

NCCAP



NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION COUNCIL FOR ACTIVITY PROFESSIONALS

Introducing NCCAP National Exam

By *Debbie Hommel, ACC/MC/EDU, CTRS*

The NCCAP Board, Executive Director and Education Committee are pleased to announce the implementation of the NCCAP National Exam. Years in the making, this test is part of the NCCAP strategic plan and the final step of the eight year MEPAP reengineering project. All new applicants for the Activity Director Certified (ADC) and Activity Consultant Certified (ACC) will need to pass a standardized exam, administered by Comira Testing Company, as part of the certification process.

The NCCAP Education Committee has work tirelessly to ensure the national exam has all the characteristics of a good test. Validity is ensured as the test has been designed to measure the necessary knowledge essential to being an effective activity professional. Reliability has been addressed as all the test questions have been piloted through volunteer applicants over the last year. This has enabled each question to be evaluated for its wording, relevance and understanding. The test is also comprehensive, with questions focusing on each of the 163 competencies defined in the MEPAP curriculum. Each test will consist of 50 questions, each worth two points, either multiple choice or true/false.

Completion of the Modular Education Program for Activity Professionals, 2nd Edition, will prepare the applicant for the exam.

Comira Testing Company is a member of the Association of Test Publishers which is a recognized non-profit organization representing providers of tests related to certification and/or licensing. Comira practices the highest standards, ensuring a credible, reliable and secure testing process. There are

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The test questions will be balanced through nine topic areas including:

- Activity Professional Standards and Practice Settings
- Aging and Professional Approaches
- Documentation Systems
- Program Design, Development and Implementation
- The Art and Science of Management
- The Planning Function of Management
- The Organizing Function of Management
- The Staffing/Directing Function of Management
- The Controlling Function of Management

over 500 Comira testing centers in the US and Canada. In addition to Comira sites, the NCCAP exam will be available at the ACT testing centers which will offer countless more locations for the NCCAP exam to be taken. You can view both testing centers web sites for testing locations near you: www.comiratesting.com/html/candidates/locations.html www.actstudent.org/regist/centers.html

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Process:

- The applicant will apply for NCCAP certification; as they have in the past – and ONLY the ADC and ACC applicants will be directed to do the following steps.
- Once their application has been processed they will be approved to take the exam. NCCAP will notify the applicant through an email. NCCAP will inform COMIRA that the applicant may schedule the exam at will.
- The applicant will be directed to the Comira or ACT website – where they can click on their state and locate the closest location to them to take the exam.
- The applicant will contact the Comira or ACT site to schedule their exam at a time and date convenient to them.
- The applicant will pay Comira directly, as NCCAP will not be making money from the testing as other organizations have done.
- The applicant will take their ID and the permit to take the exam paperwork from NCCAP with them to the testing site.
- The applicant will have 1 (one) hour to complete the proctored exam. They must pass with a 70%.
- The applicant will know their unofficial results at the time they complete their exam.
- Once the applicant has completed the exam with the passing grade, NCCAP will be notified by Comira testing company. NCCAP will officially process the certification within a few weeks time frame. **NN**

Call to Action Report

At the Call to Action meeting on November 4, 2010, Call to Action projects were divided into various tasks; some of the issues that have been tackled include the following:

“Promoting the Activity Profession through Social Media” – Bryan Rife has created a Face Book Page that gives information almost daily, along with links to new programs and web sites; it has become a great resource for sharing ideas and finding out what others are doing for special holidays. If you are not a member yet you should go to the “Official NCCAP” face book page and join. There are many others who have since created Face book pages and share information as well and you will find all of that once you join.

“Create an Elevator Speech” - Nancy Richards and Gloria Hoffner created some really great explanations that sum up what NCCAP is all about. The one that the board felt was the best out of the three was the following:

“iNCCAP, The International Certification Council of Activity Professionals, is an international certifying council for professionals who work in elder care activities. NCCAP sets standards of practice and offers three levels of certification which are recognized by CMS (Center for Medicaid, Medicare Services). iNCCAP pursues liaisons with national health agencies to promote activity design and service delivery. iNCCAP, the International Certification Council for Activity Professionals - leading the way to educate, inspire and advance the Activity Profession.”

It is important to have something that we can say to someone when they ask what iNCCAP is all about. **NN**

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Symposium
May 31- June 2, 2012

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“Develop current contact list of state and local activities associations for publication on iNCCAP Website” - Arlene Tierney-Pierce has collected state association name, website, local/regional groups, education, social media outlets on 29 states. Those have been provided to iNCCAP for publication; there are still 21 states missing, some of which may not have specific associations for activity professionals.

“Develop a list of State Health Departments” – Bonnie Ruggles-Ruechel - A list has been sent to the NCCAP office for the following: Adult Day Care, Assisted Living, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health/Senior Services for Independent Living, and Leading Age; formerly the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA).

