	71%
With a Spouse	11	16%
With a Friend	18	26%

Question #5

Please indicate the type of accomodations you would prefer:

- (a) university campus (b) motel
(c) live at home and travel to the university daily

Of the 69 repondents, 2 wrote "no preference" to question #5.
The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Preferred Accomodations

Accomodations	N	%
Campus	19	28
Motel	0	0

Accomodations	N	%
Live at home & travel to university	46	70
No preference	2	2

Question #6

If you were to attend alone, and stay either on campus or at a motel, would you like to be matched to another hosteler?

Of the 69 respondents, 47 gave a reply to this question. The results were : 26 (55% of the 47) answered "YES", and 21 (45% of the 47) indicated "NO".

Question #7

What time of the day would you prefer for instruction of class(es)?

(a) morning _____ (b) afternoon _____ (c) evening _____
 (d) no preference _____

Several of the 69 respondents gave more than one answer. The results are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Preferred Time of Day for Instruction

Time of Day	N	%
Morning	48	70.0
Afternoon	22	31.9
Evening	5	7.2
No preference	10	14.5

Question #8

As part of the program, would field trips (historic sites, museums, etc.) be of interest to you?

Of the 69 respondents, 63 (91%) answered "YES", and 6 (9%) answered "NO".

Question #9

What other activities could you suggest?

The 42 respondents who answered this question suggested a wide variety of activities, often providing more than one suggestion. The results are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Suggested Activities

Activity	N	%
Light exercise (walks/aerobics)	6	14.3
Musical evening/concert	5	11.9
Boat trips	4	9.5
Live theatre	3	7.1
Walking tours	2	4.7
Dinner theatre/party	2	4.7
Picnics	2	4.7
Folk lore	2	4.7
Golf	2	4.7
Square dancing	2	4.7
Nature events	2	4.7
Tours of historic sites/buildings	2	4.7
Tour of the naval base	2	4.7
Art galleries	1	2.3
Libraries	1	2.3
Talent show	1	2.3
Fresh water sport fishing	1	2.3
Celtic music	1	2.3
National Film Board movies	1	2.3
Trip to Fundy (whale watching)	1	2.3
Shopping tour (Historic Properties)	1	2.3

Activity	N	%
Scrabble	1	2.3
Bridge	1	2.3
Chess	1	2.3
Darts	1	2.3
Shuffleboard	1	2.3
Pool	1	2.3
Snooker	1	2.3
Badminton	1	2.3
Sharing past Elderhostel experiences	1	2.3
Visit to McNab's Island	1	2.3
The Tatoo	1	2.3

Regarding the courses and activities to be offered, the respondents indicated a wide variety, as is summarized in Tables 5 and 9 and in the reply to question #8 (field trips) of the questionnaire. Their main interests concerning course content were in the areas of the liberal arts and sciences - local history (57.9%); art/art history (27.5%); computers (26%). This is in agreement with a study by Graney and Hays (1976), in which senior participants showed a high interest in subjects pertaining to the liberal arts and sciences (42%). Gold (1982) found that many older adults enrolled in arts and humanities. Rice's (1986) study confirmed a high interest in the humanities (69.3%) and sciences (35.3%) among Elderhostel participants in

Atlantic Canada. Therefore, with regard to course preferences, the respondents in this study did not differ from those of previous studies.

A large majority of the respondents (91%) indicated that field trips were important. Other activities which rated highly were light exercise, such as walks and aerobics, musical evenings/concerts, and live theatre (Table 9). One of the respondents simply replied, "Please, no sing-song!" Since it was not suggested even once as an additional activity, one could assume that a sing-song should not be included.

Kingston (1982) states that senior citizens are a diverse group and implies that their educational interests reflect this diversity. The results of this study certainly comply with Kingston's views. The respondents have suggested such a wide range of topics and activities, from archeology to whale watching, which demonstrates that their educational interests are as diverse as those of any other group.

With regard to the scheduling of courses, the majority of the respondents (70%) indicated a preference for morning classes, while less than one third (31.9%) chose the afternoon (Table 8).

The majority of the respondents (71%) indicated that they would attend alone (Table 6). This is in contrast to previous studies (Papalia- Finlay et al, 1981 ; Rice, 1986) which indicated

answered, thought the cost was too much.

