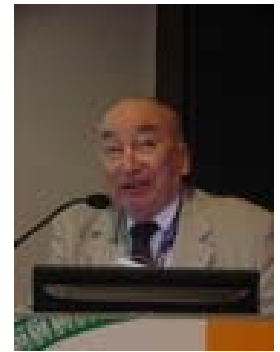




World Day...A Great Success Thanks to so Many!

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) took place at the Palais des Congrès, Paris on July 5th, 2009. Described by one participant as a "dazzling event" the program was eclectic and thought-provoking as it presented current research, reports from around the world and stories of elder abuse awareness strategies from those attending the day long session. Over 140 people representing – 31 countries including, Israel, South Africa, India, Finland, Sweden, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Japan, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Brazil, The Philippines, Austria, Belgium, Mexico, Australia, Turkey, and the United States joined the celebration. The road to Paris had some bumps along the way but the culmination of good will, encouragement and commitment resulted in quite a lovely day. Our hosts were Mme. Francoise Busby, Executive Director, Professor Robert Moulais, President, and Eric Rocca, Communication Officer, ALMA FRANCE; they provided a delicious lunch and made all the arrangements for World Day. We are so grateful for their gracious hospitality and warm welcome to Paris. We acknowledge IAGG for arranging security, venue and technology assistance. They were just wonderful.



Mme. Francoise Busby Prof. Robert Moulais

The E-Blast

We wish to express our great appreciation to Sharon Merriman-Nai, of the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), USA and Dr. Kathleen Quinn, of the National Adult Protective Service Association (NAPSA) for so generously promoting the E-Blast through their websites. The E-Blast was sent to 300 email addresses in regions including, North America, South America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. There were about 30 responses, mostly from North America, but also as far away as Ghana and South Africa, many expressing the sentiment "thank you for keeping us in the picture," this was very heart warming. Indeed, there was a sense of connection that has not been seen in past World Days. The E-Blast reports are available on the WEAAD website (<http://sites.google.com/a/nicenet.ca/weaad2009/Home>).

The main challenges are not surprising;

- The E-Blast took place on a Sunday. This was not our choice but in order to piggy-back onto IAGG which opened Sunday night, we had no option.
- The time difference made it difficult for some to participate. It would probably be more successful within one time zone.
- There were some problems with the Internet connection at the Palais des Congrès.
- The weaad@nicenet.ca had exceeded its limit.

Despite these issues, it was truly a memorable journey from start to finish. There was wonderful support and enthusiasm for the concept, seen especially from those who wrote and described their sense of inclusion in World Day which is what we had hoped for.

"Elder Abuse Awareness - Around the World in 60 Minutes"

The video was launched in Paris to a very positive reception. Sally Heldrich only received the final footage three days before Paris so it was a herculean effort to finish and get it delivered. Enormous appreciation goes to Westat and Homemakers Inc. for making this possible. To all the people who sent clips...a huge thank you! Without you, there would not have been a video! The video needs to be gussied up a bit and some content added pre-general release but it will be available in August and it will be free!

The WEAAD Website

A new and exciting website was created specifically for World Day that drew 400 visitors in a three week period. The site is both functional and user friendly, providing international participants with an array of information including the most up to date programs, speakers' biographies, presentation slides, WEAAD reports from around the world and much more. The website has generated so much attention that the IFA has cited WEAAD in their E-Newsletter in promoting World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and provided a resource link on their website. We thank the National Institute for the Care of the Elderly (NICE), its Director, Dr. Lynn McDonald and its Manager, Dr. Anthony Lombardo, for making this possible. We also thank Yongjie Yon for developing the website and are pleased to hear that he will be lending his expertise to the INPEA website.

Conclusion

WEAAD Paris, our fourth celebration brought together many people, whether interactively or in person. We are growing by leaps and bounds as WEAAD spreads to even more countries. We are all humbled by the impact of INPEA on global conscientiousness. It still is an "impossible dream" but each year we move closer. We want to acknowledge all those who contributed to the success of this year. We will take the lessons learned, build on them as we plan for Africa and our 5th Anniversary.

Elizabeth Podnieks,
Founder and Chair, WEAAD

Please send us your comments:
elizabeth.podnieks@utoronto.ca



Palais des Congrès de Paris, France