“Resources for Activity Professionals” - Peggy Gilchrist has created a list of resources, such as Creative Forecasting, and this list has all been provided to iNCCAP.

“Creating a list of all the facilities in the United States” - this takes numerous hours; so far we have 11 states completed and many more to go.

The Call to Action committees have been working diligently to complete all the tasks since the first call to action, most of which has been completed. The information has definitely helped to move the Activity Profession forward and has provided information to facilities about the importance of hiring qualified personnel and iNCCAP certification, as well as continued education. **NN**



**WHEN DID YOU GET
HERE?**

By Sue Schmidt

Inside a bustling ER ward one August afternoon, a fragile-minded, antique woman hummed an aimless tune.

I slightly pulled the curtain back then as I stepped inside the humming stopped.

Her blue eyes shined.

Her smile was sweet and wide.

“When did you get here?” she asked. Her face brimmed with relief. “I wasn’t sure you’d find me. I’ve been traveling for a week.”

“We’re on our way to Zanesville. I’ve got two young kids in tow. I lost my precious husband, Bob, about two months ago.”

“I think I had some kind of spell, though I don’t feel too bad. My family must be worried.

Will you call my mom and dad?”

With gentle reassurance that I’d do just what she asked.

I left her with a friendly nurse and went about my task.

I called back to the office. I knew they’d be concerned. I shared her situation.

And the rest that I had learned.

Returning quickly to her room I fused my face with cheer, and as the curtain parted, she said, “When did you get here?”

“I’m so glad that you found me for I have no way to pay.

My mom’s back in Ohio.
Will you be my mom today?”

"You're like her in so many ways.
I'm safe when I 'm with you.

And when I get into a jam you know just
what to do."

She leaned against her pillow as she slowly
closed her eyes.

She fiddled with her wedding ring. Shallow
breaths gave way to sighs.

The doctor brought her test results then ordered
her admission into a special unit where folks
went with her condition.

She transferred to a wheel chair and began her
lengthy ride through several locked and coded
doors. Then finally- we arrived.

Too quickly it became the time to say our last
good-byes. I stepped around the wheel chair
and her face streamed with surprise.

I knelt to hug her one more time and my eyes
welled up with tears,

As she whispered in her soft, sweet voice,

"When did you get here?"

This story is a snapshot of my afternoon with D. at
the hospital. A mentor told me many years ago
that "a person with dementia will rarely remember
what you said, but they will always remember the
way you made them feel." I witnessed this in its
fullness. She could not call my name or tell you
how we knew each other, but she KNEW through
a feeling that transcended any kind of rationale
that she was in the presence of a person who
cared for her and one that she trusted.

Along with being a twin, a Pastor's wife, and the
mother of two children, D. was an elementary
school teacher. The lesson she reinforced for
me in the hospital on that August afternoon was
anything but elementary.

Sue | Waldron Place Assisted Living, KS

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ACTIVITY PICTURES NEEDED

Send NCCAP your activity
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captions. Photos must be
for public release.

Send activity your pics to
info@nccap.org





GETTING TO KNOW

Debbie Hommel

By Michael A. Bower, BA, ACC



This is the fifth of the “Getting to Know Your NCCAP Board of Directors” series.

Debbie is a born and bred Jersey Girl. She was raised at the Jersey shore and has always lived along the south Jersey coast. She has been married to Ron, a retired teacher, for 32 years in April. She has a son, Nathan, who is married and has blessed them with 2 year old grandson named Chaning. Her daughter Kendl recently graduated from Radford University in VA and is attending Temple University Graduate School.

While a senior in high school Debbie volunteered as a “friendly visitor” in a local nursing home. As she left for college she knew that she wanted to be an Activity Professional, but there was no degree offered in Activities at that time. Debbie attended Georgian Court University and earned a bachelor’s in Art. After graduating, Debbie returned home and went to work at the same nursing home where she had volunteered. Debbie tells us, “When I walked in the front door of the facility and saw several of the same residents sitting in the same locations as I had left them four years earlier – it had a huge impact on me. I just wanted to stay and make a difference in these residents’ lives.” Debbie first worked as an activity assistant and a year later became the director.

Several years later, after she had her son, Debbie became an activity consultant. She has worked in skilled nursing facilities, medical and social day programs, assisted living

facilities, residential health care and also some of the state run centers for people with developmentally disabilities. She was activity consultant certified (ACC) in 1987, and currently has memory care and education specializations. She received her certifications in 2006. She is now an independent Activity Consultant and is the Executive Director of DH Special Services, which offers consulting and continuing education for the activity professionals. She teaches the Modular Education Program for Activity Professionals (MEPAP) through the traditional classroom setting in NJ and also through independent study. She has also developed a number of independent study programs on activities, dementia, behavior, documentation, and other topics of interest to the activity professional. She is a monthly contributing writer to the Activity Director’s Office website and maintains a website www.dhspecialservices.com which is a resource to activity professionals.

