

# **Harnessing the Gray Tide: Museums and the Coming Waves of Older Adults**

American Association Museums Annual Meeting

May 20, 2003

## *Program Description*

The graying of America will have huge implications for museums. The purpose of this session is to help museums respond to this massive demographic change, which is transforming our nation into a place having more older adults than children and youth for the first time in its history. “Third-agers” will be seeking culture and self-improvement in addition to ways they can incorporate service into their lives. Ranging in age from their 50s to centenarians, they will offer museums a challenging market as well as a resource for social capital. Are you prepared to harness this “tidal wave”?

This session will stimulate thought about new directions as well as explore ways in which museums are serving older adults today. It addresses how museums can extend the ways in which they serve intergenerational social needs while enhancing financial sustainability through targeted programming. In addition to highlighting exemplary museum programs, this session will introduce you to the Experience Corps, a new national program that can serve as a model for museums engaging with their communities.

## *Panelists*

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## *Session Sponsors*

Education Committee, Diversity Coalition, American Assn. for Museum Volunteers,  
Council of American Jewish Museums

### *Suggested Resources*

Freedman, Marc. 1999. "Prime Time: How Baby Boomers Will Revolutionize Retirement and Transform America." New York: Public Affairs; for additional information, see [www.civicventures.org/site/primetime/primetime.html](http://www.civicventures.org/site/primetime/primetime.html).

Museums and the Aging Revolution. 2001. Journal of Museum Education, 26(1): [www.mer-online.org/publications.html](http://www.mer-online.org/publications.html).

Senior Corps, Corporation for National & Community Service: [www.seniorcorps.org/](http://www.seniorcorps.org/).

Arts and Aging National Resource Directory: [www.creativeaging.org/what.html](http://www.creativeaging.org/what.html).

Science Across the Generations: [www.spry.org/new\\_items/NSFtraining.html](http://www.spry.org/new_items/NSFtraining.html).

The Arts and Older Americans: [arts.endow.gov/partner/Accessibility/Monograph/OlderContents.html](http://arts.endow.gov/partner/Accessibility/Monograph/OlderContents.html).