

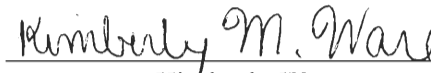
Enriching Third Age Education in Hong Kong


An Interactive Qualifying Project Report
submitted to the Faculty of
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science

by


Katelyn Bernier


Matthew Hazel


Kimberly Ware


Eric Young

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Submitted to:

Professor Ronald R. Biederman, Major Advisor


Professor Creighton Peet, Co-Advisor

Mrs. Betsy Ho, On-site Liaison
Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service

Abstract

As Hong Kong's population ages, there is a growing demand for programs that cater to the intellectual and social needs of the elderly. Caritas Evergreen College was established to provide both educational benefits and social interaction to senior citizens through a wide range of courses. Our IQP investigated the effectiveness of this program through interviews, focus groups, and observations. We developed recommendations that should help Evergreen College enhance its programs in the future.

Authorship Page

Below is a listing of the original authorship of all pertinent sections. Even though some sections were originally written by a single individual, it is important to note that all sections were jointly edited, and the final report reflects the major efforts of our entire project team.

Authors:

Katelyn Bernier (KB)

Matthew Hazel (MH)

Kimberly Ware (KW)

Eric Young (EY)

Abstract – (KW), (MH)

Executive Summary – (MH)

I. Introduction – (MH), (KW), (EY)

II. Background Information

A. Third Age Education

1. Definition of Third Age Education – (KW)

2. The goals of Third Age Education – (MH)

B. Third Age Program Participants

1. How does society define “old” – (MH)

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C. Government Assistance and Help Groups for the Elderly

1. Social Security Programs – (EY)

2. Hong Kong Elderly Commission – (EY)

3. Worcester Elder Affairs Commission – (EY)

4. American Association for Retired Persons - (EY)

D. Third Age Programs around the World

1. Sydney, Australia – University of the Third Age – (KW)

2. Worcester, Massachusetts – Worcester Institute for Senior
Education at Assumption College – (KW)

3. Elderhostel – (KW), (KB)

4. Caritas Evergreen College – (KW)

E. Pedagogical Approaches

1. How do seniors learn, and what do they want to learn? – (MH)
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4. Active Learning – (MH)
5. Comparative Analysis of educational methods – (MH)

F. Background Summary – (ALL)

III. Methodology

- A. Acquire General Knowledge about Caritas Evergreen College – (KW)
- B. Conduct a Needs Assessment of the Students and Teachers of Evergreen College – (KW)
- C. Understand why Third Age Education is Desired – (EY)
- D. Suggest Changes that might Improve the Third Age Education program – (EY)

IV. Results and Analysis

- A. Evergreen College Organization and Structure – (KB)
- B. Evergreen College Benefits and Limitations
 1. Benefits – (MH), (EY)
 2. Limitations – (MH), (KW)

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

- A. Social Interaction – (EY)
- B. Organization – (KB)
- C. Expansion – (KW)
- D. Evergreen College Vision for the Future – (MH)
- E. Further Research Suggestions – (EY)
- F. Summary – (MH), (KB), (KW)

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Caritas Hong Kong and Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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Executive Summary

As the elderly population of Hong Kong increases, so too does the demand for social and educational programs for seniors. Third Age education is one such program that has become an important part of the lives of seniors across the globe. By allowing elderly to expand their social networks, pursue lifelong intellectual interests, and build self-esteem through their accomplishments, it is no wonder why what started as a single university in France in 1972 has expanded to over 250 Third Age programs, in almost every major country.

The social service organization Caritas has established its own Third Age program in Hong Kong, known as Evergreen College, with the goal of providing social interaction and education for the elderly. However, as Evergreen College is a relatively new program, it has been our task to assess its current state and determine if it is satisfying all the needs of those enrolled. Our Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) ultimately sought to enrich the Evergreen College model of Third Age education so the participating elderly citizens would benefit as much as possible.

Our project began with an in-depth study of Third Age educational programs from around the world, so that we could compare Evergreen College to other, more established programs that have proven themselves effective. Through this research, we discovered there is a wide spectrum of Third Age education models. Certain programs, like the Worcester Institute for Senior Education, are organized, governed, and taught entirely by the participating seniors. Others do not offer the participants as much freedom in controlling the direction of the program. During our stay in Hong Kong, we discovered that Evergreen College falls somewhere in the middle, as the participants are not directly in control, however, they are allowed to provide feedback, which the administrators pay close attention to.

In order to accurately assess the effectiveness of the Evergreen College model of Third Age education, we employed a variety of research methods. We conducted interviews with students, teachers, and administrators, which allowed us to gain the personal opinions of members from all aspects of the program. Additionally, we employed the use of a student survey, in order to better understand the general thoughts of a sample of Evergreen College students. The results of this survey have showed us that the large majority of participants are pleased with almost all aspects of

Evergreen College, although many feel that there is still room for improvement. Classes were observed in order to determine the teaching styles in use, as well as the level of interest amongst the students who were participating in the class. We also made use of a focus group, where we gained valuable feedback on many of the recommendations which we had formulated.

Throughout our research, it became clear that the students thoroughly enjoy the Evergreen College experience. Not only did Evergreen College attain a high overall rating in our survey, but an overwhelming majority responded that the program had enriched the quality of their life, and that they would recommend it to their friends. Through interviews, we gathered more in depth responses from students, teachers, and administrators, such as the fact that many of the students love taking classes even though they find it hard to remember the material. Also, the teachers enjoy having the ability to give back the knowledge that they have attained through their previous experiences or through Evergreen College. Additionally, the administrators agree that Evergreen College provides the seniors with a rewarding experience that allows for social interaction that they might not otherwise enjoy.

Our classroom observations illustrated to us the students' excitement at having the opportunity to pursue their interests. Almost every student actively participated in oral exercises during the language classes, and not one of the participants was afraid to sing out loud during a Cantonese Opera class. However, our observations did reveal to us the most significant limitation of Evergreen College, and that is space.

Throughout all of our interviews, when asked about the limitations of Evergreen College, we were consistently told that the shortage of space was the only shortcoming of Evergreen College. This limitation is preventing the classes from becoming much larger than they already are, and, for popular classes, the shortage of space was actually preventing people from enrolling. Also, Evergreen College faces a shortage of teachers, both volunteer and professional, who know how to effectively teach the elderly. Additionally, Evergreen College does not have nearly enough funding to look for new space or hire additional teachers, so this issue must be addressed in order for the program to grow.

Based on our research results, we created a list of conclusions and recommendations that we felt would be the most beneficial to Caritas. These recommendations included plans for the expansion of Evergreen College, as well as suggestions that would benefit its organization and the social interaction offered. It is

our belief that Evergreen College is currently succeeding at its goal of enriching the lives of its members. However, we feel that more needs to be done to both attract more members and increase the amount of available space, so that new students can be accommodated.

I. Introduction

When most people talk about education, they assume that the time frame for this occurs from kindergarten to graduation day or the “First Age”. Many believe that after people enter the second age of active work they have achieved enough knowledge to carry them through a lifetime. According to Cyril O. Houle (1973), we need to become lifelong learners: “much of the knowledge and professional training of a graduate is obsolete fifteen years after graduation unless that education is continually updated through purposeful learning” (p. 3). Society is changing rapidly, and, as people grow older, they may start to feel lost unless they pursue their intellectual interests.

Pursuing a lifelong learning strategy in the second age is very difficult due to the commitment to a career. However, in the Third Age, active retired members of society have a great deal of free time to enjoy themselves and expand their education. Advances in medical science have made the average life expectancy longer, and, additionally, the education level of the elderly has increased. These two factors have made the time frame and population for active retirement much larger (Kilbride, Nagy and Rubinstein, 1992, p. 4). This increase in elderly population has created a demand for high quality Third Age programs.

According to the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2004), Hong Kong’s population of age 65 and older is roughly 814,000 people, which constitutes about 12 % of its population. Hong Kong has seen its elderly population percentage increase over time, which has also increased the demand for elderly programs. In traditional Chinese culture the elderly are highly respected members of society; however, this attitude may have begun to break down in recent times. Caritas - Hong Kong (2004) has undertaken the mission of assisting the elderly with the establishment of Evergreen College. Founded in 2003, it has provided elders the opportunity to maintain their mental and physical health.

Programs similar to Caritas’ Evergreen College exist all around the world, yet they are structured very differently. Some programs are organized and run entirely by the participating Third Age students, such as the Worcester Institute for Senior Education in Worcester, MA. Some programs offer not-for-credit courses designed for those who simply enjoy learning, while others offer a structured schedule with credit bearing courses. Each style of education has unique advantages and

disadvantages, such as their ability to hold the attention of the class as well as convey useful information.

The types of courses offered in Third Age programs were also of interest to our study. Some programs, like the Sydney University of the Third Age, were founded to offer participants highly intellectual classes, such as courses in art, history, foreign language, and literature. Other programs have found that the elderly were more interested in courses on using the Internet, cooking, and crafts. The offerings largely depend on the population the program is catering to. These, and many other factors, are important to Third Age programs worldwide.

Although much research has already been done in Hong Kong to investigate the current situation of the elderly, there is still a need for further research into their educational needs and interests. Despite their position of honor in the family, some evidence suggests that senior citizens are often neglected members of society. More needs to be done to help fill the social and educational void the elderly are facing. Caritas developed Evergreen College with hopes of combating this problem, but it was unclear if the program has been working to its full potential to help enrich the lives of the Hong Kong elderly, regardless of their financial situation.

It was the intention of our IQP to provide recommendations to Caritas on how to enrich and expand its current system of Third Age Education in Hong Kong, so that participating elderly citizens benefit as much as possible. We examined the Caritas Evergreen College and its curriculum, students, and teachers. Research methods employed included interviews conducted with teachers, administrators, and students, a survey of participants, and direct observation of classes. Then, having used previous work and research as a guide, we explored possible changes to the program based on both feasibility and interest. Finally, we made recommendations for the future of the program. These recommendations will hopefully allow the participating elderly residents of Hong Kong to lead more fulfilling lives, particularly against the backdrop of an ever-changing and increasingly technological society.

II. Background Information

As the world's population ages, there is an ever increasing population of retired individuals who view their retirement not as an end of their usefulness, but as a new beginning to pursue all those interests for which they previously had no time. These interests could be intellectual pursuits, such as literature by Shakespeare and philosophy by Plato, or artistic pursuits, like water color painting or modeling. Seniors often enroll in programs specifically designed for elderly education, otherwise known as Third Age education. Third Age programs are designed to offer their participants an outlet for their intellectual and creative pursuits, however, there are many different educational models that have different goals and ideologies.

Through our research, we discovered the different types of programs which have been made available to seniors. We examined programs from around the world and analyzed their effectiveness, in addition to examining the Third Age population itself. It was important to understand the cognitive abilities of the elderly, and the different teaching methods which can be employed to meet the goals of a specific Third Age educational program.

More specifically, the Caritas sponsored Evergreen College was closely examined. Demographic information, as well as information related to the government's role in Evergreen College were both important in the analysis of this Third Age Program.

A. Third Age Education

Before we could begin our research into Evergreen College, we needed to understand what Third Age education is, as well as what the goals of a typical Third Age program are. This information helped in determining if Evergreen College is a successful Third Age program.

1. Definition of Third Age Education

Third Age Education, Continuing Education, and Lifelong Learning are just three of the names that describe the essential programs that exist to educate adults. These programs attempt to assist many different groups of people, including the unemployed, illiterate, and the intellectually curious, but one particularly important

group is the elderly. For seniors seeking stimulation outside of the home, Third Age Education programs may be the key to a more healthy, active, and fulfilling life.

Adult education programs can help the elderly accomplish these goals in many ways. As expressed in Merriam (1989), “In summary, adult education might be seen to embrace a variety of prominent, visible, social activities lying somewhere between schooling and recreation” (p. 15). At some point in the lives of most adults, learning becomes something that they choose to do rather than something they have to do. Third Age programs provide an outlet for their yearning for knowledge and stimulating activities for their enjoyment.

2. The goals of Third Age Education

Started by the French in 1972, the Université du Troisième Age in Toulouse was established for those retired individuals who “have absolute freedom to choose what to do with their time” (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 33). The idea of Third Age education quickly gained popularity, and, in 1981, a group based at Cambridge University established the first English-language Third Age University (U3A). U3A programs have continued to grow, and by 1994, there were approximately 250 operating Third Age universities.

Common throughout U3As is the goal of providing Third Age citizens with the opportunity to pursue both knowledge and their interests in the arts. However, there are varying methods that have been employed in order to achieve that goal. When the French created their university in 1972, they relied on “prepackaged university courses” (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 33) in order to teach the students who attended. These lecture style courses are similar to those administered in today’s colleges and universities, in which a knowledgeable professor offers instruction to the learners who are participating in the course.

When the U3A was established in Great Britain, its founders settled upon a teaching method quite different than that of its French counterpart. In this method, the teachers and learners were one and the same (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 33). The Third Age community was capable of becoming its own resource, due to the combined skills of the participating members. They were capable of organizing meetings, trips, and lessons in topics ranging from languages and literature to first aid and wine making.

B. Third Age Program Participants

Researching societal attitudes towards seniors, demographic information, and mental and physical characteristics of the elderly helped us to understand why they desire Third Age Education programs. Knowing what issues most elderly face during their retirement age, like loneliness and loss of mobility, gave a valuable perspective to our project.

1. How does society define “old”?

The elderly were once revered for their extensive wisdom of worldly events. Those lucky enough to live into old age became tribal leaders or were elected to positions of power (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 21). Age was at one point a status symbol, and cultures such as the Chinese took great care to both worship and respect their elders. However, this reverence that was so dominant throughout Chinese society as little as a half century ago is quickly fading, and elderly citizens are finding themselves being left behind by today’s society.

As Alex Comfort wrote in his book *A Good Age*:

[Age is] the role which society imposes on people as they reach a certain chronological age. At this age they retire, or, in plain words are rendered unemployed, useless, and in some cases impoverished. After that transition, and in proportion to their chronological age, they are prescribed to be unintelligent, unemployable, crazy and asexual (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 20).

This observation makes it clear that age has become a function of societal usefulness. People are considered to be old from the moment they retire, and with old age is the common misconception that one’s cognitive abilities and health quickly vanish. Lois Lamdin (1997) comments that “[g]eriatric literature is rich in articles on dementia, incontinence, cancers, heart failure, and bedsores” (p. 17), rather than articles which focus on “wellness, diet, exercise, and the social and environmental factors that can modify aging” (p. 18).

However, there exists a large elderly population that “view[s] retirement as an opportunity to rekindle their creativity through writing, music, art, dance, and crafts” (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 29). This population of post-retirement knowledge seekers is part of the Third Age population. This classification comes from the Four Ages Theory, as was described by Peter Laslett in his book *A Fresh Map of Life: The Emergence of the Third Age* (1989). In it, he describes the Third Age as “a time of

fulfillment through activities that give men and women both pleasure and a sense of their own worth” (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 31). These activities could either be a renewed pursuit of a previous interest, continued work, or the pursuit of new knowledge, and it is for this reason that Third Age educational programs have been gaining momentum.

2. Elderly Demographics

Third Age participants usually come from the retired population aged 65 and above. To gain some perspective on people who participate in Third Age programs, it is important to look at the statistics and trends of this group. The demographic characteristics of the elderly have dramatically changed in recent times, especially in the United States and Hong Kong. The elderly population has grown significantly over the years, and if this trend continues, this age group could constitute almost half of the population within the next half century (AOA, 2004). Figure II-1 shows this trend in the United States.

Growth of U.S. Older Adult Population

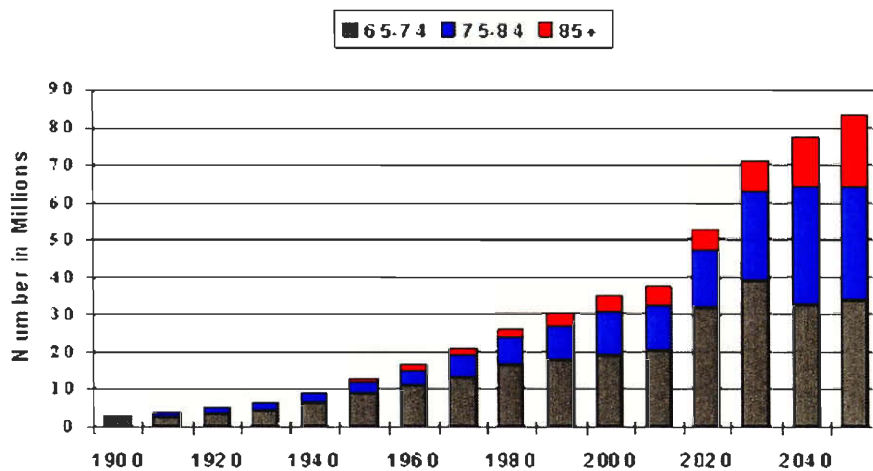


Figure II-1: Growth of U.S. Older Adult Population
(AOA, 2004)

In Hong Kong there is a population of roughly 814,000 individuals who are 65 or older (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2004), which constitutes about 12% of the Hong Kong population. Similar to the United States, the Hong

Kong elderly are a growing percentage of the population. Figure II-2 illustrates how the elderly population has grown by almost 200,000 within the previous decade.