Debbie is very active professionally. She is an active member of The American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) and a founding member of her state New Jersey Activity Professionals Association (NJAPA). She was on the forming committee and has served on the Education and Public Relations Committees, creating and implementing the organization’s newsletter. She has served one term as vice president and two terms as president of NJAPA. She is also a past president of the regional activity group – Monmouth and Ocean County Activity Professionals (MOCAP). Debbie was awarded the Weidner E. Madison Life Time Achievement award from NJAPA in 1994 and a Lifetime achievement award in 1999 from the Monmouth and Ocean County Activity Professional Group. Debbie tells us that she was honored to have won the 2009 NCCAP MEPAP instructor of the year award. She was a member of NAAP for many years, but resigned her membership last year.

“I think two of the most important things to me about working in this profession are the connections we create in our day to day interactions with the elders, and that we create opportunities for our residents to continue living their lives to the fullest, in spite of the physical and cognitive challenges they face. I believe the activity profession has changed the image of nursing homes from places where people go to die – to places where people go to continue living. As far as our future – I believe we will assume a stronger leadership role within the long term care continuum. The activity professional has always believed in individualized and person driven approaches. With this belief becoming imbedded in our regulations and in the culture of long term care, it is our time to lead the way.” **NN**

2012 Symposium brochures have been mailed! PLAN NOW to Attend

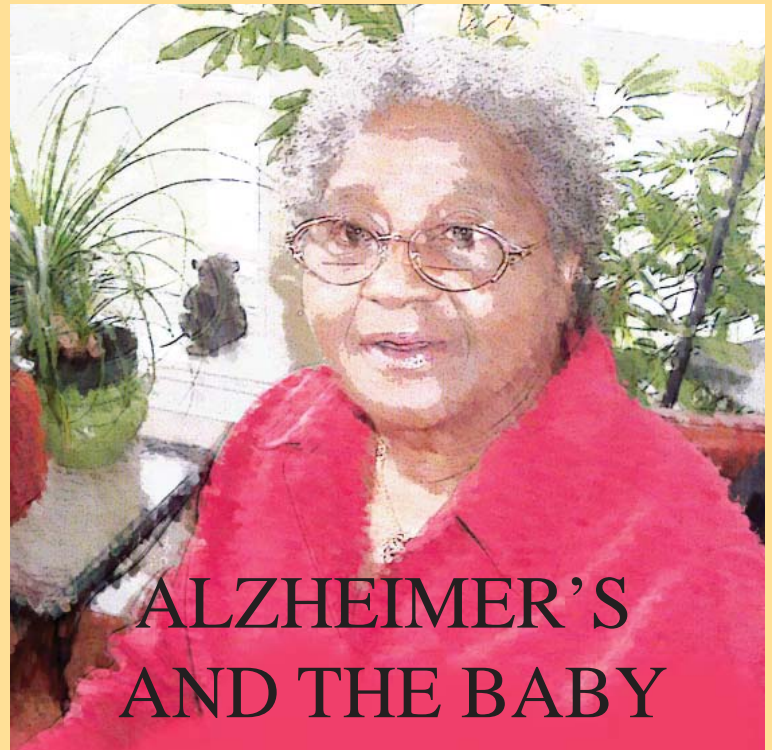
**The NCCAP Educational Symposium
May 31 - June 2, 2012 in Erlanger, KY
(near Cincinnati)**

- 1) 17 CE's are available (NCCAP follows the IACET standards, also the conference will be NAB approved, meet NCCAP standards and there will be CEU's available)
- 2) The educational sessions are taught by the nation's top leaders, - many of whom are hired by other national/state organizations, that have volunteered to participate in this event! The participants are fellow educators, professionals, trainers, consultants and instructors, and activity professionals that wish to interact with others in like fields.
- 3) All the meals, are included in the registration costs versus just 2 - 3 meals like other organizations offer.
- 4) The hotel is under \$99 a night! (NO price changes for 2012)

For the smarter more cost effective choice for your national education go to www.nccap.org and PLAN now to attend the 2012 NCCAP Symposium. *See you there!*

NCCAP received over 1500 pieces of mail between December 24th and December 31st, 2011. (This is in addition to the 100+ emails per day and the hundreds of phone calls we received). As you can imagine that was quite a lot of very important pieces of mail. While the office is generally closed between the Christmas and New Year holiday, in anticipation of the influx of mail, Cindy and Kelly worked to pick up and filter the mail daily. Included in that mail were the usual last minute January 1, 2012 certification renewals, the spring conference pre-approvals, the pre-approval renewals, the EARLY BIRD, February and March 2012 renewals, and over 500 new applications. (Several more trickled in postmarked by December 31st -- throughout the month of January 2012). 394 successful applicants received their NCCAP credential, and there are more pending; a few more items to complete their professional goals. NCCAP worked tirelessly to review the applications and respond to the calls and emails as fast and accurately as possible. Thanks to our amazing staff and supportive board of directors, we did JUST that. Congratulations to all the new applicants and all those that assisted them in achieving their goals i.e. the MEPAP teachers, supervisors, mentors, and peers.