Question #11

Would you be willing to pay a little extra for special facilities, such as a private rather than a shared bath, or, if you were attending alone, a private room, rather than a shared room?

Of the 69 respondents, 58 answered this question. The results are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Willing to Pay Extra for Special Facilities

Answer	N	%
Yes	31	53.4
No	11	19.0
Maybe	16	27.6

The majority of the respondents (31 out of 58, or 53.4%) indicated that they would be willing to pay extra for special facilities, and 27.6% replied that they might be willing to do so. This indicates that cost is not a barrier. Rice's (1986) study showed a preference for a \$150-\$200 budget range for

tuition, the 1985 Elderhostel tuition fee being \$200. However, 26% of the respondents to Rice's study indicated that they would be willing to pay more.

Question #12

Would you be interested in a "hostelship" to cover the cost of attending such a program?

All of the 69 respondents answered this question. The results are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11

Interest in Hostelship

Answer	N	%
Yes	24	35
No	37	54
Maybe	8	11

The majority of the respondents (54%) indicated that they would not be interested in applying for financial assistance through a "hostelship", and slightly over one third (35%) indicated that they would be interested (Table 11). Of that 35%, 4 people (16.6% of those interested) had previously indicated that the

cost was too high. The fact that the majority of the respondents in this study were not interested in financial assistance to attend Elderhostel is not surprising, when one considers the results of previous research regarding cost as a barrier. Rice (1986), Cross (1982), and Daniel, Templin, and Shearon (1977) found that cost was not a factor which affected participation in education among the elderly.

The response of the subjects in this study regarding a "hostelship" to help with the cost of attending an Elderhostel program definitely reflects the findings of previous studies. The majority of the elderly students feel inclined to pay their own way, rather than seek financial assistance.

Cross (1980 & 1982) says that young people are more likely than old people to mention cost as a problem. She attributes this to the fact that older people grew up in times when education did not receive the public support it does to . Therefore, she concludes, older people may expect to pay for education (a "privilege"), whereas younger people may question having to pay for something which they consider to be their "right".

Wolf (1985) states that the issue of no-fee status for the elderly in the classroom often makes older learners feel uncomfortable. They feel as though they are not contributing equally. She says that many older people, especially men, feel reluctant about participating in a classroom when they have

not paid.

3.9 Research Question #7

From the university's perspective, would it be financially feasible to "reserve" a certain number of positions in an Elderhostel program for local residents?

To answer this question, the opinions of individuals involved with the organization of Elderhostel programs in the Halifax area were needed. Correspondence from Linda MacDonald, Assistant Director of Continuing Education at Saint Mary's University, and Dr. Mairi Macdonald, Director of the Centre for Continuing Education at Mount St. Vincent University, indicated interest and enthusiasm for an Elderhostel program involving local participants. Ms. MacDonald indicated that Saint Mary's University would be delighted to have any of the 69 participants who expressed an interest in participating locally, come to Saint Mary's. Therefore, it appears that "reserving" space for local residents in an Elderhostel program would be financially feasible.

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

The author of this study recommends an Elderhostel program which includes the enrollment of local senior residents in the Halifax area. Results of this study have shown an interest among the older population in such a program. Also, those who have been involved with the organization of Elderhostel programs at both Saint Mary's University and Mount St. Vincent University have expressed their interest in this idea.

With regard to continuing education and older people, Cross (1980) states that the most critical need is information about existing programs. This study reached 217 residents, a small segment of the senior population in the Halifax area. Organizers of the Elderhostel program in Halifax should make an effort to contact as many senior citizens as possible, through seniors' groups, the media, etc. Information should be provided about an Elderhostel program which includes local residents. The seniors must be made aware that their own ideas and suggestions are needed and welcomed, and that program design will be according to their preferences, not what the "experts" think the seniors want.

Course content is extremely important. Peterson (1983) says that older people's educational needs (what the "experts" think

they should have) and their actual wants (preferences or desires) are often substantially different. West and Ernst (1981) state that older adults respond meaningfully to programs designed to meet their needs, rather than the educators' preconceptions. The results of their study showed successful achievement of the goals of the learning project and an expanded level of psychosocial functioning of the older adult.

Therefore, organizers of programs must provide the courses, activities, and facilities which are highest on the senior students' lists of priorities. The respondents in the Halifax area have indicated their preference for courses in the liberal arts and sciences, field trips, and morning instruction. These preferences should be met.