Growth Of 65+ Population in Hong Kong

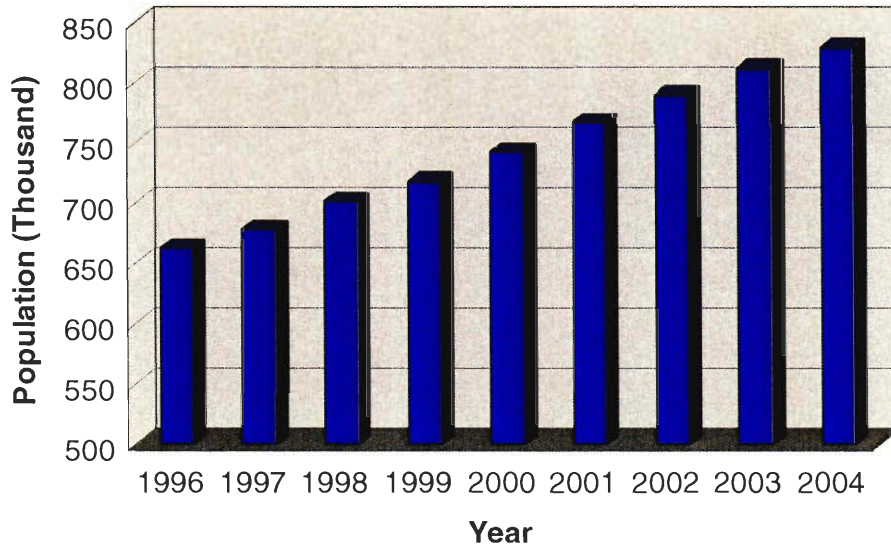


Figure II-2: Hong Kong Elderly Population Growth
(Adapted from Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2004)

Of the current Hong Kong elderly population, 378,000 are male and 436,000 are female. The discrepancy between the male and female populations may be explained in part by the life expectancy distribution. According to Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2004), the average life expectancies for males and females in 2003 were 78.5 and 84.3 years of age, respectively. Below is a figure that represents the gender populations in various age groups for 2004:

Gender Populations Versus Age Distributions: Hong Kong 2004

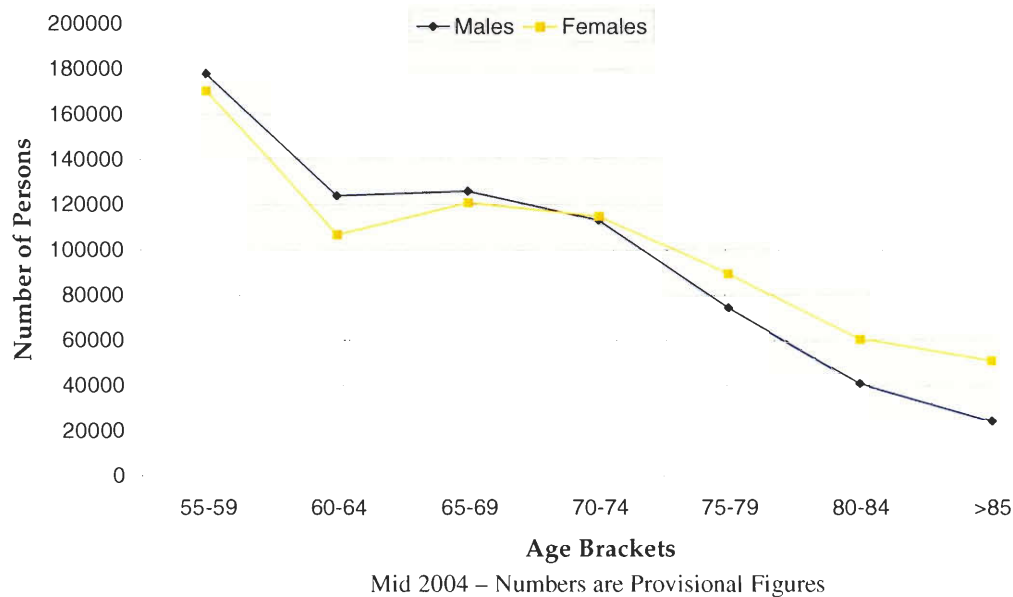


Figure II-3: Population by Age Group and Sex – Hong Kong 2004
(Adapted from Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2004)

3. Challenges that the Elderly Face

As elders enter the Third Age, it is important to understand the difficulties that they face in adjusting to retirement. Seniors face issues like loneliness, loss of purpose, and physical illnesses, however these issues are rendered largely inconsequential while they are enjoying their time at Third Age programs.

a) Entering and Adjusting to Retirement

The retirement age can be a difficult time in a person's life. Drastic changes in habit can occur, and seniors may have trouble adjusting. The biggest challenge for aging adults is the ability to remain active and busy. Some older people prefer a peaceful life of constant relaxation with few responsibilities. Others delay their entrance into the retirement age by continuing in the workforce. But for the rest of the elderly, retirement can create a difficult problem by halving their income and doubling their free time (Ashley, 1963, p. 31).

To remain active and busy with this extra time, some elders perform volunteer work. According to Lewis, Odell and Wan (1982) "doing volunteer work can be very

important to older persons at a time in their life when they are experiencing major role losses through retirement and departure of children from the household” (p. 69). Such volunteer work can contribute to an elder person’s well-being in two ways: it keeps them busy and creates a feeling of self-worth.

Another way elderly transition into retirement is through leisure activities and travel. In Lewis, Odell and Wan’s (1982) community study, they found that the leisure activity most enjoyed by the elderly was reading magazines or books. Other enjoyable leisure activities included gardening, movies, plays, concerts, games, and other hobbies.

Third Age education can be another important activity which keeps the elderly busy. When interviewing Charlene Martin, Dean of Continuing Education at Assumption College (see Appendix K), we came to the understanding that one of the main reasons for the elderly to become involved with the Worcester Institute of Senior Education (W.I.S.E.) is the opportunity to make friends and socialize with other W.I.S.E. participants. This is a program which not only provides the elderly with a chance to practice lifelong learning but also allows the elderly to continue to make new friends.

b) Loneliness and Mental Problems

With this wealth of free time, mental health problems can become an issue for those of the retirement age. Not all elders have immediate family connections, and according to Kilbride, Nagy and Rubinstein (1992), loneliness can become a large concern for these people. In their studies, they found that approximately one fourth (24%) of their samples felt that they experienced troubles making new friends and nearly 30% of the United States’ elderly population lived alone.

Feeling lonely and lacking a social support system can lead to depression. Over 6.5 million of the 35 million Americans over the age of 65 suffer from depression (Kilbride, Nagy and Rubinstein, 1992, p. 65). Depression is an extremely common mental illness which oftentimes goes untreated, especially in the case of older people. Many people think that feeling depressed at the end of one’s life is a normal part of aging. Loneliness, limited mobility, health problems, and boredom are some of the most common causes of depression in elders. Some of these causes are also a direct result of an unsuccessful adjustment to the retirement age.

c) Physical Health Concerns

As elders grow older, they become more vulnerable to health concerns. In a 1980 survey, only 26% of elderly Americans rated their health as excellent, 37% good, 25% fair, and 12% poor (Kilbride, Rubinstein and Nagy, 1992, p. 26). Although a majority of elders rated their health as good or excellent, a large percentage of elders show that they are concerned about their overall health. Some of the most common health concerns for the elderly are Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, circulation problems, cancers, and sleep deprivation.

Another one of the most concerning physical health problems for the elderly is limited mobility. As elders grow older, they may find it exceedingly difficult to get from one place to another. Some elders find that they become more reliant on canes, walkers, wheelchairs, and motorized transportation devices to function in their everyday activities. These mobility issues may limit what the elderly can do and disrupt their daily routines. There are many elderly who might desire to attend a lifelong learning center, but are unable to because of mobility problems. Figure II-4 shows the percentage of United States elders who need assistance with normal everyday activities (AOA, 2004).

Average Percent Needing Help with Activities of Daily Living (ADL) - 1982 to 1994



Figure II-4: Average United States 65+ Requiring Help with Daily Living (AOA, 2004)

d) Loss of Income

One of the biggest obstacles for elders entering the retirement age is the adjustment of income. Many people in the United States are well prepared for retirement and have saved their earnings through an invested retirement account or 401K plan so they can live comfortably and travel the world. However, not everyone has enough money for a comfortable retirement, and they are restricted by their income to the leisure activities they can afford. According to Kilbride, Nagy, and Rubinstein (1992) “those most vulnerable to poverty are elderly widows, the very old, and members of minority groups” (p. 28). These people who are unprepared for this drastic change in income have to rely on government assistance, which oftentimes barely covers their basic needs.

C. Government Assistance and Help Groups for the Elderly

While some organizations, such as Caritas, cater to the needs of the elderly by providing goods and services, it is important to remember that there are other organizations which communicate the needs of the elderly to the government. The government, in turn, provides programs such as Social Security to help seniors once they have retired.

1. Social Security Programs

Different governments provide different services to the elderly. Some countries provide much more assistance than others. The United States offers a variety of government programs for the elderly. One of the most well known and important forms of elderly assistance in the United States is the Social Security program. This system was established under President Franklin Roosevelt in 1935 and provides financial assistance to qualified elderly and disabled for a variety of different financial needs (SSA, 2004). The program’s benefits are variable and are determined by a priority formula. The formula is based on the amount of time and earnings from social security employment and the retirement age of the individual.

Like the United States, the Hong Kong government provides financial assistance to its elders through their own form of social security (SSA, 2004). Hong Kong’s social security system incorporates different requirement levels to determine the amount of compensation. Seniors between the ages of 65 and 69, with five years continuous residence, and “income and savings below [a] prescribed level” (SSA,

2004) are eligible for the lowest rate of assistance. This rate offers HK \$625 (≈US \$80) per month, which is far below the amount needed for basic living needs. Higher monthly rates are provided for elders with greater needs. Although this is not a lot of money, the government at least provides some assistance to the elderly.

2. Hong Kong Elderly Commission

The main source of government assistance to the Hong Kong elderly is a result of the Elderly Commission. This organization was established in 1997 and acts as an advisory board to the Hong Kong government which provides help directly related to issues and problems of the elderly in Hong Kong. The goal of the elderly commission is to enhance what they call “active aging” and to allow the elderly to live healthy, meaningful lives. They have three distinct terms of references:

- (1) To advise Government on the formulation of a comprehensive policy for the elderly including matters relating to the care, housing, financial security, health and medical, psychological, employment and recreational needs of the elderly;
- (2) To co-ordinate the planning and development of various programs and services for the elderly, and to recommend priorities for implementation having regard to manpower, financial and other resources available; and
- (3) To monitor implementation of policies and programs affecting the elderly, and to make recommendations to Government to ensure that agreed objectives are met (Elderly Commission, 2004).

3. Worcester Elder Affairs Commission

In Worcester, Massachusetts, there is an organization similar to the Hong Kong Elderly Commission: the Worcester Elder Affairs Commission. This commission is a volunteer organization comprised of individuals of all ages whose goal is to work with the city of Worcester in creating programs which will help the elderly (Elderly Affairs Commission, 2004). They are encouraged to look at pertinent needs of senior citizens and work alongside other elderly organizations to increase awareness of their concerns.

4. American Association for Retired Persons

The American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people age 50 and over. AARP (2004) describes their goal as “...dedicated to enhancing quality of life for all as we age. We

lead positive social change and deliver value to members through information, advocacy and service” (AARP Mission Statement). AARP offers a variety of benefits to its members, including valuable discounts on such things as hotel rates, technology products, traveling expenses, and more. They also have benefits in other areas such as auto insurance, dental plans, and medical plans. AARP also acts as a powerful lobbying agency pushing the government to introduce programs beneficial to seniors.

D. Third Age Programs around the World

Third Age education programs play an equally important role in maintaining the well-being of today’s senior citizens. These programs have many providers and exist in many places. Countries from the United States to Third World nations have forms of continuing education. These programs may be sponsored by a business, professional association, community organization, college, or military base. In any case, the programs are attended by essentially the same people. As argued in Cross (1984), “...adults with high levels of education are more interested in education than their less well-educated peers...” (p. 35). Thus, societies having more formal education systems for youth will likely have a higher demand for Third Age education programs as well.

1. Sydney, Australia – University of the Third Age

Sydney’s University of the Third Age (U3A) program is one of the largest of its kind. According to the Sydney U3A website (2004), the university has nearly 5,000 members and offers around 200 courses- most held during the day. Sydney U3A, lacking a formal building with classroom space, holds classes in many locations around seven main areas of the city, including private homes, churches, town halls, and community centers. There are annual dues of AUS \$35 and an initial fee of AUS \$10 to join. After that, all courses, seminars, workshops, and speakers are free.

As stated in Williamson (1995), “Membership is open to anyone who accepts its objects and rules” (p. 4). Typically, members are senior citizens who have retired from their jobs. They are usually part of Sydney’s middle class, and it is not uncommon for the members to have been educated beyond secondary school. “In a 1994 survey of the membership, ...34 per cent of respondents were university graduates of whom 13.4 per cent had post graduate degrees” (p. 4).

Sydney U3A offers a wide variety of courses with more strictly intellectual offerings than most Third Age programs. A list of courses for the second semester of 2004 found on the Sydney U3A website (2004) includes several language courses, book clubs, history classes, discussion groups, nature walks, art and music appreciation courses, writing seminars, and many others. Although a highly academic environment may not work well for all Third Age programs, it thrives in Sydney U3A. As expressed in Williamson (1995), “the availability of well qualified tutors and a critical mass capable of sustaining an academic orientation supports its academic bent” (p. 4).

2. Worcester, Massachusetts – Worcester Institute for Senior Education at Assumption College

Assumption College began sponsoring the Worcester Institute for Senior Education (W.I.S.E.) in 1993. As expressed by Charlene Martin, Director of Continuing Education, (see Appendix K), W.I.S.E. is a membership organization for retired individuals, run entirely by the members. W.I.S.E. charges \$120 for a one-year membership, but they still have over 400 participating seniors. Most of these 400 members are over 70 years old, with only a small portion in their 50s and 60s, and many come from the city of Worcester itself. Additionally, a large portion of the elderly is well-educated, which is consistent with the participant populations in many other Third Age programs.

When asked what makes a successful program, Dr. Martin emphasized that the key is management by the elderly themselves. It gives the senior citizens influence over their own education- from what courses are offered to how much they are charged. Being involved in the running of W.I.S.E. has provided the participants with an additional way to enrich their lives.

3. Elderhostel

Another educational alternative for senior citizens is Elderhostel, which began in 1975 in New Hampshire. According to the Elderhostel website (2004), “Elderhostel is America’s first and the world’s largest educational travel organization for adults 55 and over” (What is Elderhostel?). Over 10,000 programs per year are offered in approximately 100 countries, with nearly 200,000 participants. There are opportunities to travel to all 50 U.S. states, most Canadian provinces, Asia, Australia,

Central and Eastern Europe, South America, the Pacific, and many other regions. Elderhostel also offers specialty programs, in addition to the traditional travel options, which include birding, “homestays”, train treks, afloat programs, and intergenerational programs where the elderly can bring younger family and friends. These programs are offered in a diverse range of activity levels, but none require an educational background. Depending on the location, educational activities may include lectures, museum trips, guided tours, and other interactive experiences.

Elderhostel strives to accommodate all interested elderly, without regard for their financial situation or physical condition. The program offers some scholarships for those with financial need. “The cornerstone of the Elderhostel mission is to ensure that our programs remain accessible to all older adults. This means that we strive to assess a reasonable tuition per program, to enable more older adults to participate” (The Elderhostel Annual Fund). Typically, all program costs are covered by tuition, with the exception of travel expenses for trips within the United States. The average cost per day for a program in the U.S. or Canada is US \$115, attracting a more affluent population.

In addition to offering trips to exotic locations both within and outside the United States, Elderhostel offers senior citizens the ability to make new friends and expand their social networks. This social interaction is paramount for bettering the lives of today’s elderly.

4. Caritas Evergreen College

Caritas-Hong Kong has established Evergreen College to cater to Third Age students. According to Betsy Ho of Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service (personal communication, 14 Nov 2004), this program was created to help educate and inspire senior citizens, an age group which is often neglected. Caritas, as a whole, aims to care for “the Last, the Lost, and the Least” of society, and the elderly certainly fall into this category. The Caritas official website (2004) states, “The Evergreen College was established to enable our senior citizens to have a new purpose of life and a new sense of pride through participating in a wide range of learning activities” (Caritas Adult & Higher Education Service section).

With 12 Elderly Centers and 8 Adult and Higher Education Centers throughout Hong Kong and over 100 different classes, Evergreen College is well on its way to enriching the lives of Hong Kong’s senior citizens (see Appendix D). The

program offers courses in Art and Culture, Health, Modern Living, and Social Sciences to help achieve this goal. As noted in the Caritas Evergreen College Course Catalog (2005), courses taught by volunteer teachers can cost from HK\$30 to \$50 (~ US\$4 to \$7), and those taught by professionals can cost upwards of HK\$500 (~ US\$70).

The management of Evergreen College is largely the responsibility of administrators who are not necessarily Third Age students, and this differs from W.I.S.E., which is run entirely by its participating members. Additionally, Evergreen College is a part of the Adult and Higher Education Service division of Caritas, which works alongside the government of Hong Kong and Caritas Services for the Elderly to run the program (Caritas official website, 2005).

E. Pedagogical Approaches

Just as important as the establishment of educational programs are the teaching methods that are used within each. Third Age educational centers are established in unique communities and the programs must examine the needs of the participating seniors. Field trips and hands-on exercises can help reinforce materials that are presented in class, as well as create a fun, social atmosphere. Inside the classroom, various teaching methods can be used to convey course material in an interesting manner.

1. How do seniors learn, and what do they want to learn?

Since it has been established that Third Age citizens are not only capable of learning, but are increasingly eager to do so, the next step is to determine the most effective way of teaching these students. As part of her Elderlearning Survey (ES), Lois Lamdin asked the participants to check “the learning resources with which you are personally most comfortable”, and some of the results were as follows:

Table II-1: Learning Styles and Preferences
(Adapted from Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 76)

Reading	74.7%
Classes, workshops, seminars	68.4%
Travel	55.7%
Group meetings	51.6%

Computer programs	13.6%
Internet	5.2%

Not surprisingly, reading was what the respondents felt most comfortable doing. Lamdin suggests that this is a result of previous educational experiences, as Third Age citizens did not have computers or any such devices when they were undergoing their formal education. The next piece of notable data is that over 55% of those surveyed expressed that travel is a key tool for use in their education (p. 76). These results could help guide the creation of a Third Age educational program that would provide the maximum benefit for its students. These data also suggest that computers and the internet may not be the right solution in creating a Third Age educational program, as fewer than 15% of respondents felt comfortable using a computer program to learn, and even less felt comfortable using the internet (p. 76). This is not to say that members of the Third Age are averse to learning how to use computers. Many of them would like to learn how to send and receive emails and digital photos from their relatives, but using computers as a tool to teach literature or the arts may be less beneficial than one might expect.

Lamdin's ES also asked the participants to check off boxes that would accurately describe why they were pursuing learning at this stage of their life, and what kinds of courses they were currently taking. Lamdin was both pleased and surprised to see that the number one reason Third Age citizens were pursuing learning was simply "for the joy of learning" (p. 75). This response was checked off by almost 80% of those who took the survey. The second most popular response was "to pursue a long-standing interest or hobby", which was selected by roughly 60% of respondents. An interesting result of this question was that less than 5% of Third Age citizens are interested in participating in a U3A in order to help with a current job or prepare for a new job.

2. Grounded Teaching

The next challenge for Third Age programs is to choose a teaching style that effectively combines those methods which seniors feel most comfortable using to learn. Stephen Brookfield (Galbraith, 1991) attempts to answer this problem with a teaching method that is both obvious and largely ignored. That is, teaching should be grounded in the learning style of the class being taught. Brookfield describes how

“[m]ost teacher training programs, however, are premised on an entirely different assumption—that for teachers to be effective they should be aware of theories and models of teaching” (p. 33).

Brookfield suggests a method which he calls “grounded teaching”, which is derived from the practice of grounded theory (Galbraith, 1991, p. 33). A researcher practicing grounded theory will collect and analyze data concurrently and will frequently pause to evaluate the current theories and data and modify them if need be. It is an adaptive process that is open-ended and is frequently modified throughout the course of research.

Grounded Teaching aims to be the “pedagogic equivalent” of grounded theory (Galbraith, 1991, p.34). It differs from the more common linear styles of teaching in that it involves frequent re-evaluation on the part of the teacher and the learners. Brookfield suggests that each student in a class keep a “learning journal”, which will contain information relating to how each student experiences learning. By examining these journals, the teacher would be able to evaluate the direction of the course and modify it in order to better adapt to the learning styles of the class. While this seems like a good idea in theory, keeping such a journal is often time consuming and as a result is largely ignored.

Brookfield also suggests that the teachers themselves complete a learning survey, in which they answer a series of questions related to their own personal experience as students (Galbraith, 1991, p. 36). By completing the survey, which asks questions about their best and worst experiences as learners, and then analyzing their own answers, they will get a better perspective on how to be effective teachers. Lastly, Brookfield suggests that teachers read recent publications which describe learning from the perspective of the learners themselves. Books such as *Reflective Learning* (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1984), *Appreciating Adults Learning* (Boud & Griffin, 1987), and *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning* (Boud, 1988) were used as the basis for the Grounded Teaching model and will give teachers invaluable insight into the perspective of learners.

3. Service Learning

As defined by the American Association of Community Colleges (1995), Service Learning is an instructional methodology that “integrates community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic

responsibility” (Century Community and Technical College, 1997, p. 4), and it is an equally effective alternative to Grounded Teaching. Service Learning combines community service projects with classroom instruction in such a way as to make the academic aspect more meaningful to the participant. By participating in these projects, Service Learning hopes to give students a better understanding of social issues, develop a sense of civic responsibility, increase participation skills, and, above all, provide an increased academic understanding.