Professionalism at its Best!



ALZHEIMER'S AND THE BABY BOOMERS

By Michael A. Bower, BA, ACC

Between 1946 and 1964 American families managed to produce between 3.4 and 4.3 million babies a year – a bumper crop! Now known as the “baby boomers,” we (yes, I am one of them) have had an enormous impact on the economy, education, the workforce, and social changes. We are old hippies, Vietnam Veterans, space pioneers, and women’s libbers. And starting in 2011, we began to turn 65 years old and become eligible for Medicare and traditional retirement.

“65” – the magic age for retirement is also the magic age for late onset Alzheimer’s disease. Right now we have nearly 5.5 million Americans in some stage of Alzheimer’s. It is estimated that, by 2050, there will be 16 million. The cost of their care to Medicare will be \$1.1 trillion dollars. Today every 60 minutes 52 people are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s; by 2050 it will 103 every 60 minutes.

Scary? You bet it is. We have to ask ourselves, is this country ready for the tsunami that is coming? Are we prepared to care for this number of people? The economy is struggling now with caring for our elders with public funds, and the tide is just starting to rise.

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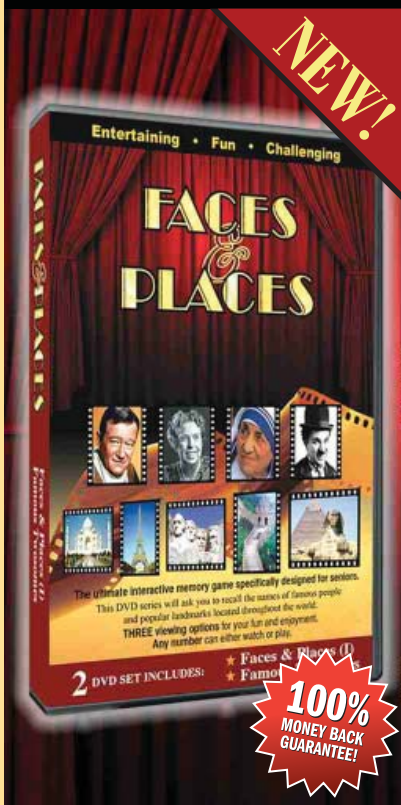
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If there are few who can afford elder care facilities in the future, how will activities change? Will there be co-operative eldercare, as there is with child care? Adult family homes are prolific now – how can we have a roll there?

What are we as a profession doing to prepare? As budgets get cut and jobs disappear, are we taking steps to insure that quality of life and activities are not casualties? How involved are you with your state government and changes in regulations for nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult family homes? Have you been following the progress of the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA)? The actions that grow from it can have a great effect on our profession – what are we doing to make sure that it is a positive effect and not a negative one? (Go to www.alz.org then click on NAPA to learn more.)

We need to anticipate the changes that could be coming and prepare for them. After all, for those of us who are baby boomers, we are preparing for our own future “quality of life” by ensuring that qualified people are delivering great activities today and in the future! iNCCAP is working hard to maintain high standards for certification and to maintain visibility and a good working relationship with the government agencies and leading health care organizations and associations.

Learn more about what iNCCAP is doing – and what you can do – to keep our profession thriving. Come to the 2012 iNCCAP Education Symposium this June; stay active in your state activity association; and be proactive with your regulatory bodies.

Be the change that you want to see! **INN**



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NCCAP meets with Activity Professionals in England

Thanks to a generous donation from the E and E Davis Foundation in honor of their daughter Barbara Fleischmann, ACC, CTRS/MEPAP Instructor in Ohio,

the NCCAP Executive Director was able to spend time touring healthcare facilities in England, January 23 - 30, 2012.

Kirstie Saunders, ADC, HRAPA international rep, and certified member is also residing in Weeting, UK while her husband is stationed there at the air force base.

NCCAP toured different facilities, and interviewed their activity staff as well as executive/deputy directors to discuss, compare/contrast the types of facilities, what they offer and how they best meet the needs of their residents.

All were invited to attend the NCCAP Educational Symposium in June, as well as Kirstie will be initiating regional communications in addition to the already established NAPA organization for activity personnel.

Be watching for a more detailed summary in the annual report from Cindy Bradshaw BS, ACC, NCCAP Executive Director.