

SENIORS SELF-ACTUALIZE AT RISE

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Mindfulness. Enrichment. Self-actualization. Mega doses of wisdom. Old and new techniques and cutting-edge sagacity blend quite naturally at RISE and yes, as recent studies show, seniors are happier here.

RISE (Rivier Institute for Senior Education) in partnership with the Elderhostel Institute Network, was created for learning in retirement. The program offers a different way for Rivier alumni to reconnect with the College—many have become facilitators for the myriad courses the program offers. RISE is all about sharing one's aggregate of intellectual and artistic resources with others: no trepidation, no exams, and no peer pressure.

The advantages are innumerable, according to RISE Vice President Delores Davis '94G. The campus environment provides activities close to home and invaluable social benefits. Delores was drawn to the exercise programs, specifically the Tufts Strong Living course for which she has long served as one of the trained leaders. She and her husband, Jim, attend regularly. Delores appreciates the freedom that allows a "left-brain person to exercise the right brain," by delving into such courses as poetry, writing, and painting. She says that RISE is convenient, educational, and helps re-connect alumni to the College, along with new students who have moved here or have traveled throughout the country and abroad. "It allows us the opportunity to share one's knowledge and experience," she says.

Claudette Durocher '63, honored last year by the Rivier College Alumni Association Council with the Sr. Madeleine of Jesus award, served her community through her 44-year career as a writer, photographer and editor for *The Telegraph*. Away from the tension of headlines and deadlines, she is honing her computer and digital photography skills at RISE in classes like the one pictured above.

Patricia Desmarais Hurd '81 started leading watercolor painting classes at RISE only three years ago. A retired RN with degrees from Rivier College and St. Joseph College, she has displayed her art works and won several awards. Her original note cards are sold locally and at a boutique in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is a speaker at conferences and retreats, a member of the Association of Christian Therapists, the JPPI Institute of Christian Spirituality, and the Rivier Prayer Community. She facilitates the popular Alpha—The Meaning of Life from a Christian Perspective course for RISE.

Antoinette Rivard Drouart '74 (*pictured below*) has taught Ikebana flower arranging for the past eight years. She is a certified teacher who studied in Tokyo, Japan, and has exhibited in Tokyo, Paris, New York, and Boston. She owns her own Ikebana studio in downtown Nashua and teaches at RISE this semester.

Mona Desbiens Jewell '61 shared her administrative skills with RISE for many years and was indispensable to the smooth coordination of the program's data base and communication needs, while Patricia Paradis '69, a Nashua native and realtor for 22 years, was eager to return to the Rivier campus to share her experience in the housing market.

After earning a law degree and living in Massachusetts for a number of years, Claire Briand McHugh '62 returned to her hometown, enrolled in RISE and was elected to the Executive Board. Claire had taught

high school social studies for five years and operated her own Little Flower private school in Nashua. Dedicated to her home state and civic involvement, she responded to the lure of politics and was elected to the New Hampshire Legislature. More recently she served on Nashua's Zoning Board.



“I love learning while playing (at RISE),” says Claire. A serious student of the Bible, she hopes to facilitate a course on women in the Bible, focusing on the role women played during biblical times and how some of the issues they faced are similar to those we face today. “There were good and bad women, and we should know them all,” she says. Her lifelong interest in history led her to take a course on Napoleon and on current issues as presented in *American Quandaries*, one of her perennial favorites among the many courses that satisfy her eclectic tastes.

“Members of RISE represent the cream of the crop—interesting people from diverse backgrounds, vibrant and energetic, all of whom are traversing through the same process while aging with grace and vitality,” Claire says. “RISE is doing a great job in offering a variety of classes, getting members to time-share in the office or on the Executive Board, as facilitators, organizers, all willing to help create a lively ambiance.” RISE members salute all of their peer-volunteers who coordinate the program under the guidance of executive director Dr. Rose Arthur and RISE President Joe Kabat.

It's not surprising that all of the interviewees raved about the capacious new library and its bright new café. The cafeteria, which offers an amazing, varied menu, is another valued gathering spot.

In a recent talk titled “Aging for Dummies,” retired gerontology professor Zane Knoy (father of NPR's Laura Knoy) said, “We need to rid society of the fear of aging. We think 'old' means decrepit, disease, losing power, prestige, sexuality. It's seen only as loss...There are frail people with healthy spirits and healthy ones who are cranky.” His advice? “Keep engaged with life after retirement. Being socially connected is probably better than any pills we take...Things do change, but it's how we greet them that makes the difference.”

Alumni concur that having the opportunity to return to Rivier after decades of success in the business world and raising families is like going home again, to a place that is hospitable and loaded with options. “Who would have thought we could rejuvenate our minds and hearts through the college's unique recognition of its senior alumnae?” said one alumna. “It's still Rivier College, my alma mater, but a new, improved, extraordinarily progressive institution. I'm so proud.”

Seniors enrolled in RISE don't only seem happier. They actually are. ■

* **GEORGI LAURIN HIPPAUF** holds a B.A. from Boston University and an M.A. in Education from SUNY at Albany, NY. She edited and co-authored three books with former Governor Hugh Gregg on New Hampshire Primary politics. She led the founding of *Le Parc de Notre Renaissance Française* in Nashua, about which she wrote the descriptive book *The Third Century: A Recognition of Franco-Americans* to raise funds for the park's bronze sculpture. Her latest book, *The Story of How They Banished Pickled Frogs' Legs Forever*, was illustrated by RISE colleague Diane Statkum. Georgi co-hosted *Talkline* with Maury Parent for three years on Nashua's local radio stations. She has facilitated courses at RISE, including *French a la Mode*, and serves on its Executive Board as RISE publicity director.