A Service Learning program can help build a sense of community both inside and outside of the classroom. Projects such as volunteering at a nature center, sharing musical or artistic skills at a school, or volunteering at an animal shelter can be both rewarding and fulfilling for individuals involved (Century Community and Technical College, 1997). Also, a program based on the Service Learning model could provide meaning to the lives of Third Age individuals as it would allow them to use their abilities to help benefit others.

4. Active Learning

A third teaching style is known as Active Learning, or “Learning by Doing”. This style of teaching can be accurately described as a teaching method where “students participate with hands-on activities that elicit critical thinking skills and reinforce real-life experience” (Schmitz & Luxenberg, 2002, p 3). Active Learning can include, but is not limited to, Service Learning, writing, and technology-assisted learning. By integrating hands-on activities with daily lessons, it is hoped that students will become more interested in learning the presented material, as they will have a vested interest in what is being taught.

In total, Schmitz and Luxenberg (2002) were able to recognize a total of 42 separate techniques instituted by faculty members of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities that would qualify as Active Learning methods. While not every method need be practiced to have an effective teaching style, it was noted that teachers on average used 20 of the 42 recognized methods. Schmitz also noticed that students taking classes which used Active Learning methods more frequently demonstrated higher levels of involvement and effort in the classroom.

Active Learning could easily be adapted to fit a Third Age educational program, as it encompasses a very wide variety of teaching techniques. Some examples could be having the students write their own poems that match the style that

has been discussed in class, or painting a picture which reflects the artistic style which was presented. Also, group work and work which encourages the students to participate in constructive conversations with both the teacher and each other are effective Active Learning techniques.

5. Comparative analysis of educational methods

As illustrated in Table II-1, those seniors who responded felt most comfortable learning through the use of books, as well as group activities and workshops. Also, travel was indicated as a favored learning style. While each of the three teaching methods presented would be effective in educating the elderly, it seems the goal of creating a more meaningful life for the elderly would be best accomplished by the Active Learning style of teaching.

Hands on workshops which encourage the seniors to get involved in the material which they are learning, as well as in-depth class discussions, and even field trips are all incorporated in the Active Learning teaching style. Grounded Teaching, while effective in its own right, is a more goal oriented style of teaching which would be well suited for a university curriculum. Active Learning can be adapted to a more open-ended curriculum, where the goal is not a cumulative test, rather, simply supplying the joy of learning to those participating.

F. Summary

Through the research provided in our background chapter, we have investigated Third Age participants and the challenges they face after retirement. We also have examined the government and non-government organizations that exist to enrich the seniors' lives. Most importantly, we have looked into Third Age Education programs from across the globe, as well as educational methods, to gain insight into the many different facets of educating the Third Age population.

III. Methodology

The ultimate goal of our project was to make recommendations that would enrich and expand the current system of Third Age Education in Hong Kong, so that the participating elderly citizens would benefit as much as possible. In order to achieve this goal, we needed to complete several objectives which are outlined below. A number of different social science research methods were employed while in Hong Kong, including direct observation of Evergreen College classes, a survey of students, a focus group with a targeted demographic, and interviews with teachers, administrators, and students.

A. Acquire General Knowledge about Caritas Evergreen College

Before any recommendations for the Caritas Evergreen College could be made, we needed to acquire information about how the program works. We needed to know what kinds of classes are taught and how, the number and type of participants involved, what kind of funding exists for the program, and other aspects. In order to obtain this kind of information, we needed to use enrollment data, college records, and course registration information. Additionally, we observed Evergreen College classes to see how they are run and interviewed administrators to find out more about the program.

1. Observe Evergreen College Classes

Observation was the best way to find out exactly how Evergreen College classes are conducted and what teaching methods are used. Ten different classes were observed using continuous monitoring. With this style of observation, we watched the teacher and students in each class and recorded their behavior. The initial focus was on identifying what teaching methods are used in the classroom, the average class size, the ratio of men to women, and other information about the program itself. We verified these observations through our interviews with teachers and administrators. Additionally, we gathered statistical information about the facilities and resources available to the teachers.

Evergreen College offers courses in art and culture, modern living, social science, and health, which take place in a variety of locations throughout Hong Kong. We selected courses from each of the main categories, as well as from different

Evergreen College locations to ensure a broader perspective of the program. The five centers we observed were selected by our on-site liaison, Betsy Ho, as they demonstrated differences in both physical size and the economic status of the members involved.

Although we were not able to observe all classes and instructors, the observations we did make, provided valuable information for our project, which was used to help us make recommendations. Charts were helpful for reporting the results of our direct observations when representing information such as facility observations, class size and gender statistics.

2. Interview Administrators

Administrators of Evergreen College were interviewed to learn more about their personal experiences with the program and its current state. The interviews were semi-structured, using open-ended questions that allowed for discussion. Each interview followed a pre-designed protocol (see Appendix C), but additional questions were asked when appropriate to gain further information. Seven administrators were interviewed, and they were chosen so that we spoke with at least one from each Evergreen College center.

B. Conduct a Needs Assessment of the Students and Teachers of Evergreen College

Learning the opinions of the students and teachers involved in the program helped us to understand the best ways to improve Evergreen College. We needed to investigate the needs and interests of the elderly, the experiences of the teachers, and the goals of the administrators. This type of information was gained through interviews with instructors and administrators, questionnaires distributed to Third Age participants, and observation of Evergreen College classes. At times, particularly when dealing with the Third Age students, we needed the assistance of Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU) students for translation between English and Cantonese.

1. Conduct Interviews with Teachers and Administrators

During our interviews with teachers and administrators, we also collected more personal and specific information about their experiences with Evergreen

College. Our interview protocol included questions about their individual goals for the program, problems they have encountered, and any ideas they have for improvement. The information we obtained was vital to formulating our final recommendations. These data were presented in writing, as opposed to visual forms of data representation. Content analysis was used, however, to identify and quantify patterns in the interviewee responses.

2. Survey Third Age Participants

We used a questionnaire (see Appendix G) to survey the participants at Evergreen College and help us gauge their interests, needs, and experiences with the program. The questionnaire was translated from English to Cantonese to ensure that most participants would be able to respond. It was self-administered; however, assistance was given to individuals who required it by our Hong Kong Polytechnic University translators. This allowed us more time to survey a larger number of participants. We distributed the questionnaires to the students directly following scheduled classes. A wide spectrum of classes was surveyed to obtain a diverse pool of respondents. The survey asked the participants to provide basic demographic information, followed by questions on their attitudes towards different types of classes and teaching methods. In all, 93 questionnaires were distributed and returned by students at three elderly centers.

3. Observe Evergreen College Classes

While we were observing classes to find out basic information about Evergreen College, we acquired information about the feelings and thoughts of the teachers and students. This was achieved by observing their behavior and reactions to classroom situations. Overall, we looked for the students' interest in the topics covered in class and their perceived levels of attention to, understanding of, and participation in the course. Similarly, we observed the instructors' interaction with students and their enthusiasm while teaching. More detailed observations about the facilities were gathered, particularly as they pertained to the needs of the students and teachers.

Through the use of Hong Kong Polytechnic students, we tried to ensure that any differences in patterns of behavior were properly interpreted, as behavior patterns may be different in China than in the United States. The classes were chosen in the

same manner as before, attempting to observe a broad variety, based on location and subject matter.

C. Understand Why Third Age Education is Desired

To get a better understanding of why Third Age education is desired, we began by looking at the demographic characteristics of Third Age students. Some important things to look at were age, gender, and population. The age range of the participants allowed us to understand when most elderly citizens enter Third Age educational programs. Knowing the gender proportions of Third Age programs allowed us to assess the levels of interest of men and women. Researching the demographic profile of Hong Kong's population, including income levels and average education levels, gave us a perspective on the amount of potential elderly participants for Evergreen College.

1. Interview Evergreen College Students

After examining demographic characteristics, we gained additional information by interviewing participants using the designed interview protocol (see Appendix A) for Third Age participants. This process required the aid of an HKPU student to communicate our questions to the participants. To get a thorough understanding, we conducted 12 interviews with participants. We selected students to interview based on their age, gender, and location. The interview process allowed for feedback from participants concerning their thoughts about the program and why they decided to join. This helped us to assess Evergreen College and gave us ideas for possible recommendations. Also, the interview process allowed us to see if the results of our participant survey were consistent with what we learned from interviews.

2. Interview Evergreen College Teachers

To gain a more complete perspective of Evergreen College, it was important to interview the teachers in addition to the participants to understand their thoughts on the status of the college. Using our designed interview protocol for Evergreen College teachers (see Appendix B), we saw what differences of opinion occurred between instructors and participants in regards to their motivations for joining Evergreen College. Interviewing the teachers also allowed us to inquire on subjects that might not have been known to participants, such as course structuring and funding. We also

inquired about their teaching experience, methods used, and overall qualifications. Since there are far more students than teachers, this was reflected in the number of interviews we were able to conduct with teachers. We conducted interviews, both formally and informally, with five Evergreen College teachers.

D. Suggest Changes That Might Improve the Third Age Educational Program

Understanding why elders attend Evergreen College led us to our final objective of ultimately suggesting changes that may enhance the current program. Holding a focus group and using designed interview questions allowed us to assess our recommendations.

1. Hold a Focus Group with Evergreen College Students

Before finalizing our recommendations, we felt they should be heard by the participants, who would be most affected by possible program reform. To allow the students to provide feedback on our assessments, we held a focus group. This focus group required the use of a Cantonese speaking student to translate for the elderly and help serve as a moderator. This focus group gave Third Age students a chance to offer their opinions about our potential recommendations. Focus group participants were chosen based on criteria such as gender, age, income level, and education level, as we attempted to gain a diverse collection of students. This was also a good opportunity for Evergreen College participants to offer other possible recommendations they felt were more appropriate and tell us anything that we had not come to understand through our other methods.

2. Interview Evergreen College Teachers and Staff

Some of our initial ideas were not possible due to budget constraints or other reasons. These issues needed to be worked out immediately so that we offered reasonable solutions rather than suggestions which would require unavailable resources. To resolve these issues we interviewed the teachers and administrators of Evergreen College. The teachers also offered us alternatives that were similar to our original plans but more feasible. It was important that our potential recommendations be accepted by both teachers and participants so they could be useful to Caritas.

IV. Results and Analysis

The results gathered from our research on Third Age education in Hong Kong were divided into three categories: Evergreen College organization and structure, benefits, and limitations. The organization and structure provided us with an overall perspective of the general aspects of the program, specifically pertaining to its facilities, classrooms, and course offerings. We also analyzed the benefits and limitations of the program by using the results from our interviews, focus group, observations, and participant survey.

Please note that the names of the individuals interviewed have been changed to protect their privacy.

A. Evergreen College Organization and Structure

Observing the facilities and classes of Evergreen College gave us insight into how the program is organized. Consequently, this understanding helped with the interpretation of data gathered from our interviews and participant survey.

1. Facilities

While making general observations, we focused our research on two specific areas of interest. Of particular concern were the numerical data about resources and space and other general observations about the elderly centers where classes are held.

Through our visits to Evergreen College locations, we observed that the college does not have its own designated campus. Instead, the program is operated out of pre-existing elderly centers owned and operated by Caritas Senior Services. This was the case in the five centers we visited in Central, Kwun Tong, Tung Tau, Sham Shui Po, and Yuen Long. In fact, we learned the students of Evergreen College are typically members of the respective elderly centers where the classes are held.

At each Evergreen College center we visited, we recorded data concerning the facilities. These observations were made to assess the available classroom space and resources, such as number of computers and classroom seats in each of the centers. Table IV-1 illustrates a number of different observations, such as number of classrooms, from three of the centers we visited.

Table IV-1: Facility Characteristics of Evergreen College Centers

Characteristics	Central	Sham Shui Po	Yuen Long
Number of classrooms	1	3	1
Number of available seats	18	35	32
Number of computers	4	15	8
Computer room	1	1	1
Social room	1	1	2
Dining area	1	1	1

As the above chart demonstrates, the facilities at these three locations were very limited. In Central, the same space was used for the classroom, fitness area, dining room, and social area. This was similar to Yuen Long, where we observed a social room, which was sometimes arranged as a secondary classroom. Additionally, at all five centers we observed the classrooms were not large enough to hold more than 30 people, making it difficult for class enrollment to increase substantially.

2. Classrooms

In order to understand the general characteristics and classroom statistics at Evergreen College, we observed classes in Central, Sham Shui Po, and Yuen Long. We also collected enrollment data from the Kwun Tong center to compare with the data we gathered from the other centers. Our findings at the individual locations gave us a general perspective of each center as well as a basic understanding of Evergreen College as a whole. At the centers, we observed two basic characteristics of the program, which included teaching methods and participant statistics.

a) Teaching Methods

At three of the centers that we traveled to, we had the opportunity to observe at least one if not more classes. By observing the interactions between the teachers and the students, we were able to distinguish which teaching methods were in use. The majority of the classes we observed demonstrated the Active Learning style of teaching.

In Yuen Long, we observed four separate classes: English, Mandarin, Cantonese Opera, and Chinese Painting. In both the English and Mandarin classes, the students were given a packet for the daily lessons. Typically, the packets included

new material with the corresponding Cantonese for reference. The exercises in the packets usually revolved around a common theme; in the case of the English class that we observed, the lesson included food-related vocabulary that could be found on a Café de Coral menu. Additionally, some teachers distributed extra materials such as flashcards of vocabulary words for students to use.

At the Central center, we observed another Mandarin class, which was being taught in much the same way as in Yuen Long. However, all of the students in the class had a textbook from which the lessons were being taught rather than a photocopied language packet. This may be because the Central Elderly Center is located in a much more affluent section of Hong Kong. The teachers at both centers also used a whiteboard for writing important aspects of the lesson out for the students. It was observed that the whiteboard was an essential component to visually instruct the students, regardless of the subject of the course.

As for the art and culture classes we observed at the Yuen Long and Sham Shui Po centers, we noticed the same style of Active Learning that had been present in the language classes. Specifically, in the Chinese painting classes at both centers, the instructors first gave a general lesson for the class, and then the students began practicing what they had just been taught. The instructors would then walk around the classroom and give each student individual instruction and assistance.

Somewhat different from the other classes we observed, the Karaoke and Cantonese Opera classes at Sham Shui Po provided social opportunities for the students more so than strict educational lessons. Both of these classes had teachers who acted more like facilitators than educators. The Cantonese Opera class at Yuen Long, however, had some instruction on the pitch and tones of the notes.

b) Participant statistics

Another important observation made when visiting the Evergreen College center locations was basic information on the number and type of participants involved. The information collected included attributes such as the male-to-female ratio and class size. In the majority of the classes we observed, the number of female students was much greater than the number of male students. The following table is a comparison of the number of students by gender as well as the respective class sizes.

Table IV-2: Selected Class Sizes from Evergreen College Centers

Center	Class Size	Number of Males	Number of Females
YUEN LONG			
English	8	1	7
Mandarin	20	2	18
Cantonese Opera	16	0	16
Chinese Painting	7	2	5
SHAM SHUI PO			
Tai Chi	30	9	21
Chinese Drawing	9	2	7
Chinese Opera	19	3	16
Karaoke	10	5	5
CENTRAL			
Mandarin	17	1	16

At the Central, Sham Shui Po, and Yuen Long centers, direct observation of classes was our primary method of obtaining enrollment data as the actual figures were unavailable. However, this type of information was provided to us in Kwun Tong during an interview with Sandy.

Table IV-3 Table IV-3 illustrates the number of students enrolled in each Evergreen College course available at Kwun Tong.

Table IV-3: Selected Course Enrollments – Kwun Tong Center

Courses	Number of Students Enrolled
Social Science	
Concern Group to Community Affairs	13
Health Promotion	
Tai Chi 8 Steps	11
Aerobic Dance	28
Culture Talent	
Elementary Chinese	29
Elementary English	15

Table IV-3 (continued): Selected Course Enrollments – Kwun Tong Center

Courses	Number of Students Enrolled
Putonghua	36
Cantonese Hit Song Singing	16
Putonghua Singing	17
Chinese Opera Forum	17
Information Technology	
Introduction to Computer Operation	16
Further Computer Operation	4

Other participant information was gathered through interviews with administrators from Evergreen College centers in Central, Sham Shui Po, and Yuen Long, Kwun Tong, and Tung Tau. In the beginning of our interview with Susan (see Appendix D), an administrator at the Yuen Long center, we learned valuable statistical information about the members of the program. There are 1,460 current members of the elderly center with 270 participants enrolled in Evergreen College. However, not all students are members of the elderly center because they do not meet the requirement of 60 years of age. Susan also informed us that the average class size was 15 students.

3. Course Offerings

Although it may appear as though the average class size is somewhat small, this did not indicate a lessened demand for Evergreen College classes. According to the Evergreen College course catalog, there is a wide range of courses that are offered. Courses are held at introductory, intermediate, as well as advanced levels depending on the subject material. Happiness Workshop, Mind over Mood - Mutual Support Workshop for Depressed Elderly, Yoga 2, General English, Elementary Chinese 4, and Introduction to Use of Computer and Internet are just some examples of the courses available to Evergreen College students.

The course catalog consists of a compilation of all the classes from the 20 Evergreen College centers. Some classes, however, are only offered at specific centers because of teacher availability. Members are welcomed to take classes at other centers if there is a class that they are interested in and can afford the additional

travel costs. Typically, classes are an hour to an hour and a half long, but can extend to two hours in some cases. Also, the courses are usually only taught once a week due to classroom availability.

Feedback from participants on the courses offered by Evergreen College was another issue that we investigated. In order to assess the satisfaction of the students taking classes at Evergreen College, end-of-course evaluations are used. On these evaluation questionnaires, students are asked to rate the classes on a scale of one to four, with four being the best. Comments are also encouraged to accentuate positive and negative opinions of the students towards the program. However, according to the administrators, the results from these assessments are not being well-maintained. This may be because administrators are already busy with other tasks. Instead, results from the questionnaires are evaluated by the administrators, but only utilized when concern is expressed.

B. Evergreen College Benefits and Limitations

After observing the general characteristics of some Evergreen College centers, we shifted our focus to the benefits and limitations of the current Evergreen College system. Our survey and interview results gave us key insight into the attitudes of the participating seniors, and through these data we were able to recognize the benefits of the Caritas model for Third Age education.

1. Benefits

Based on our interviews with students, teachers, and administrators, the benefits of Evergreen College fell into two main categories, which were social interaction and lifelong learning. Additionally, other key benefits were discovered; however, all of them led towards the goal of enriching the lives of the participants.

a) Social Interaction

One of the most important benefits for seniors who come to Evergreen College is the opportunity to socialize with others. Evergreen College offers a variety of opportunities for seniors to socialize by offering courses, social rooms, and occasional field trips. We found many of our interviewees focused on social interaction as one of the main reasons to attend Evergreen College. In an interview with Jane (see Appendix F), when asked “What was your motivation for joining Evergreen

College?” she responded that the main reason she joined was to socialize. She further said that the classes were just a bonus to the opportunity to make new friends. When asked “What is your favorite part of Evergreen College?”, Jane repeated that the opportunity to make new friends was an important benefit of the program. She explained that because she is old and her family has moved far away, Evergreen College has allowed her the opportunity to expand her social network. This benefit was reconfirmed many times from other students during informal interviews.

Throughout our research, it became clear that Evergreen College was offering its students an excellent opportunity to increase their social networks. The responses to survey questions such as “Has Evergreen College improved the quality of your life?”, “How would you rate Evergreen College overall?”, and “Would you recommend Evergreen College to a friend?” were largely positive. We believed the responses to these questions were a direct result of the students’ opportunity to socialize with the other elderly members, as the goal of any Third Age program is to enrich both the social and intellectual lives of its students.

