New Milwaukee Idea initiative designed to make UW–Milwaukee a leading center for studies on aging will be launched at a reception from 10-12 noon on Tuesday, October 11 at University Outreach, 161 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Partners in this important collaborative effort are UWM faculty and a consortium of community professionals who work with older people and will help identify the key research issues most critical to improving the lives of seniors in Southeastern Wisconsin.

The new Age and Community Initiative will broaden understanding of issues in aging and strengthen services to older adults.

New Milwaukee Idea to be launched!
Age and Community Initiative to benefit seniors

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The new Age and Community Initiative grew out of discussions over the last 18 months between university and community leaders who are experienced in working with issues facing today’s seniors, explained James Blackburn, Dean of the UWM School of Social Welfare who heads the initiative.

“As our society ages, there is a real need to develop innovative new ways to look at a variety of issues, whether it is the need to employ older workers or actually identifying and resolving how to make our community a better place for our seniors to live,” he said.

The graying of society is expected to have a major affect on Wisconsin, where just 17% of the population was over 60 in 1999. In contrast, the number of seniors will nearly double to over 26% by 2025, and that change will touch virtually every resident’s life, whether as seniors or the family, friend or caregiver who watches over them.
A boon for the Age and Community initiative was the recent decision by the Helen Bader Foundation to donate $5 million to UWM for an endowed chair in gerontology. The grant is expected to help attract scholars in residence who will produce major new studies on aging.

According to Robin Mayrl, vice-president of the Helen Bader Foundation, “The national, state and local demographics clearly show that the 85 and older population is the fastest growing segment. The aging of our society will create enormous changes and it is imperative that we begin to work together to plan for these changes. The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee in partnership with the local and state aging network is in a perfect position to take the lead on this issue.”

The University recently launched a nationwide search for a top scholar in aging studies to spearhead research on issues that can affect the quality of life for area seniors. In addition, UWM has expanded the number of faculty who do research on a broad spectrum of issues in aging, ranging from transportation, housing and long term care to innovative ways of using the arts to reach the elderly. Efforts are also underway to develop certificate programs in aging studies at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Meanwhile, UWM is working with a variety of community partners to develop internships and service learning opportunities where students can put their classroom experience into practice.

Cathy Young, Chair of the Milwaukee Aging Consortium said her group was definitely ready to take a leadership role in helping shape the services provided to older adults. “Our goals fit perfectly with what has been developed for UWM’s Age and Community Initiative,” she said.

For an invitation to the Age and Community launch, please call The Milwaukee Idea office at 229-6913.

Community members participate in activities at the Milwaukee Christian Center, a Project Shine site.
The Helen Bader Foundation is supporting the Institute with an eight-year, $1.2 million grant. Additional support is coming from the Faye McBeath and the Greater Milwaukee Foundations.

With the goal of strengthening Milwaukee’s nonprofit sector, the Institute is collaborating with a wide range of community partners to offer degree and non-degree academic programs, provide technical assistance to local nonprofits and act as a clearinghouse for nonprofit-related research. The Institute’s academic offerings will draw from UWM’s Schools of Business and Social Welfare as well as from University Outreach. Additional support will be provided by UWM’s Center for Urban Initiatives and Research and its Center for Volunteerism and Student Leadership.

“Nonprofit organizations make Milwaukee a better place to live…” said Daniel Bader, president of the Helen Bader Foundation. “As social trends create new and unique challenges for these organizations, the Institute will help nonprofits serve more people more effectively.”

The Institute emerged from a collaboration which began two years ago between local nonprofit organizations, the Helen Bader, Faye McBeath and Greater Milwaukee Foundations and UWM’s Milwaukee Idea, the University’s initiative to build partnerships with the community. It was spurred by a growing recognition that for Milwaukee’s nonprofits to remain vital, an organized resource for education, knowledge management and technical assistance was critical.

“The nonprofit sector needed a high quality place to learn management skills,” said Sarah Dean, of the McBeath foundation. “Here there is the potential for them to earn a bachelor’s or master’s degree and take advantage of courses in diverse areas, including social work, business, the arts, education, etc. In my 11 years in the business, this is one of the most exciting initiatives I’ve been involved with.”

The goals of the Institute’s educational program are enhanced agency stability, well-prepared managers, improved staff relations, an increased ability to generate new revenue and a clear means of measuring success. In addition, the Institute will help nonprofits stay up-to-date with a website providing research results, job listings, and information on trends and policy. It will also coordinate technical assistance for nonprofits, linking agencies to a variety of resources.

Said Stephen Percy, Chancellor’s Deputy for The Milwaukee Idea: “With this exciting launch of the Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management we have clearly reached a milestone, creating a shared commitment to make our ambitious vision for nonprofit management education a reality.”
Organizations participating in the EPIC partnership and honored with The Milwaukee Idea award are:
Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Office for Schools; City of Milwaukee, Mayor’s Office; Corporation for National Service, Wisconsin Office; Greater Milwaukee Foundation; Marquette University, Institute for the Transformation of Learning; Milwaukee Public Library, Marketing and Technology; Milwaukee Public Schools, Guidance and Career Education, Student Services and Technology; Milwaukee Urban Systemic Initiative; Missouri Synod, Lutheran Schools; Partners Advancing Values in Education; Barbara Goldberg, Planning Consultant and Evaluator; Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County; UWM Center for Urban Initiatives and Research; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction – Wisconsin Educational Opportunities Program; Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Lutheran Schools.

The award committee also cited several partnerships as notable. They are: Art Education Technology Visualization, Department of Visual Art, UWM Peck School of the Arts; Auto Advertising Monitoring Project/Center for Consumer Affairs, UWM University Outreach; Child and Youth Care Learning Center, UWM University Outreach; Global Studies Summer Institute/UWM Center for International Education; Great Decisions/Institute of World Affairs; Marsha Kindall Smith/Music Program, Peck School of the Arts/Milwaukee Public Schools.

Milwaukee Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/UWM Center for Addiction and Behavioral Health Research/Milwaukee Women’s Center; Milwaukee’s Task Force on Family Violence/UWM School of Social Welfare; “A Self Help Guide: Where to go in Milwaukee for Help with a Drug or Alcohol Problem”/Fighting Back, Inc./UWM Center for Addiction and Behavioral Health Research; Health Research/UWM Center for Urban Initiatives and Research; Aurora Partnership in Clinical Nursing Education/UWM School of Nursing; Youth Enterprise Academy and Investment Club Program/Center for Economic Education.