



*We Help.
We Care*

OCCOA

OTSEGO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

120 Grandview Blvd., Gaylord, Michigan 49735

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Eileen Godek
**RESEARCH &
VOLUNTEER
COORDINATOR**

Meeting Will Honor Cultural Diversity!

The Otsego County Commission on Aging (OCCOA) is excited to announce that it will be hosting a two-hour program entitled...

"SPIRITUALITY, WORLD RELIGIONS, AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY," UNIVERSITY CENTER AT GAYLORD • FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2008

OCCOA Director and Aging Services Specialist Dona Wishart noted, "This latest program in the series will feature a guest speaker and panelists who will represent some of the major religions of the world. They will also address the concept and importance of spirituality, as well as its existence within these various religions." She added, "It is my hope that those who attend will be empowered with information that will lead them to a broader understanding, respect, and appreciation for all people."

NATIVE OF INDIA WILL BE THE GUEST SPEAKER!

Wishart shared, "We are fortunate and honored to have Neelam Puri as our guest speaker for this program!" Puri, an immigrant from India, is currently a program manager at the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. Her responsibilities include co-managing a strategic plan aimed at improving services to Michigan's diverse older adult population. She also oversees a grant that provides education to older consumers on public benefits available to them, and works on guardianship issues.

Puri's biographical sketch, as shared with OCCOA, notes, "[Her] travels within India and many countries in Asia and Europe have nurtured her fondness for and interest in the many dimensions of diversity. Her academic pursuits led to studies that would ultimately broaden her understanding of and belief in different aspects of human life in different cultures. Fluent in English, Hindi, and Punjabi, she was educated in both India and the United States. Puri holds a master's degree from Michigan State University, and an undergraduate degree and a PhD in Social Philosophy from India." In addition Puri has also studied Kathak, a type of classical Indian dance that is "a fusion of the aesthetic ideals of both the Hindu and Muslim cultures."

Puri is also talented as a stage and television artist and has used this experience to "inform, educate, and advocate on behalf of minority and underserved populations." "In India, she has participated in plays to raise awareness about India's social issues. In the United States, she has participated in various cultural events and panel discussions on the theme of diversity." Attendees are sure to be drawn to her openness and passion in relating to other people from different backgrounds and cultures.

LIGHTER-FARE, SHORT-TERM EDUCATION IS THE GOAL!

The Educational Breakfast Series has been hosted by the Otsego County Commission on Aging (OCCOA) every other month since 2004. The two-hour programs are targeted toward our county's older adult population (55 and older) and those who care for them, but everyone is welcome to attend! The programs hold great appeal toward those who are interested in lighter-fare, short-term education that they can apply to their own life situations. The series offers participants the flexibility of choosing from a wide variety of topics and attending the ones that appeal to them the most. Each program also includes a delicious continental breakfast!

HOW ARE THE PROGRAMS STRUCTURED?

An OCCOA staff member facilitates each program, which includes a guest speaker and a group of panelists who are knowledgeable about the program topic. During the course of the program, attendees listen to the presentations as they sip their coffee and enjoy their breakfasts. A twenty-minute question-and-answer session is allotted at the end of each program, allowing participants to directly address the speakers and panelists. Educational handouts and reference materials are usually available to take home, and they also have the opportunity to evaluate the program and make suggestions for future topics.

The March 7th program will run from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. in Room #U-111 at the University Center, located at 80 Livingston Blvd. in Gaylord. *Registrations are suggested* and welcomed beforehand by calling 732-1122, but will also be accepted at the door. There is no charge for attendance but a suggested donation of \$5 per person is welcomed!

PLEASE COME AND BRING YOUR SPOUSE, FRIEND, OR NEIGHBOR!



GUEST SPEAKER NEELAM PURI

989.732.1122 • www.OtsegoCountyCOA.org • Advocacy 989.732.9977

Fax: 989-731-2739 • occoa@occoaonline.org • Weekdays 8:00 am to Noon and 12:30 to 4:00 pm

120 GRANDVIEW BLVD. ✧ GAYLORD, MICHIGAN 49735