The survey results also reaffirmed what we discovered through our interviews, such as how many of the elderly are lonely in their homes. In our interviews we learned how some of the females were widowed, and most of them have experienced the loss of a friend. Additionally, those that live with their family described how they would spend most of the day alone because their children were away at work. April, one of the students we interviewed (see Appendix F), explained to us that, of her five children, she can only see one of them regularly, as the other four have very busy jobs. It is for reasons like this that, when asked if Evergreen College has improved their quality of life, the overwhelming majority of students responded positively, as illustrated in Figure IV-1.

Has Evergreen College improved the quality of your life?

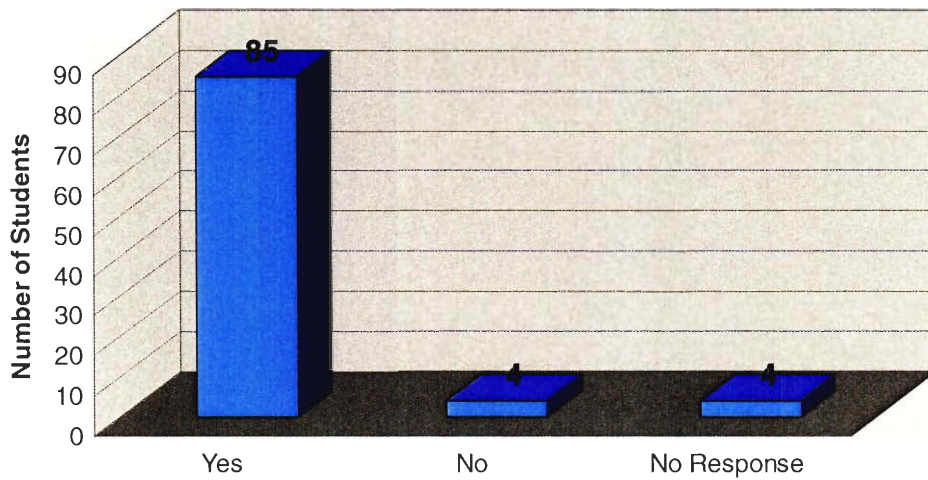


Figure IV-1: Evergreen College Enrichment of Student Life

The students' overall rating of Evergreen College also illustrates their satisfaction with the social interaction they are provided. As the following graph shows, the seniors appreciate the ability to meet new people of similar interests and expand their social networks. From the 93 questionnaires collected, Evergreen College earned an overall rating of 4.54 out of 5. This rating demonstrates that, according to the students, Evergreen College has thus far been successful in achieving its goal of enriching the social lives of the seniors involved. However, we still needed to interview both teachers and administrators in order to gather their unique perspectives.

How would you rate Evergreen College overall?

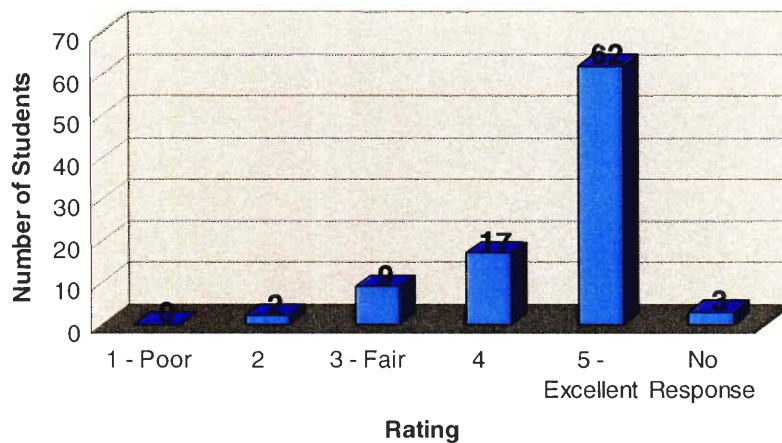


Figure IV-2: Overall Evergreen College Rating

We found that the teachers and administrators also feel that the program offers an excellent opportunity for the seniors to socialize. Danielle (see Appendix D), an administrator at Evergreen College, described the result of learning to be less important for seniors than the process of learning because it allows them to support each other and interact with other seniors. We found many responses from teachers that also confirmed social interaction is a focal point of Evergreen College. This reinforced what we had learned from students in the understanding that, unlike some traditional continuing education programs, which may lead to a degree or career change, Evergreen College has a social aspect which is essential to its success.

b) Lifelong Learning

Another benefit of Evergreen College is the opportunity to take classes and pursue lifelong interests. In an interview with Hillary (see Appendix F), she responded that her motivation for joining Evergreen College was the opportunity to learn from classes. In another interview, Randy (see Appendix F) responded that “class interests” were his main motivation for joining Evergreen College. In our informal interviews, we found many students enjoyed learning new things such as making greeting cards and sending emails. From these responses, it was clear that there is a strong desire for the elderly who join Evergreen College to continue learning.

To further understand the intellectual aspects of Evergreen College, we asked teachers and administrators why they believe the elderly come to their program. In an interview with Rachel (see Appendix D), an Evergreen College administrator, she explained that the educational value of the courses is very important. The information obtained from these courses allows the seniors to have skills that enhance the quality of their lives. Rachel told us that if the elderly learn how to read and write, they can go to the market and know the prices of items. However, before any conclusions could be made, we needed a wider spectrum of responses from our survey to confirm what we discovered in our interviews.

The survey asked the students to rate the courses offered at Evergreen College. As Figure IV-3 illustrates, the students were quite pleased with the current course offerings of Evergreen College. The overall rating of the courses was 4.34 out of 5. While this is good, it was not quite as high as the overall rating of the college, leading us to believe that there is room for improvements in course offerings. Also, this could

signify that the social interaction offered by Evergreen College outweighs the intellectual benefits of the program, reaffirming what Danielle stated – the result of learning is not as important as the learning process.

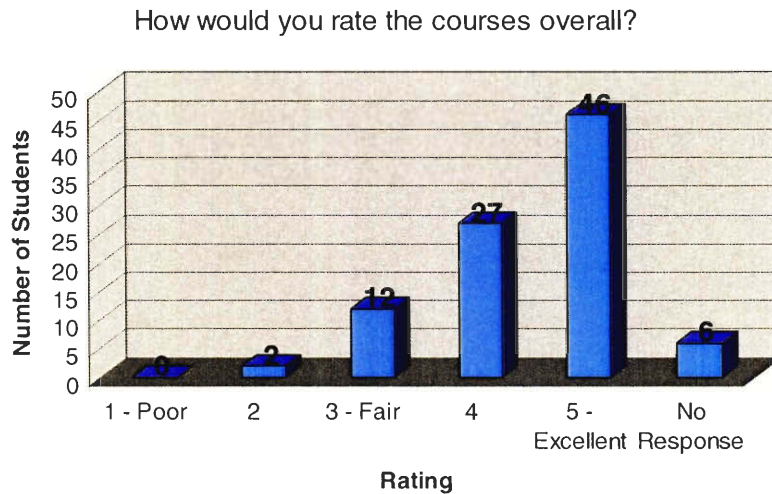


Figure IV-3: Overall Evergreen College Course Rating

Also, of the 93 questionnaires collected, 63 students responded that they would be interested in taking computer related courses, and only 27 responded negatively to this idea. Computer classes can range from learning how to type with Chinese characters to learning how to make computer greeting cards for their relatives. When asked about taking courses which were not currently offered, 43 students responded that they would be interested in taking courses which were not available at their center. There were 35 students who responded they were content with the current courses, and 15 students chose not to answer this question. Some respondents even wrote in suggestions, such as a cooking class or photography class.

c) Other Benefits

While the two main benefits of Evergreen College include social interaction and lifelong learning, we also noted other key benefits through interviews with students and administrators. In interviews with Becky and Rachel (see Appendix D), improved self-esteem seemed to be one benefit for the elderly at Evergreen College. When the participants learn new things at the center they can feel a sense of accomplishment about their achievements and this boosts their self-esteem. Another benefit we learned through an interview with Jane (see Appendix F) is that while she

spends time at Evergreen College, her family is relieved of the burden of caring for her, and they feel comfortable knowing that she is in a safe environment.

2. Limitations

In addition to all the benefits that Evergreen College offers its students, we observed several limitations that are preventing this program from further enriching the lives of the participants. These issues, such as space, teachers, and funding, among others, are preventing Evergreen College from reaching out to some of its members and, in some cases, are even preventing interested elderly from joining.

a) Space

The most obvious limitation that we discovered through our observations was the shortage of available classroom space. The Evergreen College center at Yuen Long had a single classroom, and, on our first visit, we noted that the room also contained cardboard boxes and metal scaffolding. There was a second room that doubled as both a social room, where the seniors would gather for meals, and as a secondary classroom when it was needed. Also, the computer room was just barely big enough for the eight computers that were placed inside.

At Central, when it came time to teach the Mandarin language class, social workers at the center simply arranged folding tables and chairs into rows, and a white board was wheeled into place. The class did not even have its own devoted classroom. Rather, it was in the main common area, and a divider was used to separate the class from the rest of the center. At both Central and Yuen Long, teachers used portable whiteboards and markers in order to teach the class, and, while this may seem insufficient at first glance, in practice it seemed to be enough.

At Sham Shui Po, the size of some of the classes was large enough to necessitate the borrowing of classroom space. Fortunately, there is a government building located across the street from their center, and they were able to borrow a dance room, free of charge, so that they could teach Tai Chi to all 40 registered members of the class. However, not all Evergreen College centers are fortunate enough to have such a building located nearby, and, as they are unable to acquire more space, they must fill classes on a first come first served basis.

Due to issues like these, it is easy to see why so many people we talked to were quick to respond that space is the main shortcoming of Evergreen College. The

limited space is causing some people to be turned away from classes which they would enjoy taking, and, without more classroom space, it is impossible to add more computers, which is one of the biggest draws for seniors to attend Evergreen College classes.

b) Teachers

A second important limitation of Evergreen College is a shortage of teachers willing and able to educate Hong Kong's elderly. Even with enough space and high enrollment, the program cannot be successful without tutors who are well-trained and passionate enough to run the courses.

Currently, the teachers from Evergreen College create their own lesson plans and course materials, which are then submitted for approval. The teachers have freedom as to how their courses are taught, with little intervention from the administrators of the program. Most are volunteers; however, for some of the more advanced classes that are offered, professional teachers are hired, and they are paid a nominal fee. In some cases, teachers even take other classes offered at Evergreen College. Becky (see Appendix D), an administrator from the Yuen Long elderly center, said that the money that teachers are paid is very little, and this money is only enough for travel expenses. We learned from our interviews with the administrators from Central, Sham Shui Po, and Yuen Long that the teacher selection process is fairly simple. According to Susan (see Appendix D), the applicants must file an application and complete an interview in order to be hired. Oftentimes, Evergreen College teachers were formerly students themselves; however, new teachers can be acquired through student recommendations or online applications. These teachers come from a diverse spectrum of backgrounds, and some have been teachers in the past, while others have had no formal training. A computer teacher at the Yuen Long center, Steve (see Appendix E), said that originally he was an Evergreen College student who was trained by Becky and then decided to give his knowledge to others.

The teachers who are working at Evergreen College are highly rated by the elderly. In a survey of Evergreen College students at three centers (see Appendix H), they gave the teachers an average rating of 4.60 on a 1-to-5 scale. The breakdown of the results from the survey is detailed below.

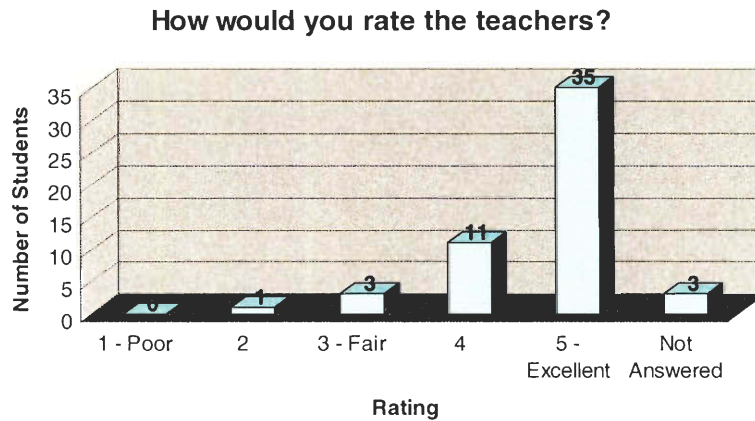


Figure IV-4: Evergreen College Teacher Rating

An interview with Becky, however, made the problem clear. She stated that one of the biggest weaknesses of Evergreen College is the lack of professional tutors. As Becky pointed out, recruitment of teachers with the proper motivation and ability is very difficult. There is a large difference between teaching children and elderly, and any member of the Evergreen College staff needs to understand this difference. Because of this, Becky feels that the program needs to strengthen its training for teachers.

Another important factor causing the shortage of teachers was pointed out by Jessica and Joe (see Appendix D), administrators from the Tung Tau elderly center. The elderly prefer that Evergreen College classes be offered during the day, as their families return from work in the evening. Unfortunately, many tutors are busy during this time with their own jobs and responsibilities.

c) Organization / Program Identity

While we were not originally anticipating Evergreen College to suffer from an unclear identity, throughout our interviews it became more and more apparent that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. When we asked about the students' involvement with Evergreen College, they described situations of how the elderly have learned how to cut hair or take blood pressure readings, and can then go to the homes of other senior citizens and care for them and deliver meals. While this is definitely a positive experience for the elderly, it is not directly related to Evergreen College, and is actually a service provided by the Caritas Senior Services division.

Also, we discovered that many of the centers have member councils, and, while we were initially led to believe that these councils were involved in running Evergreen College, upon further questioning we learned that the member councils were actually involved in providing suggestions for all aspects of the senior centers.

While we are unsure of the exact reason for this confusion, we suspect that it may be because Evergreen College and the Caritas senior centers are very closely intertwined. As Evergreen College lacks its own devoted campus, most classes are held within Caritas Elderly Centers. Additionally, many of the students of Evergreen College described to us how, once they became a member of Caritas, they later found out that they had the ability to take classes. While most elderly are aware that they are enrolled in Evergreen College, some simply consider themselves to be taking classes at the Caritas Elderly Centers.

Secondly, our results led us to believe that, while Evergreen College is organized well, there is still room for improvement. When trying to schedule interviews with administrators, we often had to make appointments several weeks in advance because the administrators of the senior centers were extraordinarily busy. Because of this, we often suggested that they could utilize the Evergreen College students to perform some of the administrative tasks, and thereby relieve some of the burden that is placed on the administrators. We discussed with them the idea of a member council comprised entirely of Evergreen College students that would be in charge of such aspects as organizing field trips, advertising, or deciding which courses were to be offered.

This idea was well received by each of the administrators we interviewed. Many of them even stated that, for example, the members already have some involvement in deciding where field trips go. However, the administrators take over at that point, and organize the field trip. In an interview with Becky (see Appendix D), we suggested that the members be the ones to organize the field trips, and not the administrators. While she thought this to be a good idea, she did note that it takes time and energy to train the elderly to take on administrative roles, and she felt the mindset of the elderly is not conducive to wanting to contribute back to Evergreen College. Many of the elderly go to Evergreen College in order to get something out of the program, be it knowledge or social interaction, and it takes time to cultivate a good relationship with them so that they will want to give back and contribute to Evergreen College. She also noted that, currently, she does not believe there is

adequate motivation amongst enough of the elderly members for them to fill an administrative role in the college, however, in a couple of years, this may no longer be the case. As we have seen before, W.I.S.E. has demonstrated how seniors can help themselves by taking an active role in their education.

Lastly, we wanted to know what level of communication there was between the different centers. During our interviews, we questioned the administrators about whether or not the centers communicate amongst themselves, and we were told that there was some communication between the centers. We found that administrators will often call other centers in order to request one of their teachers or communicate with each other via email. Additionally, we were informed that there had been a meeting in the past where all of the administrators came together to discuss different aspects of Evergreen College. However, since that meeting, there have been no further forums devoted solely to Evergreen College. Rather, the administrators will gather once every two months to discuss all aspects of their elderly centers, with Evergreen College being just one of many topics of discussion.

d) Funding

Of course, very few changes to Evergreen College are possible without proper funding. This is one of the most limiting factors that the program faces as well as one of the hardest to remedy.

According to Susan (see Appendix D), an administrator from the Yuen Long elderly center, we learned that Evergreen College has a quarterly budget of approximately HK \$10,000 to 12,000 (\approx US \$1300-\$1560). Due to these limitations, the supplies for the classes are at a minimum. In some classes, like the Chinese Painting class, the students are required to bring their own supplies. In other classes, as we learned from Becky (see Appendix D), the teachers must provide any supplies they would like to use that are not already available at the center. Aside from classroom materials, Evergreen College is also in need of funding for more computers and larger facilities.

However, Becky stated that the program has not applied for any kind of direct government funding. Only the elderly centers that house Evergreen College are subsidized by the Social Welfare Department of the Hong Kong government. Instead, the program is funded by donations, low tuition fees, and whatever money is apportioned to the college from the elderly centers. Unfortunately, according to

Danielle (see Appendix D), an administrator at Sham Shui Po, a large majority of the elderly centers' funding goes to staff salaries and maintenance costs. This leaves Evergreen College only a small budget for classes and social activities.

This does not mean, however, that the government does not see Third Age education as a priority. According to Dr. Robert Young (see Appendix L), a professor at the University of Hong Kong and expert in continuing education, the government of Hong Kong recognizes the growing elderly population. Already, the Social Welfare Department of the government is funding many university continuing education programs. He was unsure, however, whether money would be available for a program like Evergreen College.

e) Male Enrollment

Although Evergreen College appears to be very popular among female senior citizens, male enrollment in the program is minimal. The following table displays a gender breakdown of the number of participants enrolled in Evergreen College at the Kwun Tong center. We also observed this trend throughout other centers we visited.

Table IV-4: Gender Breakdown of Enrollment Data – Kwun Tong Center

	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Males	13	10
Females	113	90
Total	126	

Our survey results seemed to validate this trend. Below is a chart giving the gender breakdown of survey respondents.

Gender Breakdown of Survey Respondents (n=93)

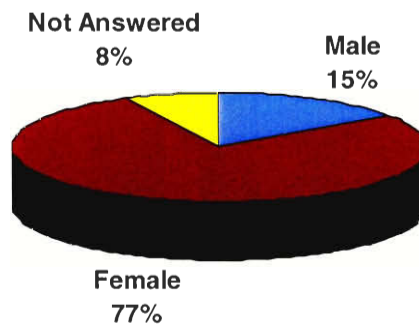


Figure IV-5: Gender Breakdown of Survey Respondents

All interviewees and focus group participants agreed that men make up a very small portion of Evergreen College students. One particular interviewee, Steve (see Appendix E), stated that many men do not attend classes because they enjoy smoking and gambling, two things that are prohibited within the centers. Danielle (see Appendix D), an administrator from the Sham Shui Po elderly center, seemed to agree with this opinion. She listed rules against smoking and an overabundance of women as two reasons why men might be hesitant to become involved. When asked what classes might attract more males, Steve responded that they may enjoy learning guitar, Chinese violin, photography, or dancing.

Focus group participants (see Appendix I) at the Sham Shui Po elderly center, however, seemed skeptical. They pointed toward a difference in personalities between men and women as the cause for the lack of male involvement. In fact, one participant said that a male relative had volunteered as a teacher at one of the centers but quit soon after when he became annoyed with the large number of women there. One male student, during an informal interview (see Appendix J), thought that many men just are not interested in learning. We have found through our research, however, that social interaction is one of the largest benefits Evergreen College brings to the elderly. Men certainly seem to have an interest in socializing, as they often do in parks with other men. As such, it seems that the problem may be more with finding opportunities for men to socialize at Evergreen College rather than ways to interest them in education.

