



Active minds for longer life

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VAIL - Vail Symposium launches the Active Minds for Lifetime Learning outreach program Wednesday to reach senior residents who possess active curiosities and a hunger for continued lifelong learning. Active Minds is responding to a national trend toward keeping the minds of older adults as healthy as their bodies. It has been proven that lifelong learning is a key to longevity.

A new initiative for the Vail Symposium in partnership with Eagle County, Active Minds is a series of lectures regarding hot topics and cultural and educational issues geared to the senior community. This summer's topics include U.S. immigration policy, the intriguing history of how evolution theory was allowed to be taught in the classroom, and a look at the Chernobyl disaster 20 years later. These programs are designed to introduce an impartial and historical background to these topics, which are further covered in symposium lectures this summer. Active Minds for Seniors, a Denver-based company, will be providing experienced instructors to present this program.

Jack Cox of The Denver Post researched this new issue and found that "older Americans have dabbled in adult education for years, usually by auditing college classes or taking courses through lifelong learning institutes. But with research showing that those who keep their brains active may stave off Alzheimer's disease and other forms of cognitive decline, the senior-services industry is starting to take schooling more seriously. Mental stimulation is seen as not just an amenity but a key part of successful aging." While the series is open to all ages and encourages participation by anyone who wants to learn about the topics, the lectures are directed toward participants in their later years.

Eagle County's projected-population-growth studies forecast a dramatic increase within the senior community in the next decade.

"We are hoping to help meet a need of this part of the community by establishing the first program specifically geared to promoting active minds for seniors within the region. Both Vail Symposium and Eagle County are looking forward to providing this special new opportunity this summer," said Fraidy Aber, executive director of the Vail Symposium.

All Active Minds gatherings are free and open to all ages and begin at 4:30 p.m., hosted at the Golden Eagle Community Center in Eagle. For reservations or for more information, call the Vail Symposium at 476-0954 or visit www.vailsymposium.org.