Pitman (1984) states that as educational institutions lose the number of adolescents and 20 year olds, more and more personnel and facilities must be devoted to the mature and retired. The Halifax area has the three necessary factors - qualified personnel, excellent institutions, and a mature and retired population interested in pursuing education. An Elderhostel program which includes local residents is both needed and wanted.

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

(1) Have you ever heard of ELDERHOSTEL programs before?

YES ----- NO -----

(a) If yes, have you ever participated in the ELDERHOSTEL program? YES ----- NO -----

(b) If yes, please tell where and when.

(2) If you had the opportunity to participate in the ELDERHOSTEL program at a local university, and take the course(s), you preferred, would you do so?

YES ----- NO -----

(a) If yes, what would be your main reason(s) for attending?
(type of course(s), meeting other people from other parts of Canada and the U.S.A., enjoying the university "atmosphere", etc.)

(b) If no, please tell why you would not attend.

(3) Please indicate any courses you would be interested in taking, such as local history, art, computers, etc.

(4) If you were to participate, would you attend:

(a) alone _____ (b) with a spouse _____

(c) with a friend _____

(5) Please indicate the type of accommodations you would prefer:

(a) University Campus _____ (b) Motel _____

(c) Live at home and travel to the university daily _____

(6) If you were to attend alone, and stay either on campus or at a motel, would you like to be matched to another hosteler? YES _____ NO _____

(7) What time of the day would you prefer for the instruction of classes?

(a) morning _____ (c) evening _____

(b) afternoon _____ (d) no preference _____

(8) As part of the program, would field trips (historic sites, museums, etc.) be of interest to you?

YES _____ NO _____

(9) What other activities could you suggest?

(10) The cost for one week of instruction, including accomodations, meals, and some extra curricular activities is \$200 - \$300 per person. Do you feel that this amount is:
(a) too much _____ (b) reasonable _____

(11) Would you be willing to pay a little extra for special facilities, such as a private rather than a shared bath, or, if you were attending alone, a private room, rather than shared accomodations?

YES _____ NO _____ MAYBE _____

(12) Would you be interested in a "hostelship" (scholarship) to cover the cost of attending such a program?

YES _____ NO _____

(13) Briefly explain your educational background - grade school, high school, college, university, technical or other specialized training.

(14) Please indicate your age category:

55 - 60 _____ 61 - 65 _____ 66 - 70 _____
71 - 75 _____ over 75 _____

(15) Please indicate either: MALE _____ or FEMALE _____

APPENDIX II

4 Tobin Drive
Dartmouth, N.S.
B2W 1W8
November 9, 1987

Dear Sir or Madame,

As a graduate student interested in the ELDERHOSTEL program, I am grateful to the universities in the Halifax - Dartmouth area for their assistance and support of my research. For several years, our local universities have been involved with ELDERHOSTEL, and their work and organization have been admirable. They have shown both a keen interest in the mature student, and a genuine enthusiasm towards the ELDERHOSTEL program.

The purpose of my research is to investigate the idea of making the ELDERHOSTEL program in a certain area available to the local residents of that area. That is, would people living in the Halifax - Dartmouth area be interested in attending ELDERHOSTEL at one of the local universities? If so, what suggestions could be offered with regard to courses, time of instruction, other activities, etc. ?

Therefore, I would greatly appreciate your assistance. Simply complete the two-page questionnaire and return it, as soon as possible, in the pre-stamped, addressed envelope provided. The questions are not intended to be personal. Do not write your name and address on the questionnaire or envelope, unless you wish further information about ELDERHOSTEL, or you would like to contribute more suggestions.

I look forward to receiving your comments and ideas - they will indeed be most helpful. Thank you for your time and co-operation.

Yours truly,

Donna S. Graham

Donna S. Graham

P.S. If you have already completed this questionnaire through Spencer House Senior Centre, thank you. I would therefore ask you to please pass it along to a friend.

Thank you,

D.G.

D.G.

ELDERHOSTEL is an educational program for older adults who want to continue to expand their horizons and to develop new interests and enthusiasms. We're for elder citizens on the move, not just in terms of travel, but in terms of intellectual activity as well. Our commitment is to the belief that retirement does not represent an end to significant activity for older adults but a new beginning filled with opportunities and challenges.