Becky (see Appendix D) felt that the lack of males involved in Evergreen College may be due to the difference in life expectancies. She also agreed with the focus group participants that males' personalities may be inhibiting them from becoming involved. Becky suggested that men enjoy being independent and are not as eager as women are to make friends.

Dr. Robert Young (see Appendix L), professor of psychology at the University of Hong Kong, felt that the solution is to offer more technical courses for the males, such as electronics or household repair courses. He noted that Evergreen College, as well as many other Third Age education programs, provides many cultural and social science courses, which are typically more interesting for female students. Dr. Young, however, pointed out that many technical courses require expensive equipment that Evergreen College may not be able to supply.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

From our results and analysis, we determined three categories of recommendations for enhancing Evergreen College: Social Interaction, Organization, and Expansion. Our social interaction recommendations encourage more social opportunities for members, while organization and expansion recommendations aim to improve Evergreen College's ability to accommodate the increasing senior population.

A. Social Interaction

We found in our results that social interaction is one of the largest and most important benefits for seniors attending Evergreen College. The seniors seem to be very satisfied with the program and its social aspect. However, many feel improvements can be made. Because of the overwhelming response of seniors enjoying social programs, we recommend that Evergreen College have more activities for them. Our recommendations for more social programs include:

- **Hold More Field Trips** – Interviews and a focus group revealed that many of the seniors at Evergreen College enjoy traveling and would be willing to do more of it if given the opportunity. We suggest that the seniors organize and run field trips themselves. We found through interviews that many of the seniors held jobs which required organizational skills that would be more than adequate for such a task. Seniors could select travel destinations and make arrangements for transportation and other tasks that administrators might otherwise do.
- **Provide More Social Events** – We feel that more social events sponsored by Evergreen College would be well received by participants. These events could be organized and run by elderly participants to alleviate administrative work. We have noticed many seniors who enjoy games such as Mah-Jongg or Chinese checkers. A tournament or social competition offered for games like these might be appreciated by the elderly and would further the social interaction among members.

B. Organization

Our research of the limitations of Evergreen College has shown that the program's organization is one area that could potentially benefit from improvement. In order to address some of the weaknesses associated with the organization of Evergreen College, we identified three recommendations that could improve the quality of this program in the future.

- **Improve End-of-Course Evaluations** - Currently, the Evergreen College centers are using a uniform end-of-course evaluation questionnaire to obtain feedback from students. While we have noticed the questionnaire to be very useful, the results are not well maintained. One way to improve the effectiveness of the course evaluations would be to develop a standard system for record keeping which would allow Evergreen College to maximize the benefits of the feedback it receives from the students.
- **More Member Involvement** - Another limitation that we noticed at the centers, described in Chapter IV Section B, was that the administrators involved with the program were all extremely busy. More member involvement could help alleviate stress on the administrators, giving them time to do other things with the program that there has been no time for in the past. Tasks such as event planning would require little or no administrative training for the seniors. One suggestion would be:
 - Create a Members' Council devoted to Evergreen College. This council could take on tasks associated with the program, such as planning activities, which would also help to reduce work for the administrators. Although the administrators were enthusiastic about this suggestion, they seem to believe the ability level and motivation of the participants is not currently high enough to take on more complicated tasks. As we already discussed, the W.I.S.E. program is run entirely by its members and is fully functional. By developing a Members' Council at each center, Evergreen College could gradually move in this direction.
- **Hold an Annual Administrative Meeting for all Evergreen College Centers** – One other issue related to the organization of Evergreen College was that communication among the center administrators was limited. An

annual meeting for the administrators from all of the centers within Hong Kong, devoted specifically to Evergreen College, would allow them to share ideas and discuss what works and what does not at each center. From our research, we learned that one meeting was held when Evergreen College was originally created, but all other meetings since then have been to discuss general issues regarding the elderly centers. This type of collaboration among center administrators could be extremely beneficial to the program.

C. Expansion

It has become clear through interviews with students, teachers, and administrators that one of the largest limitations for Evergreen College is the lack of possibilities for expansion of the program. Although Evergreen College is very popular among current students, there are few ways for the program to attract additional members. Specifically, areas of concern include the limited space and supplies, low male membership, and lack of publicity and advertising. Our recommendations for the expansion of Evergreen College are as follows:

- **Increase Classroom Space and Resources** – Observations and interviews have made it clear that classroom space is too limited at Evergreen College centers. Although many centers have tried to find other options, space is still a large issue. Some suggestions that could be looked into for increasing classroom space and resources include:
 - Contact local churches, community centers, or other nearby buildings to see if renting space is an option
 - Consider early morning courses or outdoor classes, particularly parks for physical education courses.
 - Collaborate with local companies, particularly ones with an interest in the elderly, who may be willing to donate or discount supplies for the centers, especially computers. The members' council, which we have recommended above, could take on this responsibility.
- **Expand Male Membership** - We have found through our results that males make up a very small portion of Evergreen College members. We feel that an increased male population would enhance the overall atmosphere and encourage expansion. For this to occur, there first needs to be more opportunities for males to socialize with other males through the program.

Men will then be more willing to take part in the educational aspects offered by Evergreen College. A suggestion to attract more male members is:

- Offer more male-oriented classes. Possible courses recommended by male interviewees included photography, guitar, Chinese violin, and wood carving.
- **Increase Overall Membership** – If space issues can be addressed, Evergreen College could benefit from an increase in overall membership. The more participants the program gains, the better Evergreen College will achieve its goal. Some possible ways to increase membership are:
 - Offer incentives for current students to bring a spouse or friend to a class. A discount on course fees or a guaranteed spot in a popular class could be given.
 - Give discounts for students bringing a guest on a field trip.
- **Search for More Volunteer Teachers and Increase Teacher Training Programs** – Another limitation of Evergreen College seems to be a shortage of teachers. Although it appears the current administration is aware of the problem, we feel a more extensive search for volunteers would be beneficial to the program. Particular attention should be paid to recruiting elderly tutors, who would have a more flexible schedule.

Evergreen College students may actually be the best source for additional teachers. As we noticed in the case of W.I.S.E., it is possible for a Third Age program to maintain its own population of teachers simply through current members. As volunteers are acquired, a more formal teacher training program might be needed. This should emphasize the important differences between teaching methods used in Third Age education and other forms of schooling.

- **Enhance Advertising** - Evergreen College's advertising is currently not as effective as we would have hoped. An increase in the amount of advertising will help to attract new students, male or female, and teachers to the program, helping to achieve the previous three recommendations. Advertising should include:
 - Male-oriented advertising
 - Advertising for volunteer teachers

- Advertising that stresses an educational background is not necessary to attend classes.

D. Evergreen College Vision for the Future

It is our firm belief that for a Third Age educational program to be truly rewarding, it must be placed in the hands of the participating elderly. Our interview with Charlene Martin (see Appendix K) made this clear, as she described how managing their own Third Age education program gives the students of W.I.S.E a sense of accomplishment that they could not otherwise achieve. Part of our vision for the future of Evergreen College involves the integration of members into the daily administrative duties of the program. We have been told that currently the participating elderly may not be ready to handle the full responsibility of Evergreen College. However, we believe that by starting with supporting tasks, such as planning field trips, and then steadily increasing the responsibility given to the students as the overall experience of the elderly population increases, eventually Evergreen College could be completely handed over to its students.

Secondly, the acquisition of more space and funding will need to occur for Evergreen College to continue to grow. If Evergreen College were to apply for direct government funding, and not rely on money from Caritas' existing budget, then these problems could potentially be alleviated. In our interview with Jessica (see Appendix D), we were told that there are primary schools which may be closed due to current low enrollment levels. If Evergreen College were to acquire one such school, then it could be converted into a school for the elderly, which would greatly alleviate the space issues at some Caritas Elderly Centers.

Additionally, Evergreen College must continue to foster a strong community relationship with its members. Currently, the majority of participants are reportedly not inclined to give back to Evergreen College; rather, they go to Evergreen College in order to receive education or have the opportunity for social interaction. By creating strong relationships with the students, this attitude can be changed so that the elderly will deeply care about Evergreen College and will want to make it the best program they can. By achieving this relationship, Evergreen College will have no problem succeeding in the future, as the members will do whatever it takes to sustain the program that has enriched their lives so much.

E. Future Research Suggestions

Although the results from our research enabled us to make recommendations for Caritas Evergreen College, seven weeks was too short a time period to gain a complete understanding of the program's offerings and potential limitations. More research can be done in areas which our IQP could not address. Our suggestions for further research include:

- Exploration into the Adult and Higher Education centers of Evergreen College.
- A more detailed study of the government's potential role in funding Evergreen College programs.
- Research into elderly male interests and methods of attracting them to Evergreen College.
- Exploration of other Third-Age programs in Hong Kong as a comparison to Evergreen College.
- Research into the specifics of getting donations and supplies from the private sector.

F. Summary

The demand for Third Age education programs will continue to increase in the coming years. We hope that our recommendations will allow Evergreen College to grow as well as meet the needs of the ever-changing elderly population.

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Appendix A – Interview Protocol for Students

1. How did you find out about Evergreen College?
2. What was your motivation for joining Evergreen College?
3. Are there any courses or programs you wish were offered, but aren't?
 - a. What kinds of classes have you taken so far?
 - b. What has been your favorite class so far, and why?
4. What is your favorite part of Evergreen College?
 - a. Would you feel comfortable naming your least favorite part?
5. Do you wish anything was done differently?
 - a. Would you like to be involved in running some aspect of Evergreen College?
(member council, advertising committee, field trip organization, etc.)
 - b. If so, how would you like to be involved or make a contribution?
 - c. Do you get "homework"? Do you want "homework"?
6. Has paying for Evergreen College classes been difficult for you?
7. Do you feel you've learned valuable information since you've begun taking classes?
 - a. For how much longer do you want to continue learning?
8. What are your thoughts on computers and the internet?
 - a. Do you understand how to use them?
 - b. Have you taken computer courses at Evergreen College
 - c. Would you be interested in taking courses that teach how to use them?
 - d. What would you use computers for, if you knew how to use them?
9. Do you have any friends that aren't involved in Evergreen College, and why do you think they choose not to participate?

For Male Interviewees

1. Why do you think so few males are a part of Evergreen College?
 - a. Is there a desire amongst men your age to remain in the workforce?
 - b. At what age did you retire?
2. What do you believe could be done to attract more men?
 - a. What courses could be offered?
 - b. Should classes be at a more convenient time?

Appendix B – Interview Protocol for Teachers

1. Are you a volunteer teacher and if so why do you volunteer at Evergreen College?
 - a. How did you find out about Evergreen College?
 - b. Were you previously a teacher before you became a volunteer at EC?
 - c. Have you ever taken any courses at EC?
2. What do you think are the benefits of Third Age education?
 - a. Is the social aspect of Evergreen College just as important as the intellectual aspect?
3. What makes Third Age education different from other types of education?
 - a. Do you think there are certain teaching styles that are more beneficial?
4. What do you think are some activities that senior citizens would most enjoy?
5. What do you think are some reasons that senior citizens become involved in this program?
 - a. Can you think of any ways that would help more senior citizens become involved in this program?
6. If you could change just one thing about Evergreen College, what would it be?
7. Why do you believe there are so few male students taking classes?
 - a. Have you ever taught a class that had a large amount of male students?
8. Do you think the supplies and/or facilities at Evergreen College are adequate?
9. Does this center use an end-of-course evaluation form?
 - a. do you get to see the results of this survey
 - b. how are the results used to better this program
 - c. if no evaluation form is used, do you think it would be helpful
10. Do you find that your students are enthusiastic during class time?
 - a. What, if anything, is done about students that seem disinterested in the class, especially if they are affecting other students

Appendix C – Interview Protocols for Administrators

Interview Questions for Administrators (General)

- How is Evergreen College Organized?
 - o How is it funded?
 - Do you receive any donations (especially from companies invested in the interest of the elderly)?
 - o What (if any) involvement do the members have in running this center?
 - o What is the annual budget for Evergreen College?
 - o What are the expenses of Evergreen College?
 - o Are teachers given a budget for supplies?
- How are the classes organized?
 - o How many members are at this elderly center, and of those, how many take Evergreen College classes?
 - o What is the average class size?
 - o How do you get teachers for the Evergreen College classes?
 - Are teachers given any compensation, like the ability to take classes free of charge, etc.?
- How do elderly find out about taking classes at your senior center?
 - o Solely word of mouth?
 - o Do you advertise in places like churches or other community centers?
- What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of Evergreen College?
 - o What changes (if any) would you like to see made to Evergreen College?
 - o For a program that is less than two years old, are you happy with the direction and structure of Evergreen College?
 - o How much do you know about what is being done at other Evergreen College centers?
- Other Questions
 - o Why do you think there are so few male students at your center?

- Do you use any surveys or questionnaires of your own to gather feedback from the participating students and/or teachers?
 - What is done with the results of these surveys?

- At this point we have come up with a list of possible recommendations that we believe to be feasible and beneficial for Evergreen College. We will present these recommendations to the interviewee in hopes of getting some constructive criticism.

Interview Questions for Becky:

1. How did you get involved with Evergreen College?
 - How long have you been working at this center?
2. What is your favorite part about working with Evergreen College?
3. What exactly does your job entail?
4. In your opinion, what are the most significant benefits for the elderly that join the program?
5. Has the number of members taking courses increased?
6. Why do you think there are so few men involved in the program?
7. Would you like to see members have more involvement in running the program?
 - Do you think having more volunteer committees with members would be helpful in lessening the workload of the administrators?
8. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of Evergreen College?
 - What changes (if any) would you like to see made to Evergreen College?
 - For a program that is less than two years old, are you happy with the direction of Evergreen College?
 - How much do you know about what is being done at other Evergreen centers?
 - Have you looked into ways to expand your center's facilities, especially computer facilities? If so, how?
9. Once you retire, will you become a member of Evergreen College?
10. Do you have a Member's Council at this center?
 - What responsibilities does this council have?
 - How many members are part of it?
 - Are the positions elected?
11. Has your center tried to apply for government funding for Evergreen College specifically, not just your senior center?
12. Are you doing anything to recruit more teachers?

- At this point we have come up with a list of possible recommendations that we believe to be feasible and beneficial for Evergreen College. We will present

these recommendations to the interviewee in hopes of getting some constructive criticism.

Interview Questions for Rachel:

1. How did you get involved with Evergreen College?
 - How long have you been working at this center?
 2. What is your favorite part about working with Evergreen College?
 3. What exactly does your job entail?
 4. In your opinion, what are the most significant benefits for the elderly that join the program?
 5. Has the number of members taking courses increased?
 6. Why do you think there are so few men involved in the program?
 7. Would you like to see members have more involvement in running the program?
 - Do you think having more volunteer committees with members would be helpful in lessening the workload of the administrators?
 8. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of Evergreen College?
 - What changes (if any) would you like to see made to Evergreen College?
 - For a program that is less than two years old, are you happy with the direction of Evergreen College?
 - How much do you know about what is being done at other Evergreen centers?
 - Have you looked into ways to expand your center's facilities, especially computer facilities? If so, how?
 9. Once you retire, will you become a member of Evergreen College?
 10. Do you have a Member's Council at this center?
 - What responsibilities does this council have?
 - How many members are part of it?
 - Are the positions elected?
 11. Has your center tried to apply for government funding for Evergreen College specifically, not just your senior center?
 12. Are you doing anything to recruit more teachers?
- At this point we have come up with a list of possible recommendations that we believe to be feasible and beneficial for Evergreen College. We will present

these recommendations to the interviewee in hopes of getting some constructive criticism.

Interview Questions for Jessica:

1. What is your job now?
2. What was the motivation for creating Evergreen College? How was it created? How much input (if any) did you have in its inception?
3. How has Evergreen College attempted to gain funding?
4. Is finding teachers a problem for Evergreen College?
5. Have you ever tried offering an evening course?
6. What happens when there are more applicants than class spots?
7. Since there are limitations on space, we were thinking that you could contact nearby buildings to borrow space. Have you tried that?
 1. Another thing we noticed at other centers is that there are not a lot of males. Is this the case at your center?
 2. Computers are very common in U.S. Would technology courses be appealing to next generation?
8. An administrator from another center said that elderly need to have the attitude of giving back to the center. What do you think about this?
 3. In the U.S., we looked into a program called W.I.S.E. that is completely organized and run by the members? Do you think this would be possible here?
 4. Have you ever tried to have an administrative retreat?

Interview Questions for Sandy:

1. What is your job now?
2. How has Evergreen College attempted to gain funding?
3. Is finding teachers a problem for Evergreen College?
4. Since there are limitations on space, we were thinking that you could contact nearby buildings to borrow space. Have you tried that?
5. Another thing we noticed at other centers is that there are not a lot of males. Is this the case at your center?
6. Does Evergreen College have Forums for administrators to come together and share ideas? How many of them are held a year? How many have been held in the past? Are administrators from all centers invited at once?
7. What is the current level of member involvement? What are the future plans for member involvement?
8. If you could improve Evergreen College in any way possible, what would it be?
9. How are the results of end-of-course evaluations maintained? How is the feedback used?
10. Are all centers required to keep statistical information for things like number of Evergreen College students, and number of students in each class?

Appendix D – Administrator Interview Results

Administrator Interview: Susan

Interviewer: Eric Young

Secretary: Katelyn Bernier

Translator: Ricky (Hong Kong Polytechnic Student)

1. How is Evergreen College Organized?

Mainly it is government support, the fees from the students. Not many donations.

2. How is Evergreen College funded?

a. *What (if any) involvement do the members have in running this center?*

The elderly members are also the teachers. They also give the ideas for the administrators. Evergreen College is run together with the participants.

b. *What is the annual budget for Evergreen College?*

10,000 – 12,000 HK dollars for 3 months.... 4x that for a year

c. *What are the expenses of Evergreen College?*

The expenses for Evergreen College are traveling fees for the teachers. Other fees are stationary and some equipment.

d. *Are teachers given a budget for supplies?*

Mainly the supplies are from the centers. The students are required to bring their own supplies for painting and such. Yes, the teachers get money.

3. How are the classes organized?

The teachers come up with their own lesson plans.

a. *How many members are at this elderly center, and of those, how many take Evergreen College classes?*

In our center there are 1460 members, and the student size is 270. Some are not members. Some of the 270 are not actually members

b. *What is the average class size?*

Average class size is 15 students.

c. *How do you get teachers for the Evergreen College classes?*

They interview the teachers. Some of the teachers had background before coming to EC.

d. *Are teachers given any compensation, like the ability to take classes free of charge, etc.?*

In the past they used to give money to the teachers for traveling. After this year, they don't get any compensation.

4. How do elderly find out about taking classes at your senior center?

I post advertising in public housing area near this center. So total is 30 buildings so they post banners and such. I have tried to get teachers from local news.

a. *Do you advertise in places like churches or other community centers?*

They have never advertised in places like churches or other community centers.

5. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of Evergreen College?

I'm always surprised that the elderly is interested in so many classes. This means that they like the living. They sometimes even get some improvement out of the courses. But they stay to learn. I hope that more elderly can join the classes. There's more than 1000 members, but the student total is much smaller. She hopes that there can be more students. The space is a problem. This area is the New Territories. The elderly is some special tradition. They don't like new things; this is a problem for us to educate them.

a. *For a program that is less than two years old, are you happy with the direction and structure of Evergreen College?*

The direction of the program is good. Other programs within Evergreen run better.

