

## THE POWER OF POSITIVE AGING

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Spring is a beautiful time of year – especially in Virginia. My family and I relocated to Virginia in the Fall of 1993 and discovered what would become our favorite pastime - driving to the mountains to take our boys fishing. I was struck by the vibrant orange, golden and reds of the trees surrounding the lakes like something I had never before experienced. In fact, I thought it couldn't get more beautiful – and then, 6 months later, Spring came bursting onto the scene with its Redbuds, pink and white Dogwoods and Cherry Blossoms securing its place as #1 favorite time of the year for me.

And, since joining Aging Together almost 5 years ago, this beautiful time of year has become even more special for me. In preparation for the 5 Over 50 event held each May I get to join the Culpeper Media Network film crew to interview the honorees from each county. This often involves driving through the rural countryside to meet some very extraordinary people. I am always moved to hear how selfless and giving these extraordinary people are, often spending most of their days in service to others. They don't do it for recognition, they do it because they believe that is "just what one does as a citizen of a community – you see a need, and you do what you can to help". (an actual quote from one of the honorees)

One of the goals of the event is to help change the way people think about growing old. Often, the word "old" conjures up negative stereotypes such as frail or helpless. The 5 Over 50 event celebrates the many contributions of older adults – including time; resources; financial; and more.

How do you feel about growing old?

For some, it's a scary time filled with change and loneliness.

But it doesn't need to be that way. In fact, it shouldn't. We're social creatures and growing old isn't a solo sport. That's what positive aging is all about.

How we choose to define, view, and accept the changes is crucial to our ability to "age gracefully." Positive aging allows us to weather the expected and unexpected changes we experience.

We're living longer. How will you plan and prepare for the next decades of your life?

People who think positively about getting older often live longer, healthier lives. That is what this issue is all about!

I enjoyed reading this quote from Japan:

*"Japanese conceptions of aging are rooted in Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist philosophical traditions that characterize aging as maturity. Old age is thus understood as a socially valuable part of life, even a time of "spring" or "rebirth" after a busy period of working and raising children" (Karasawa et al., 2011).*

What type of information would you find helpful for successful aging and retirement? Let us know!

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