With ELDERHOSTEL, participants enjoy inexpensive, short-term academic programs at educational institutions around the world. ELDERHOSTEL students live on the campus of their host institution while attending a program and have access to the cultural and recreational facilities and resources available there.

ELDERHOSTEL has its origins in the youth hostels of Europe and the folk schools of Scandinavia. ELDERHOSTEL founder Marty Knowlton, a well-known social activist and educator, was impressed by the way in which the availability of a network of modest accommodations encouraged and nurtured an adventuresome hosting spirit in European youth. He also observed the very positive impact a *residential* setting had on adult education programs offered by the folk high schools. In 1975 a new movement in American adult education was launched with the offering of the first ELDERHOSTEL programs.

We've grown enormously since those early years. In 1986 over 112,000 hostellers enrolled in our programs in all 50 states, all 10 Canadian provinces and over 35 countries overseas. Over 1,000 different colleges, universities and other educational institutions proudly offer their best programs to our eager and challenging students.

The Hosting Tradition—What You Can Expect

Most ELDERHOSTEL programs are one week in length. They begin on a Sunday afternoon and end the next Saturday morning. During your week you will be offered three courses which meet for 1-1½ hours each weekday. While you are only required to attend one course, they are scheduled so that you may take all three.

You will live simply but comfortably in the dormitories of our host institutions. Usually two twin beds per room.

Since the ELDERHOSTEL philosophy is consistent with traditional hosting (simple accommodations at modest cost), we want to emphasize that dormitories are not like hotels and other commercial facilities. You may express a single room preference when registering (for which there may be a modest additional charge), but you must be willing to share a room in the event that no single accommodations are available. Bathroom facilities are generally shared. Similarly, while Elderhostellers are usually favorably impressed by the generally high quality of institutional food, it is intended to be wholesome and nutritious but not fancy or up to gourmet standards.

We think you'll enjoy our programs if you enter them with a positive and adventuresome attitude. Although ELDERHOSTEL is a unique concept and all participating institutions subscribe to a common format and approach, each program is distinctive in its own way. The mix of courses, facilities and people in each program will be unique. Successful hostellers seek out the positive elements of each hosting experience and enjoy the adventures each host has to offer.

Eligibility

ELDERHOSTEL is a program specifically created for older adults. We welcome individuals 60 years of age or older, together with their spouse(s). A companion 50 years old or older may accompany a participant who is at least 60 years of age.

Courses Offered

ELDERHOSTEL courses are in the liberal arts and sciences. Each institution selects the courses it wishes to offer. The result is an intellectual smorgasbord of impressive proportions. We're confident you will be able to find a program with courses to your liking.

Our courses are not for credit and there are no exams, grades or, except for Intensive Studies, required homework. We presuppose no particular previous knowledge or study. We've enrolled hostellers who have had Ph.D.'s and others who have never graduated from high school. A lifetime of experience and an inquiring mind are all you'll need to enjoy the ELDERHOSTEL program of your choice.

Program Cost

The cost of ELDERHOSTEL is intentionally held to a modest level. The program charge is listed after the campus or program description. The typical charge for a six-night program in the United States is \$215 and in Canada \$240. Institutions in Alaska and Hawaii may charge somewhat more. Variations in program charges within the United States and Canada reflect real differences in regional and institutional costs. Hostellers should not assume that variations in the program charge reflect specific differences in the quality of programs. Every ELDERHOSTEL program is designed to be the very best an institution can offer within the constraints of the ELDERHOSTEL philosophy and budget.

The program cost is an all-inclusive fee which, in a typical program includes:

Registration costs

Six nights accommodations

All meals—from the Sunday evening meal through Saturday breakfast

Five days of classes

A variety of extra-curricular activities

Hostelships

ELDERHOSTEL fees, which are kept as low as possible, may still be beyond the means of many older adults. Therefore, a limited amount of assistance is available to help those people who cannot afford even the modest cost of attending ELDERHOSTEL. These "hostelships" (scholarships) are not intended as travel grants. They are normally used "close to home", and are valid only for programs within the continental United States or Canada. To receive hostelship information and application forms, please write to

ELDERHOSTEL
Attn: Hostelships
Corbett House
29 Prince Arthur Avenue
Toronto, Canada
M5R 1B2

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