Administrator Interview: Becky

Interviewer: Matt Hazel

Secretary: Eric Young

Translator: None (interview conducted in English)

1. How did you become involved with Evergreen College?

She is involved a little with evergreen college

Main duty is community education and career services

Comm. Ed is to let the public learn how to deal with the elderly, and organize interaction programs for the elderly and the primary/secondary school students

Her role is like public relations, so that's why she helped us. Her role is to let others know more about this center

20-30 Koreans were also doing social service, she was assigned to introduce them to the elderly services here

2. How long have you been working at Caritas?

Seven years. Work with elderly over 15 years

3. How did you get involved with working with elderly?

After she finished her studies, she liked to do social work for the elderly. She enjoyed helping the elderly and she got promoted to another post after her other work. In the beginning she didn't have much experience in doing community education work before coming to this center. She has elderly volunteer group where she has meetings together with her volunteers. Most of these volunteers are well educated and have the ability to become elderly teachers. One of her main duties is to train the elderly volunteers. If they have the ability, they will become an Evergreen College teacher. She is not directly related to Evergreen College. They distribute the course catalog to the public, she has the list of significant agencies. The elderly might want to know about the program so she will distribute the catalogs to elderly agencies. She will organize the booklets, she might distribute them to bookshops. Some of the bookshops in open areas can place the booklets to be viewed.

4. What do you think are the biggest benefits for seniors in Evergreen College?

There are certain numbers of benefits. They can manage their social life.

When they were old, some of them will come to the center in the beginning because their spouse passed away, maybe their relatives or family have gone away. The social network becomes smaller and smaller with age. When they

come to the center they gain peers. Their purpose isn't necessarily for knowledge. They can enrich their social lives. Another benefit is that it is also an opportunity for them to learn how to communicate with each other. Most members are the traditional Chinese elderly mother. Elderly fathers are the breadwinners in the family. They are dominate in the family. When they come to the center, the status is equal. They need to learn how to respect others, and how to communicate with each others. Some of the programs are intergeneration programs. It is an opportunity how to communicate with the younger generations. When you are always so dominate, others will be distant. Maybe they learn English, but the main thing is that they can communicate with each other. It offers healthy aging, physically or physiologically. They may make more friends or allow them to release stress. Some of the programs teach them physical exercise like Tai Chi or dancing. The physical education classes are good for their health and allow for healthy aging. Another benefit is that they can keep up with society; otherwise they will be very distant. They won't know much about what's going on with society, elderly policies, or government policies. Maybe these are benefits. They can know more about their programs. The main purpose is not just to get them to learn. The main purpose is that the program allows them to contribute their abilities and contribute to society. One of the students in the past owned a store in the market. Her whole life was just selling toys and cloths in the little store. Wake up early, sell things at the market, and close the store and that was her life. Now she is retired and in the center. She's very eager to learn. She joined lots of courses like English, Chinese, and computers. She is also a volunteer in the group. Sometimes she will get together with her to go to the school. They can have integration programs with children, and they can share. She doesn't tell Alice, but Alice feels that this woman finds her life much more meaningful. This is an empowerment opportunity for the elderly: How to learn and contribute themselves to society. Not everyone will go through entire courses but she hopes that they can make use of their lives.

5. Do you find the amount of people who take courses is increasing every year?

I know that the numbers of courses are increasing. There were 16 in the beginning and 26 now. The number of courses offered will increase the need.

We only have so much space though. The space is not enough. Because Evergreen College is only part of their activities, they also need the rooms for other elderly activities. The space is quite tight. How to fully utilize the space is really a big problem for us.

6. Why do you think there are more women at Evergreen College?

One of the facts is that the life span of females is much longer than men. I think this is one of the reasons. Another reason is that women are quite “show show” human beings. They like to talk, they are eager to make friends. They like to communicate with each other. Men are different. They are quite independent. Some of them don't like to communicate because their communication pattern is different. Women and Men are so different. Women release their stress by finding someone as their outlet. When women come to their center and register as members they may be widowed, and they come to make new friends. She seldom learns about men whose wives have passed away. Men are not so conformed to the rules and regulations. They would like to have more freedom. In her experience, she would organize a picnic and then the woman would be very conformed with the rules and regulations. But the men usually go away and go to other places. The center has lots of rules and regulations, can't swear. This could be why men don't like this place. Some of the elderly that are men like to sit outside and chat with other men. They can smoke outside of the center which makes them feel more comfortable. Program content could be another reason men don't come. It's like the hen and egg relationship. With lots of women in the center, they design the program much more towards women because there are more women. The men have less say in the program. They are still finding solutions to solve this. They have set up a men's group. They have much more freedom to talk. They look at what courses men will like computer classes. In computer classes men/women ratio is much more even. Men love machines. Photography class has more men, possibly because of the machines. She needs teachers that have the skills to teach the elderly courses that involve machines such as digital cameras.

7. Do the men like Tai Chi and other physical classes?

Some of them, but men don't like rules and regulations. They might find it more comforting to do this in the park.

8. What are the Strengths and Weaknesses of Evergreen College?

Strengths: As we've set up for the past 2 years. She thinks that the program has had a very good beginning. There are other places for elderly to register in Hong Kong. This is good for the public to have a good impression. Their program looks systematic and the elderly has the confidence to join. Their public image for the elderly is a strength. The resources can be shared. They have teachers list which they share with other centers. Their human resources are very important to EC. Some of the course content are similar at other facilities, so they can reserve administrative power to design other courses. This is a strength for EC. Also, when this college was set up the program gave the elders a "we" feelings. The elderly have team spirit and belongingness feeling about the center. They are all students. They can share with other centers with other elders from other centers. They can feel recognized and respected. Another strength is that they will be holding a graduation ceremony. This ceremony is a great opportunity to recognize the elders hard work at EC. Because there is so many students, they will organize a big scale ceremony. They will feel that their hard work is deserved in the learning.

Weakness: They are really in need of professional tutors at EC. Their allowance is not so much. The money allowance is for the tutors to travel. It is difficult for the center to have good stable teachers at Evergreen College. How to recruit professional teachers with ability and motivation to communicate in the elderly teaching world is difficult. They need to do a lot to recruit these people. Another weakness is that they need to train all the teachers how to communicate to the elderly. The training techniques are different. The methods for teaching young people are different than methods for teaching elders. They need to further develop training programs. The workload is very heavy for Edith. She is not only in charge of EC, she is in charge of volunteer activities and other members. Something needs to be done to release her pressure. But to find someone who is stable and committed is not easy. Few people don't like to do calculations, and paper work. This is a very boring job without social interaction. They need these kinds of volunteers, but they need to find more people for these paper jobs.

9. Would it be possible to make a council or group to have those administrative responsibilities?

This is a good proposal. In the past 2 years, they used lots of energy in setting up the system. Most of the time and energy is used in this way. In the future, they might be able to train some students to get involved more with the college. There are also some difficulties with this idea. First of all, they need lots of effort to train up the elderly. Usually the elderly's mindset is to get something. You can't change this mindset in one day. They need to change their mindset that they are not only here to get, they have the ability to contribute. But if you want to change their mindset to contribute, we need to make good relationships, which they have, but they need to cultivate them to get the mindset of contributing. Another limitation is that if they organized these type of groups. Some of their educational levels are different, sometimes people are motivated but educational levels are lacking. Some of these people have good educational levels, but may not be motivated. If they are involved with this type of job, they will be afraid with commitment. There is still a long way to go.

10. Is there an upcoming generation of Hong Kong elders that are well educated?

I really hope so. In these two years she has a feeling that this generation of elders are evolving. When she first came to this center, most of the elder members were illiterate. Even writing their names was difficult. Most of the very old elders are illiterate because of war in China they may have missed the opportunity to learn and study. Lots of them don't know how to sign their own name. They will use a cross to sign their name. This is very common. In the very beginning they may just attend Chinese writing class to learn how to write their name. Many have difficulties with learning. In the recent years, some of the younger retire early because of economics so they will volunteers. These elders are more active and they have much more confidence to voice out their own opinions. It goes back to the problem, maybe they are motivated but they aren't educated, or maybe they are educated but not motivated. Part of her job is to understand how to use the elderly to empower Hong Kong society, not just her but all social workers must think of this. When she grows old, will she like this kind of system? Each generation is different; maybe they won't need social workers in the future. Maybe in 10-15 years the way this run

will be different. This is always changing. It is becoming much more common for the elderly to use the computer and to make use of technology.

11. Is it possible to apply for direct government funding?

Presently they don't apply for any funding- only special funding. This is because her center is subsidized by the social welfare department, and all the administrative salaries are subsidized. She doesn't know whether she will get any funding in the future, but she personally knows that they didn't apply for any direct government funding.

12. Will you join Evergreen College when you retire?

I think that I would like to do organizing work, maybe not necessarily as a student. Maybe she would be a student anyways, but she would organize other kinds of subjects that she likes and join them to be a student.

Administrator Interview: Danielle

Interviewers: Open discussion format. All of us asked questions.

Secretary: Matt Hazel

Translator: None (interview done in English)

1. How much independence is each Evergreen College center given?

Each center has free will to select classes, so they can advertise in the booklet.

Surveys were the idea of Sham Shui Po

2. What kind of involvement do the students have?

Seniors are allowed to give opinions. Meetings are held with elders to gather their opinions about how to target people or what subjects.

Course catalogues are delivered to churches, as well as the newsletter.

3. What is the female to male ratio of this Evergreen College center?

Females are the large majority, but they have tried to set up an open group for males.

Males are about 26%, but they are very active

4. What is the biggest need of your center?

Classes are very popular, but there is not enough space!!!

Need more space for classroom, and more classrooms themselves.

They are moving to a larger facility soon and will be using both centers

Use of their classrooms nearby will be acceptable

Use the classroom across the street is free of charge

5. How did you gain access to your new building?

Told social welfare department about Evergreen college space problem

Another organization is moving out, so they get to move in.

6. How long has Evergreen College been running at this center?

Before, Evergreen College was called sunshine classroom. It was the same idea as Evergreen College.

25 years ago is when it started.

Classes used to teach people to read and write Chinese.

There was a minimal amount of classes.

Membership has grown a lot over the years, and should continue into the future.

They can absorb students from age 55 and above.

7. What is more important in your opinion, the knowledge from the classes or the social interaction allowed?

There is a 50/50 importance between teaching knowledge and expanding the social networks of the senior participants. They hope that they can make new friends, same objective of learning. They learn to “support each other in the learning process”. The result of learning is not as important as the process.

8. Why don't some members come to classes?

Still have to take care of grandchildren

Some think they are too old to learn

Classes are only held once a week

9. Are classes unaffordable?

Not really, classes are not that expensive.

If they have problems with finance, then the fees can be waived.

10. Does your program try to appeal to all elderly, or just the poor elderly?

The mission is to serve the most needy. With Evergreen College, all elderly have equal opportunity to join

11. Are the different centers independent?

Content may be the same, but the style of the teacher will change.

Centers may have a different focus, based on the characteristics of the community, so they have to serve different needs.

Sham Shui Po is the poorest area in Hong Kong. Fees and charges cannot be too expensive.

Credits are given for completing classes, much the same as Yuen Long.

12. Where does the funding for Evergreen College come from?

80% of funding for the center comes from the social welfare of the government. 20% comes from Caritas. Evergreen college could ask a company to sponsor them, and they might be receptive to that. Maybe they can get funding from district board to hold certain classes. Graduation ceremony was sponsored by the district board. A proposal had to be written to ask for funding. The retirement group is sponsored by the adult education department.

13. What are the expenses of Evergreen College?

Salary of staff, maintenance, and running the center is the large majority of the cost. School classrooms can be rented on Sundays, but that means working

overtime. Schools are very busy after classes because there are many after school activities.

Churches do have classrooms, but the churches here are not very close, and it is uphill. Seniors would have to climb staircases, which is not enjoyed.

14. Why do you think men aren't as attracted to Evergreen College?

Most women are widowed. If women can work, then they want to work.

Sometimes they don't want to come because there are lots of other women.

No smoking is allowed in the centers. This may drive off some of the men.

No swearing is allowed here at all. Sometimes men will discuss the news and get angry...

15. What does your center offer for field trips?

Field trips are usually within Hong Kong. They go to a museum or new territories. Fields trips are once every two months. We talk with the members' council to figure out where to go.

16. How is your survey utilized to improve Evergreen College?

Sometimes there are negative survey results, and they think they could not benefit. This is less common than positive results

17. Can you give us some more statistics about your program?

They have about 500 enrolled students. Classes are offered over the radio.

Work can be done at home, and then submitted. About 70 students take advantage of the radio program. It attracts busier students who want to stay at home to study. Enrollment of the members encourages the administrators to work harder. Members give helping hands to the people in charge.

Members are already used to help advertise the program. "They can be a good agent."

Administrator Interview: Rachel

Interviewer: Katelyn Bernier

Secretary: Eric Young

Translator: None, interview conducted in English

1. How is Evergreen College organized and run?

This college is run by the core groups with is under our elderly service. We have many professional staff from elderly center, district center and then they join together from adult and continuing education in caritas and they run the program. The main point is that if one of our members in the center wants to study this program, then she can bring her membership card to join this program. They have 1 card and they can join this program which is organized from every center. I've been working here 4 years- since 2001. I was working here before Evergreen College.

2. What is your favorite part of Evergreen College?

Encouraging the members to join the program. It's very difficult for some of the elderly to attend programs which are far away. Members should join

3. What exactly does your job entail?

She's a social worker. She needs to provide the administration such as financial management, some programs which prepare for the needs of the elderly, she organizes support groups and takes response for the older elderly in caring for them, caritas elderly community, she organizes all the elderly leaders 1 in elderly center and 2 in elderly home, all the elderly join together and sometimes she will discuss with them the elderly policy the elderly welfare, she will join a forum or program which is joined in society. She takes part in the working group, and will have a meeting every 2 months and they will run meetings from membership programs. She has 36 organizations about the elderly and elderly services. Some is healthy and some is well, she encourages them to voice out their opinion on the quality of service.

4. What are the benefits of Evergreen College?

There have many benefits here. They have friendship and build self-esteem. They go to elderly home to help the poor elderly. Evergreen College allows them to get new knowledge. They do English or Chinese. They can learn how to write their name. They can read newspapers they go to market they can know the prices. They can catch the bus. They don't know the alphabet, so then after then come here they know English and can read it, and they are very happy. Because the tutors are very friendly and nice, they use their empathy

and they use their potential energy. It takes a long time for the elderly to learn, they are very patient.

5. Has membership increased over the past years?

I think that the elderly aren't joining the Evergreen College, but rather just take courses that belong to the center that they are in. So it hasn't increased. They will stay here at their home.

6. Why do you think there are so few men involved in Evergreen College?

The traditional Chinese men are not very active. They are more passive. They like to join in the garden. They like chess or learning the birds. They seldom like to join the center because they think that this is a place for the woman only. I don't know why they have this idea. Some men join the center just because their wife joins the center. They will join with them together, this happens a lot. Some men when they were young worked hard, so they die earlier, and the men elderly population is very low. Nowadays health conditions are more improved.

7. Would you like to see members have more involvement in running the program?

Last time I would say we have a committee already. This is the committee members there (points to photo albums). This is a members council they have a meeting about once a month. They have many responsibilities. They have a lunch quality council. They will have a regular meeting about their lunch about the quality and the quantity and college elderly opinions and then they get information which they will communicate to the elderly. They also run the regular programs, happy birthday parties, Chinese autumn party, may festival parties. They will run the program by organizing games, singing, presents, food, and all the elements of the party. This helps the administrators out a lot. In every big program, they will have about 180 people to come to the center, so it's very busy for just the administrators. Sometimes they join the English program and they join classes. They will prepare the performance, and they will express their learning and goodness. There are 25 members of the council. It changes a lot, it's 21 since last week. The members are elected and some are volunteers. The members elect the other members. If the council is too big, then they won't be very happy. There is a leadership training program. They collect information and opinions of the members. Sometimes the members are quite shy and they prefer to voice their opinions directly to the staff. We

encourage them to express their opinion. They will have more direct information.

8. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of Evergreen College?

Strengths: They have this college which is good for some elderly who don't know anything. They can look at the program and find what courses they are interested in. Sometimes the elderly can't get to the programs that are far away. This is a weakness. Because the program is very cheap the elderly can accept this financially this is beneficial to the elderly. Weakness is that some elderly who always stay at home that and don't join the program then the enrollment may be very low. They also suspect that elderly feel that they can't learn. They encourage the elderly to come here and try to learn with the program. When they see their classmates here trying that encourages them to try more and more. Changes: All the courses are quite good. I think that some are limited because they have a professional tutor. She'd like more teachers. Professional teachers cost more. They are not pleased with the direction of Evergreen College. Because I think that every center has their own jobs and I think that the effort is just like here. They do the same things as other centers. More space: Because all the centers running are limited by the funding, which is donated by the social welfare department. The area here is limited. When this program began in 1979 the elderly came here much less. Now this program is bigger, sometimes they separate the class by the room, there's a little more room in the next room over. Sometimes they use this to solve the problem of the space. No more space here, very limited. They have a computer center which the elderly will use to get more computer space, they share the facilities. The community center will use this space for the program so they use all the facilities. They get a very small amount of money from the government- lottery funds, council funds by the district, social welfare funds from the government, and volunteer promotional program. All these programs have about 1 million. Organize this program 2 to 4 months. Learn the way how to use the money and give the ability to run the program. We invite some fresh graduates from university, some retired people from business people, and they have internet information where they can apply the information if they match the needs. Sometimes they don't like to come here because they don't

have the time to match the center. They will say that it's too far to come here. Maybe they have some difficulties.

9. Will you become a member of Evergreen College when you retire?

Maybe I will join when I retire. She makes sure to let the elderly know that she is fair to everyone. She tries to keep everyone at equal status. All the people are the same position. They will get more confidence.

10. Has the center tried to apply for any government funding for Evergreen College?

Financial status in HK now is not very good, so maybe a reason elderly don't come here is because they are afraid that they need previous knowledge. Elderly center changes working direction. Lack of financial resources, the government will say no more money. This is the trend that we know that the more educated elderly will come to the center. If they had time or interests, then she thinks they would come. Sometimes they still need to earn their life, sometimes they will just come on Saturday. There are some limits here because they like to come during office time. Evergreen doesn't get any donations from other places around. Field trips: They like to join the outdoor program, they will organize BBQ party. No traveling to mainland because of the limitations. Most important are interests. Some elderly have parties. You can travel in HK but not outside of HK. Before the EG college they had program to go visit Macau, shanghai few members joined though. Just from island and other centers. The elderly like traveling. The elderly are not so technical.

11. Do you have an end of course evaluation at this center?

After each class finishes, we will have a survey for them. They ask if the facilities are good for them. They have a standardized questionnaire. It is useful. Sometimes they will say that next term they want to learn something and they get their opinions.

12. Has there been an administrative meeting amongst all the centers in the past?

We know that evergreen college before has organized something. The enrollment is not very high. After they join this center maybe they will join another program. They organize the program in Kowloon. This is a good idea, but sometimes they are limited by their own business and abilities. They share information about their centers through the internet.

Administrator Interview: Jessica and Joe

Interviewer: Matt Hazel, Kim Ware, Katelyn Bernier, Eric Young

Secretary: Kim Ware

Translator: none

1. What is your job now?

Administrator for Tung Tau Elderly Center and Director of Caritas Evergreen College.

2. What was the motivation for creating Evergreen College? How was it created? How much input (if any) did you have in its inception?

The Elderly Services and Adult Education divisions of Caritas joined and designed together the framework and operation system. Currently, there are 12 elderly service centers 8 adult education centers, making 20 total learning centers. There are differences among the centers because they devise their own courses that customized to the neighborhood in which they are located. Most of the elderly service centers have quite similar courses, but the adult education centers may be a little different. The adult education centers have a better setting that is more like a classroom. Elderly centers focus more on the sharing of learning. They are more interactive. Previously, classes were taught, but Evergreen College was not organized. There were no awards or diplomas. They organized the centers and made them more uniform. There are 3 levels of awards for taking classes: Fundamental, advanced, and a more advanced level. An assessment committee decides what level classes should be. They want it to be systematic and consistent in each institute.

Each center can develop their own courses, and seniors can register for courses at any center. Centers are long established, but there was no organization to the classes or requirements for the courses. They tried to make courses consistent. In 2003, Evergreen College was established.

The first semester of the year runs from September to November. There is a break in December. The second semester is from January to March. The third semester is from April to June. Then, there are summer courses in July and August.

There are 6 characteristics of Evergreen College: multi-disciplinary collaboration, variety of courses, multi-level, teaching by activity approach not classroom approach, field trips (this April they are going to Beijing, this will

be their second “international” trip), centers all over HK (with one card you can go to any center)

The mission of Evergreen College: Learning should not be limited by age.

There should be continuous learning throughout life. Learning raises the quality of life for seniors. It also helps them to continue to contribute to society. This is Caritas’ mission with Evergreen College.

3. How has Evergreen College attempted to gain funding?

The government doesn’t contribute to Evergreen College, but money indirectly comes from them to the college. The government pays rent, and Evergreen College enjoys those resources that the government pays for. The government also pays for the staffing, who are a part of the program. The course fees help bring in more money (\$30-50 a class). But, most of the elderly living in this estate are living on government assistance, so they don’t have much money.

4. Is finding teachers a problem for Evergreen College?

Teachers are often members of the elderly centers, but they have some sort of expertise in a specific area. Most of them are retired, but they are volunteering. They get about \$50 for each lesson, which is only about enough for transportation, but they are really helping the elderly to learn. Sometimes they need to pay more for more professional teachers, when there is a particular topic that is hard to find teachers for. They have a tutor workshop to strengthen their knowledge in classroom management, teaching, etc. and to help them run classes. There are lots of problems recruiting volunteer teachers. Young professional have to work during the day, but the elderly want to learn during the day. It is very hard to find people available then. Also, it might be hard to find people in the areas that the elderly are interested in. For instance, elderly want to know about health, but they can’t get doctors. They are too busy, and there isn’t enough to attract them here. The time of classes is one of the biggest factors. They are trying to contact retired professional organizations to ask for volunteer retired nurses, teachers, and policeman to find people who have the time and interest to volunteer. Even when they find volunteers, they still need to mesh with the centers’ needs (time, space, etc). For instance, the tutor may want to teach a class from 9-10 but the center can’t accommodate that. They need to have follow-up evaluations.

They are very flexible. They depend on the availability of specific trainers. They have some volunteers that are experts in computers. On the other hand, they need to develop the elderly interests in that program.

5. Have you ever tried offering an evening course?

No, the elderly won't come back at night. When it gets dark, they aren't able to find their way back home. The landmarks changes when it gets dark, and they don't like staying out late. They also want to be home with their families at night time. In this particular estate, it is better. But at centers in rural areas, there is not much transportation at night time. They like to be home before 5, so it gets really quiet at the centers around 4. They go to bed at 8 or 9.

Sometimes classes are possible in the very early morning. Tai Chi is before 8 or 9 am. A lot of elderly wake up at 4 or 5am.

6. What happens when there are more applicants then class spots?

At this center, there is a youth area nearby, and they can get more computers from them. They borrow the computer rooms from other services. Other centers are not as lucky. They need to hold more classes with fewer students in each.

If there are more applicants than spots, it's first come first served. If one course really popular, they will offer another class.

7. Since there are limitations on space, we were thinking that you could contact nearby buildings to borrow space. Have you tried that?

Yes, they do that in some cases. Sometimes they hire space from other NGOs. Sometimes space from schools and training centers can be arranged. Space isn't that huge of an issue, but places with large spaces are more attractive. For right now, it is ok. Because they don't have direct funding, it is hard. They set aside some money for the development of these education services. Hong Kong's population is aging now, so they are asking the government to set aside some old schools not used anymore for the use of the elderly. Most schools don't have lifts or escalators though, so it is difficult for the elderly. Even if the government sets aside an empty school, it would be hard for it to be accessible. Also, if it is an hour away, it won't be very attractive to them. The space and placement of centers needs to be considered.

8. Another thing we noticed at other centers is that there are not a lot of males. Is this the case at your center?

It's about 3-1 at this elderly center. Out of those taking courses, it is 87% female and 12% male. Males are not that eager to learn. What they are interested in is not the same as females. They don't want to join a class with all females. It is another problem. They need to recruit more male members. Males like to play cards in the gardens and smoke. They don't enjoy talking like the females do.

9. Is this trend continuing?

The centers need to be fast, before the next generation retires. They need to get a hold of them before they adjust to this type of atmosphere. They are trying some repair classes, but it is hard to find tutors for the technical courses. They are launching a repair class in March. It is hard to reach out to male members. The setting is very feminine. Most Chinese men don't like to hang out with women. The husband is usually very cold toward his wife. If they could go to where the men gather, maybe they get more men.

10. Computers are very common in U.S. Would technology courses be appealing to next generation?

Computers aren't so common in Hong Kong, but they need to start looking into more technology courses. Banking and ATMs are even a problem for the elderly. They are being isolated from the technological trend of society. Each semester, there is a class teaching them how to use the computer. More male elderly join these technical classes.

11. An administrator from another center said that elderly need to have the attitude of giving back to the center. What do you think about this?

They need to take this into consideration. Anyway for the elderly to participate would be a good thing.

12. In the U.S., we looked into a program called W.I.S.E. that is completely organized and run by the members? Do you think this would be possible here?

Yes, there are plans for this. They are moving in this direction. They need to be wary of their capabilities and motivation. They can ask the elderly to do registration or monitoring classes' attendance. Every center asks one or two elderly to be assistants. They get 50 dollars for each class. They hope that the elderly can set up a panel or committee to choose courses. Later, when there are more volunteers with more abilities, this might be possible. Right now,

30% are illiterate. A lot more only have primary school training. Despite this, they are still trying to pull the elderly in.

13. Are all the centers doing this?

They give the centers a push to do these things. But they can't push too hard because it depends on the own pace of the elderly. They trained one elderly member, but he dropped out because it was too big of a demand. The elderly are not completely ready yet.

14. Can you start small with field trips or anything like that?

Yes, but it takes a lot of training and manpower. For this center, they have 2 social workers and 2 program workers – only 4 people to run and manage over 100 elderly members. They can't just concentrate on education. They also have many other things to do, like counseling and health services. There are 7 focuses in all.

15. Have you ever tried to have an administrative retreat?

Yes, they have social workers, program workers, and volunteers. They develop training, manuals, and guidelines together. They have one or two sharing programs a year to discuss difficulties. So, they do have these types of forums. There have been over 600 courses in the first year. It is a very good start and gives a good image. They have limitations like manpower and space, but they have set up considerations for this. They need to consolidate. They need to use databases for classroom enrollment. This will help to learn what kinds of courses they need to conduct. It will assist with future planning. They also need to consolidate the training for the academic affairs assistants (volunteers). They need to train more of them to build the manpower of the centers.

They also need to create classes for different types of interests, like Chinese medicine, financial planning, culture, or drama. This is another aspect they want to explore.

The most important thing is they need to support the centers to make an effective way of attracting members to join. They are creating an enrollment system to help other centers in future planning.

Right now, the elderly can print out a "transcript" to see how far they have come. They are having a graduation ceremony in May.

Administrator Interview: Sandy

Interviewers: Open discussion format. All of us asked questions.

Secretary: Matt Hazel

Translator: Phil Ng

At the beginning of our interview, Sandy presented us with a PowerPoint presentation about Evergreen College; the following are notes from that presentation and questions that we asked along the way:

1. Promotion:

There are regular meetings at Evergreen College every Wednesday to promote the program to the seniors. In addition to this, they promote Evergreen College through the course catalog distribution, a Quarterly center magazine, and the agency website.

2. Evaluation:

The administrators evaluate the program through the use of questionnaires which ask participants about the courses.

- Do the teachers see the results from the evaluation?

- The results of the questionnaire can be used to evaluate teachers.

There was one case where a dance instructor was rated as having a poor attitude. The administrators then talked to the teacher about his attitude.

3. Number of Students:

The center had 126 students, with 13 males, and 113 females. The age range was from 47 to 84 years old. The elderly center has approximately 600 members.

4. Courses:

There are 15 courses offered at this center. Of the 15 offered, 1 is social science, 3 are health promotion, and 7 are cultural.

- Where was this photo (of a tai-chi class) taken?

- The space used for dance classes comes from a building which they rent across the street.

The largest classes offered were aerobic dance with 28 students, elementary Chinese with 29 students, Elementary English with 15 students, and Putonghua with 38 students.

5. Computers:

They only have 4 computers at the center with which to teach the elderly.

6. Why are there so few members from the elderly center?

Physical health condition is one of the reasons why some of the elderly from the centers do not attend classes.

7. What statistics are kept for the program?

Basic statistics are kept at each center for the government.

8. What is one thing that you would change about Evergreen College?

Wants to standardize the teaching material across the centers, but it will be very hard to do this.

Appendix E – Teacher Interview Results

Teacher Interview: Steve

Interviewer: Kimberly Ware

Secretary: Matt Hazel

Translator: Alex (Hong Kong Polytechnic student)

1. **Introductions were given:**
We are students here to give recommendations...
2. **(Conversational question) What did you use to do before you retired?**
He was a taxi driver and retired at age 58. He was very bored after he retired.
Someone told him about Caritas, that's how he found out about it.
3. **Do you live alone?**
He lives with his family.
4. **Why did you become a teacher at EC?**
Originally, when they come here, they learn how to use the computer. Most elderly that come here don't know how to use the computer at all. When they learn about the computer he wants to contribute his knowledge to the other.
He learned how to use computers at Evergreen College from Becky, and now that he knows how to use them, he wants to give back that knowledge to others.
5. **What classes have you taken?**
Mandarin class, Chinese drawing, singing, he likes singing, he likes Chinese drawing very much, and he wants to talk mandarin, so he needs to learn more
6. **Does you feel the elderly are excited to use computers or afraid?**
He feels most of them are very excited to learn how to use computers. Only a few people are afraid to use computers
7. **What is the main reason you believe elderly come to Evergreen College?**
Both social reasons and educational reasons are a draw to students
8. **Why do you think there aren't as many men at Evergreen College?**
Men like to smoke, but they are forbidden to smoke in the Caritas building.
They also like gambling, but that is forbidden in Caritas.
9. **Are there any classes that aren't offered, but you think men would like to take?**
A class about the guitar or the Chinese violin (the instrument from the Cantonese opera class). They don't offer a dancing class either, and he feels men would like to take that. Also, there could be a photography class offered
10. **Do you think the facilities are adequate?**

He thinks the computer room is too small. He also wants to learn how to cook, but there aren't any facilities that they can use to teach this.

11. Does this Evergreen College center use end of course evaluations?

They got some opinions about the computer room being too small. But because they have limited resources, they cannot improve on this situation. The class pacing depends on the speed of the elderly and their ability to understand the material

12. Do you like to travel?

He's been to Japan, Korea, and Australia. His family is in Australia. Yeah, he goes on the local trips that are offered by Caritas.

13. Would you like more social events?

He believes that there are enough social events.

14. Is there anything about Evergreen College you would like to change?

He thinks that they should build a bigger building to hold the college. The meeting area is too small, and they need a bigger space to run the program.

15. Do you do any volunteer work for Caritas?

Yes he does. He goes to visit the elderly who live alone.

16. Overall, has it been a good experience taking classes?

Yes. He thinks that he is very happy because when he teaches the people, he is learning all the time. He wants to continue being a teacher and student here for as long as he can stay healthy.

17. Why do you think some people don't come to Evergreen College?

Some people don't want to learn.

18. Is the cost reasonable?

It is not expensive and quite reasonable. He doesn't know anyone that finds it expensive

19. What is your favorite thing about here?

The computer course, the singing class, and the Mandarin class.

20. Are you happy that you found out about Evergreen College?

Yes, he is very happy that he joined.

Teacher Interview: Amanda

Interviewer: Matt Hazel

Secretary: Kimberly Ware

Translator: Alex (Hong Kong Polytechnic Student)

First, Matt introduced himself and our project.

1. What her job was before and when she started coming here.

She had many jobs before including QC?, driving teacher, taxi driver, car salesman

2. How did she become a teacher here?

After she retired, she started to have health problems and couldn't work. Since she was born in Beijing, she learned some Mandarin there. She knew how to teach children. She wanted to learn anything at Caritas, but didn't think she could be a teacher. But Caritas provided her with the chance to teach Mandarin. Many elderly think Mandarin is very interesting, and she had the ability to teach it, so she wanted to make this contribution to help the elderly.

3. Why are the elderly so interested in learning Mandarin?

Since Hong Kong was handed over to China, the elderly think Mandarin is very important and it became very interesting to learn about.

4. How did she find out about this center?

It is very famous in the area. Her mother is also a member of this organization and lives near it so she knew about it.

5. Do students take classes to learn or to meet new people?

Both are motivations.

6. Is there anything she wants to change about Evergreen to make it better?

She caters the material to the level of the elderly. She provides all materials for the class.

7. Does she think the classrooms are big enough? Are there enough supplies?

The resources are good. Since many people want to join the Mandarin class, there is not enough space for the class. Mandarin is most popular here.

8. Why do so few men take classes here?

From her point of view, women live longer than men. Men got more chances to study when they were young. Women want to learn more because they

didn't get the chance when they were young. Women are more active than the men. They don't have responsibility for the children anymore.

9. After a class is over, does she get any feedback from the students?

Yes. The students have thanked her for teaching the class. The feedback is very formal. They get notes from the students. The students get surveys about the quality of the course.

10. How does she decide at what pace she should teach the course?

After they get the surveys back, they can find out if the course was taught too quickly and adjust it for later courses.

11. Are all of the students very interested in the class material, or are there ever students that aren't as enthusiastic?

All of the elderly that join the class really want to learn. Only a few people have been absent, but they must have had good reasons.

12. Is she glad that they don't give any tests and keep the class fun for the students?

The elderly just want to learn. If they had tests, it would be too much pressure.

13. Does she like to travel? What is her favorite place to go?

Yes, she likes to travel. America is her favorite place to go. She has also been to Vancouver in Canada, Australia, Hawaii, Singapore, and many places in the Mainland. She went to many cities in Europe.

14. Does she go on any field trips offered by Caritas?

She has joined every trip they have been on.

15. Does she go on trips to see the sites or to socialize?

Socialize

16. Does she like to use computers?

Yes, she uses them to make cards and email friends. She learned how to use computers through this center.

17. Does she know anyone that doesn't go here, and why don't they join?

Yes, she has told her friends to come here but they don't feel it is suitable for them. They have health problems and the courses provided here are not suitable for them. Her friends don't want to learn anything. They did go on a one-day Hong Kong trip.

18. Does she enjoy being a student or teacher more?

Both, very much.

19. Are there any classes she wishes were offered here?

No.

20. Has joining this center been fulfilling?

Yes

Informal Interview with George

Interviewers: Open discussion format. All of us asked questions.

Secretary: Matt Hazel

Translators: Ricky and Alex (Hong Kong Polytechnic Students)

1. What is your role with Evergreen College?

Kenneth is a volunteer teacher and student at the Yuen Long Caritas Evergreen College Center

2. Can you tell us about what you did before you came to Caritas?

Kenneth used to live in the United States, and he worked in Silicon Valley. He arrived in America in the year 1976, and he was graciously taught the English language by a woman that he met when he arrived. Because of that experience, Kenneth was motivated to become a volunteer teacher at evergreen college, so that he can teach the elderly, in much the same way he was taught by the American woman.

3. Can you tell us about the classes you teach at Evergreen College?

Kenneth teaches 2 classes. An English pronunciation class and a beginner level computer class. He believes that pronunciation of the English language is very important, and it is not something that many people can teach, except those people that have lived in the United States, like he has. His class teaches how to pronounce the different vowel and consonant sounds of the English language. Additionally, he tries to teach common phrases that would not appear in the Chinese language. These phrases are things like “have to” or other such phrases. This class was actually Kenneth’s idea.

4. How did you find out about Caritas?

Kenneth found out about Caritas through word of mouth. He visited the Yuen Long center, and checked it out one day, and he really liked what he saw. Kenneth registered to be a member of the Yuen Long center about 4 years ago, and he took some classes. However, now he spends his time volunteering at Yuen Long and teaching classes.

5. How did you create the English Pronunciation class?

Kenneth described the process of how he created his English Pronunciation Class. He approached the people in charge of the Yuen Long center, and told them that he felt an English Pronunciation Course was very, very important,

and that not many people knew how to properly pronounce words and phrases. The people at Caritas agreed that the course was a good idea, and as long as 12 people registered for it, then he could teach his class. He got the required number of interested students, so his pronunciation class came to be.

6. Any other classes you've tried to create?

Kenneth also described how he came up with the idea for a class about sound recording, and the nuances that are involved in microphone placement for television shows and the like. After working in Silicon Valley for 10 years, Kenneth took a job as a sound director for a television station. He gained knowledge about microphones, and where to put them in a room to best capture the sound, but when he wanted to teach a course about it, the members of Caritas decided that they did not see the benefits of offering such a course.

7. What are your thoughts on the learning abilities of the elderly?

He says that the seniors are more than capable of learning, but that there are lots of different ability levels of the students that are in his classes. Some really know the material, but others hardly know it at all, so teaching them is quite difficult, and it requires a lot of patience on his part. However, he noted that the seniors are quick to learn, but can forget what they learn if they do not practice it outside of class. For example, in the computer class he teaches, he teaches the students on how to type using Chinese characters. It's much more difficult than a QWERTY keyboard, however the seniors have no problem learning how to do it, and after 4, hour long classes, they are all able to write using the Chinese characters.

8. What are your thoughts on traveling?

When we asked him about traveling, Kenneth responded that he really loves to travel. He lived in America for 20 years, and he has traveled to Shanghai and Beijing, and he would be interested in Evergreen College field trips.

However, he said that the budget constraints of Caritas wouldn't allow for field trips that go very far, like to mainland China.

Appendix F – Student Interview Results

Student Interview: Hillary

Interviewer: Eric Young

Secretary: Katelyn Bernier

Translator: Ricky (Hong Kong Polytechnic Student)

1. Conversational question: What did you do for a living?

She was worked in the Jockey Club; lots of tasks

2. What do you like to do in your free time?

When she has time, she comes here to hang out. She spends lots of time here.

3. How did you find out about Evergreen College?

There are many promotions around here that she noticed; she lives here in Yuen Long. When she met the age requirements she moved here and joined EC.

4. What was your motivation for joining Evergreen College?

After her retirement, she was bored b/c she did not have anything all that much to do; she can learn from the classes here as well as be a volunteer at the same time

5. Are there any courses or programs you wish were offered, but aren't?

The computer classes that are here are quite basic; she would like to learn something more advanced with regards to the computer like some software, etc.

a. What kinds of classes have you taken so far?

She takes Putonghua as well as English, Handicraft class, and computers.

b. What has been your favorite class so far, and why?

Her favorite class was English and Putonghua.

6. What is your favorite part of Evergreen College?

Comes here to learn more and to make new friends.

a. Would you feel comfortable naming your least favorite part?

She does not have any class that does not like. She has considered every class as long as she has time for it. Not always has a lot of free time, so she can not take all of the classes.

7. Do you wish anything was done differently?

She thinks that the students' levels vary and are different between each other; some people learn faster than others; difficult to have all students in the same class when they are at different levels. Can take some courses outside of EC b/c they may be more advanced or that so she can learn more when not everything is available here. Resources are limited at caritas so sometimes she has to go elsewhere. She has learned some IT information in the past

a. *Would you like to be involved in running some aspect of Evergreen College? (member council, advertising committee, field trip organization, etc.)*

She has been involved with running some functions or activities with other organizations of caritas;

b. *If so, how would you like to be involved or make a contribution?*
involved just like a teacher here sometimes.

c. *Do you get "homework"? Do you want "homework"?*
English course has some assignments; example- have to copy the vocabulary words; computer course does not have assignments but usually will make some ppt/animations in classes; before the end they will show them to each other and give opinions; sometimes will burn these things to a CD and show them in a meeting later on.

8. Has paying for Evergreen College classes been difficult for you?

For Putonghua/English/Chinese words class 30 HK\$ for 10 classes; Computer international technology group- does not pay for it, but when she is finished with the class she will be a volunteer to teach others the same.

9. Do you feel you've learned valuable information since you've began taking classes?

She thinks that has not learned all that much b/c her memory is not all that good and that she usually forgets all that she has just learned; when she teaches others she revises what she has learned- helps to refresh her own memory by teaching others.

a. *For how much longer do you want to continue learning?*

She will continue to stay at EC; as long as she can teach others then she will be here.

10. What are your thoughts on computers and the internet?

She thinks that if she learned English better that it would be easier for her to use the computers and the internet. She mainly learned email here; just email with each other in the class and have fun here; in the future she can use it if necessary.

11. Do you have any friends that aren't involved in Evergreen College, and why do you think they choose not to participate?

She has some friends that do not come to EC b/c they think that they are too old; even though they can learn, they feel that they will forget whatever they learn and they are going to die soon anyways. Also, some are members of the center and just socialize rather than take classes.

Student Interview: Randy

Interviewer: Katelyn Bernier

Secretary: Eric Young

Translator: Ricky (Hong Kong Polytechnic Student)

1. How did you find out about Evergreen College?

He found out about Evergreen College from his friends

2. What was your motivation for joining Evergreen College?

His interests

3. Are there any courses or programs you wish were offered, but aren't?

No, he likes the computer class

b. What kinds of classes have you taken so far?

English, Putonghau

c. What has been your favorite class so far, and why?

Computer class has been his favorite class because the computer classes teach him how to use the internet, get more information and read things.

He knows how to use the internet to see his friends and community.

4. What is your favorite part of Evergreen College?

The main part is to learn more things.

a. Would you feel comfortable naming your least favorite part?

He thinks that the courses here are interesting and he will take. But the courses that he doesn't like, he won't take them.

5. Do you wish anything was done differently?

He thinks that the computer room has too little computers. He wants the computer room to be larger, so more people can take classes. Too many people with too few computers

a. If so, how would you like to be involved or make a contribution?

If he can do it, he would do it. But because he's quite busy he cannot do it because he doesn't have the time.

b. Do you get "homework"? Do you want "homework"?

He has no homework, but he will practice at home using the computer and the internet and typing words. Sometimes the class will have some assignments but he will always do it himself.

6. Has paying for Evergreen College classes been difficult for you?

It costs about 50 dollars for 10-12 hours. It is not difficult.

7. Do you feel you've learned valuable information since you've began taking classes?

Yes, he feels that he has learned a lot but 2 Hours is very good, class time is very short.

a. For how much longer do you want to continue learning?

He doesn't know how long he will continue to take them, but when he thinks that he has learned enough. People from overseas, he wants to learn how to type Chinese words more.

8. Do you have any friends that aren't involved in Evergreen College, and why do you think they choose not to participate?

Most of his friends want to be here, but the class limitations have been exceeded. Most of the reason is the computer rooms are too small. In the other housing, there is another caritas center. He will go to another caritas housing, but the courses are more expensive. It is the next building over.

For Male Interviewees

3. Why do you think so few males at Evergreen College?

a. Is there a desire amongst men your age to remain in the workforce?

b. At what age did you retire?

He thinks that because usually women live longer, this is the reason. They stop working at 55. That is how old he was when he retired.

4. What do you believe could be done to attract more men?

a. What courses could be offered?

b. Should classes be at a more convenient time?

He thinks that because the courses are mainly for the women because the songs, the operas, the handy craft is mostly designed for men. Men like board games, like pool and basketball. But there is not enough space here.

He has not thought about this question. He basically just wants to learn here.

The class time, he has rarely missed a class especially if he was sick. He rarely missed the classes, he likes them.

5. What was your job before you retired?

He worked in a restaurant. He worked at the Peninsula Hotel

6. What do you like to do in your free time?

Finance and stocks.

Student Interview: April

Interviewer: Kimberly Ware

Secretary: Matt Hazel

Translator: Alex (Hong Kong Polytechnic Student)

1. (Ice breaker question) What are your general interests?

Before becoming an Evergreen College student, she ran a small business. She Retired in 1999. She knew about Caritas through her friends, they told her about it, and before that she did not know about it. She joined Caritas in 2003; afterwards, she found out that there was the ability to take classes about whatever she wanted to learn.

She wants to spend time here, because there is no one at her house. All of her kids go out to work, so she is left all alone during the day.

2. Could you tell me more about your former business?

She helped her husband run their restaurant. She ordered the food and stuff. Afterwards she helped her daughter to sell toys. She felt unhealthy, so she wanted to retire early.

3. Who do you currently live with?

She responded that she currently lives alone.

4. Do you keep in touch with your family?

She has 1 son, and 4 daughters, and they live close to her. She can see 1 daughter everyday, but the others have busy jobs, so she can't meet them very often.

5. What classes have you taken here?

She responded by telling us all the classes that she takes on each day of the week, and they are as follows:

Monday - She joined the English pronunciation class, and the Chinese computer input class.

Tuesday - She joined the opera class.

Wednesday – Christmas cards class. She likes making cards for their children on their birthdays.

Friday – Mandarin class,

Saturday – English class and conversational English class. She is also a volunteer at caritas.

6. What kind of volunteer work do you do for this center?

When the elderly live alone, they need to do some medical body checks for them. She goes into their homes to take their blood pressure and help them.

7. What is your favorite course?

She likes all of the classes, but her favorite part of evergreen is getting to know more people. Her favorite class was the computer class.

8. Are there any courses you would like to take, but they don't offer?

She does not have any class that she wants because she joins the classes to meet new people. She thinks it is very easy to forget what they learn, so her main reason for coming here is to have fun with the courses, and to make new friends.

9. Is there anything about Evergreen College that you don't like?

No, she really likes it here.

10. Have you ever had trouble paying for any of the classes?

No, personally she doesn't. Someone may have economic problems, and find the program expensive. Especially the trips, some find the trips to be expensive.

11. Have you learned a lot from taking the classes here?

She studied in the past, she thinks that learning new things is easy, but remembering them can be difficult. She graduated from primary schools

12. For how much longer do you want to take Evergreen College classes?

She wants to keep taking classes until she dies, she is alone now and is very free to take classes, so she will continue to take them as long as possible

13. Do you have any trouble with technology?

She got happy when she was successful at making a card. Making cards on the computer is very satisfying. *She wasn't afraid to pull out what she had made in computer class and show them off to us. She had a calendar, a birthday card, another calendar. She liked to put pictures of her loved ones on the calendars.*

14. Do you like to travel?

She has been as far away as Vancouver, Canada. She lived there for about 2 months, she lived with her little sister. She took a 1 day trip to Sai Kon in Hong Kong.

15. Would you like Evergreen College to offer more trips?

She really enjoyed the 1 day trip to Hong Kong, and wished that they offered it more often.

16. Why don't your friends outside of Evergreen College come and take classes with you?

Many of her friends know of caritas but they don't come because they have a family, and they have the responsibility to take care of their family, so they cannot make it out to caritas

17. Do you communicate with your family using email?

A while ago, she tried to email her grandkids. Now she doesn't use it anymore because she doesn't own a computer. She prefers to instead make greeting cards here at caritas, and then send them to her children.

18. Is there anything else at all that you would like to tell us?

She thinks that the courses are not too expensive. Even if she doesn't learn information here, caritas provides her with an outlet for her to spend her free time. Sometimes she gets lonely, and she really enjoys coming out here to socialize.

Student Interview: Jane

Interviewer: Katelyn Bernier

Secretary: Eric Young

Translator: Ricky (Hong Kong Polytechnic Student)

1. How did you find out about Evergreen College?

Found about the program from her friends; main motivation for her coming to EC

2. What was your motivation for joining Evergreen College?

Came to Caritas before Evergreen College and was a member; classes are just a “bonus”; after her retirement she came here with her friends to socialize and to make new friends within the program here.

3. Are there any courses or programs you wish were offered, but aren't?

Can not think of any classes that she would like to take that are not offered;

d. What kinds of classes have you taken so far?

Classes that she has taken so far include Chinese Opera; computers; Chinese writing.

e. What has been your favorite class so far, and why?

She likes the computer classes b/c she learned how to send emails (she has family/children overseas). Also likes the opera class b/c she gets to socialize with friends

4. What is your favorite part of Evergreen College?

Favorite part is the social aspect of coming to the center; she comes to make new friends here since she is older now and some of her family is far from here.

a. Would you feel comfortable naming your least favorite part?

Does not really have a part of the program that she likes the least but she has more difficulty with the English and putonghua classes which could be considered her least favorite part b/c it is much harder for her to learn.

5. Do you wish anything was done differently?

a. Would you like to be involved in running some aspect of Evergreen College?

(member council, advertising committee, field trip organization, etc.)

She was involved with some smaller roles in the past like organizing dramas and some other small things;

b. *If so, how would you like to be involved or make a contribution?*

she feel that she is a little too old to assist with running anything; feels as though that she would be unable to run something.

c. *Do you get “homework”? Do you want “homework”?*

For homework, she tapes the opera class to practice it at home and also works on her painting at home as well.

6. Has paying for Evergreen College classes been difficult for you?

About HK \$30 for 10 classes so she does not really have trouble with it; the dancing class that she takes is a little bit more expensive HK \$100 for 10 classes so there are less people in the class with her. Computer classes are taught by volunteers that have learned it before so they are cheaper than taking it with the official “professional” teachers.

7. Do you feel you’ve learned valuable information since you’ve began taking classes?

Attending EC has made things more worthwhile; she feels as though she has learned something; has learned many things which are all worthwhile.

a. *For how much longer do you want to continue learning?*

She will keep coming here to be a volunteer and to take classes for as long as her body will continue to let her do so. She thinks that b/c she is able to come here on her own that it is better for her children b/c they do not need to worry about her so much; by extension her children can live better lives without having to worry about how to take care of her or get things for her to do so much.

8. What are your thoughts on computers and the internet?

She thinks that the computer classes are ok; she has learned how to use the email and internet; has also learned the English characters ABC’s as well as the Chinese characters now more so; she has also learned how to make the greeting cards, etc. being able to use the computer is useful for her b/c she can stay in contact with other people as well as learn more for herself.

9. Do you have any friends that aren’t involved in Evergreen College, and why do you think they choose not to participate?

A lot of her friends do not take classes here; they have to take care of their grandchildren, others are not interested in learning b/c they feel that they are too old; some others may have jobs.

Appendix H – Student Survey Results

Overall Results

Question 1		59 or below	60-65	66-70	71-75	75 or above		Not Answered
(age)		11	35	14	18	9		6
Question 2		Male	Female					
(male or female)		14	72					7
Question 3		1 - Poor	2	3 - Fair	4	5 - Excellent	Avg	
(College rating)		0	2	9	17	62	4.54	3
Question 4								
(rate teachers)		0	1	3	11	35	4.60	3
Question 5								
(rate courses)		0	2	12	27	46	4.34	6
Question 6		Yes	No	No Response				
(desired courses not offered?)		43	35	15				
Question 7								
(computer interest?)		63	27	3				
Question 8								
(Could there be improvement?)		70	19	4				
Question 9								
(Improved quality of life?)		85	4	4				
Question 10								
(would you recommend?)		89	3	1				
Total Surveys Received	93							

Appendix I – Focus Group Results

Moderator: Matt Hazel

Transcriber: Kim Ware

Translator: Martin Cheung

1. Introductions

2. (Ice Breaker Question) What classes are offered at Evergreen College?

Art class, origami, Chinese opera are all classes offered.

3. What is your favorite class?

One used to attend singing class, but now she volunteers here so she doesn't have much time. Another enjoys Chinese painting, Singing, and Chinese writing. The next likes painting class, sketching, and water painting.

The last likes singing class and writing.

4. How long have you been involved in Caritas, and how long have you been taking classes?

3 years

Less than 1 year

15 years

9 or 10 years

5. Do you enjoy taking classes for the social aspect of meeting new people?

Yes, that is important. They are here 6 days a week to do volunteer work even if they aren't taking classes. They have been working on "New Years writing." One was actually the leader of room decorations for Chinese New Year, which they sell to other people to make money for Caritas. It is a good way to get some funding.

6. How many different committees are there for members to get involved in?

They also have other volunteers that aren't elderly – they have volunteers that are young adults that do origami and room decorations to help raise money.

7. Would you like to opportunity to decide what classes or field trips are offered?

They basically have a say on what trips they want to take and what classes are offered. If there is a class that students want, they need to have enough

students, and a good teacher for the class. They need to acquire both of those in order to get the class approved.

8. What field trips are offered?

They usually go to a tour site in Hong Kong. They don't go to the Mainland or anything. They have been to the Buddha on Lantau. They went camping for one night in the Western area of the New Territories and Ocean Park.

9. Do you enjoy traveling and would you like to do more of it?

Yes they enjoy it. They definitely enjoy going on trips. The point of the trips is for them to socialize more. There are always a lot of participants on the trips. If one member gets another person to come, they only have to pay 75 dollars instead of 80.

10. Are you married, and do your husbands come?

They were all married. One person's husband is still working, but comes on weekends. 2 of their husbands passed away. The last person's husband is a member.

11. Why do you think men don't come here as much as women?

They said that they think there aren't many male members because the males are more reserved and quiet, they don't like to socialize. One member's husband likes to do chores at home instead of coming here.

12. Do you know how to use computers?

Only one out of 4 knows how to use computers. Most of them don't want to touch it because they don't want harm it – they are afraid. They know there is a computer class offered, but they just aren't interested. Most of computer classes are full anyway. One learned how to use a computer in the other Caritas center, but it gives her a headache after using it for awhile.

13. What did you do before you joined Caritas, and has the program made your lives more fulfilling?

Most of them were either working or stay at home moms. All of them think it is very fulfilling. They get to socialize and learn new things. One didn't get the opportunity to go to school when she was little, but now that she has the time, she wants to.

14. What are your favorite activities when you are not at the center?

They love going on trips a lot and singing Chinese opera.

15. What is your overall feeling about Evergreen College?

All the teachers are very nice and patient. The cost is very cheap. The only thing they aren't happy about is lack of space.

16. Would you be interested if Evergreen College offered incentives to bring a friend to classes or field trips?

There is no need for that promotion. All of the classes are very popular. They need to have a lottery to pick which students can attend the classes. One class may only have 50 seats but 200 applicants.

17. Do you fill out an end-of-course evaluation form?

The teacher asks them informally about their suggestions and comments. There is no official form.

18. Has there ever been a class where you didn't enjoy the teacher or course material?

Only a few times. It is mainly a problem with the teacher and teaching style.

19. How far would you be willing to travel to take courses in other buildings?

It would not be a problem for them to travel.

20. What one thing would you want to have done to improve Evergreen College aside from the facilities?

They would like to have an art room strictly for art classes. It would be easier to have all the supplies in one room. They have to go upstairs and downstairs for the art classes – it is a pain. Other than that, they are very satisfied.

21. At what age did you get married?

One stopped working right after she got married because she had a child. Another retired when she was 68 and a third retired in 1990. One said she joined Caritas before she retired.

22. Do you know of any advertising that this center has done, and have you taken part in any of that advertising?

They have taken part in the advertising. They have a stand in the mall where they pass out flyers and take people's blood pressure.

23. How did you find out about taking classes here? Was it before or after you started coming here?

They knew before they became members. One found out through her husband. Some of them knew by word-of-mouth, flyers, or by advertising for volunteers.

24. Do you have any additional fun activities aside from classes?

There are choir competitions against other branches of Caritas. There is dancing and group meetings.

25. Can you think of any ways for Evergreen College to attract more males?

It is basically their personalities. One of their relatives joined a different branch as a teacher and got annoyed because there were so many female members.

Appendix J – Informal Interview Results

Interviewer: Informal Interview – all asked questions

Secretary: Katelyn Bernier and Kimberly Ware

Translator: Martin Cheung

Female Student

1. What did you use to do before you retired?

She lived in Canada for 10 years working there.

2. What do you like to do in your free time?

She likes to travel a lot and go shopping or get tea with friends.

3. Why don't you come to the center more often?

She is still fairly young (about 65) and doesn't have a lot of time to come to the center.

4. Have you taken any classes at the center before, or are you just a member?

She had taken a class or two but was basically just a member of the senior center.

Male Student

1. Do you like to travel?

Yes, he travels a lot. He has traveled to Mainland China many times.

2. What classes have you taken at this center?

He has taken computer and English classes.

3. How long have you been coming to the center?

He said that he had been going there for about two years now.

4. How did you find out about the center?

He saw advertising for computer classes and was interesting in learning more.

5. Why do you come to the center?

He said that he came to the center because he was interested in learning more as well as being able to use the computers that are available at the center.

6. What prevents you from taking the other types of classes?

He felt he was too above the Mandarin class that was being offered.

7. Do you like to use the computer a lot?

He used the computer to make cards and keep in touch with friends and family. He comes to the center often to use the computer because it is always being used by someone else at his home.

8. Why do you think male students aren't interested in coming to the center?

He thought males just aren't as interested in learning. They like to sit quietly in the park and read or play games. Also, he said that a lot of people his age do not want "to do anything"; they would rather just eat and sleep in many cases.

9. What do you like to do in your free time?

He said that he liked to travel, to use email, and make documents such as cards, etc. on the computer. He also stated that he was not all that interesting in playing Mah Jong or Chinese checkers or some other activities that men in China are accustomed to doing.

10. Are there any courses not offered by Evergreen College that you wish they had?

No. He felt Evergreen offered all the courses he could possibly want.

Male Student

1. What classes have you taken at this center?

He has only taken an English class. He is married, and his wife takes many courses.

2. Do you like to travel?

He used to enjoy traveling a lot, but is too old to travel anymore.

3. Do you go on any of the field trips with Caritas?

Yes, he had been on field trips with the center before.

4. Are you interested in using the computer?

No, he can't use the computer because his eyes are too bad.

5. Why don't you take more courses at this center?

He isn't very interested in them. He is too old to take more courses. He comes to the center just to relax.

Female Student

1. Why did you use to do before retiring?

She lived in Sydney, Australia for 7 years.

2. Have you taken any courses at this center?

She has taken a singing course.

3. Why don't you take more courses?

She feels she is too old to take classes anymore and her physical condition gets in her way.

4. Do you like to use the computer?

She can't use the computer anymore because her eyes are too bad.

5. Do you like to travel?

She used to love traveling, but she is not physically able to do it any longer.

6. What do you like to do in your free time?

She likes to read newspapers and relax.

7. How did you hear about this center?

She looked for an elderly center on her own. She didn't hear about Caritas anywhere.

Female Student

1. What classes have you taken at this center?

She has taken Mandarin, English, and Chinese writing. She very much enjoys the classes and the homework she gets in all of them.

2. Why did you decide to take classes here?

Her husband (2nd male) wanted her to learn English.

3. Would you be interested in taking any computer classes?

She first wants to improve her English skills before she attempts to take any computer classes.

4. Do you get any homework in your classes?

Yes. She said that she had homework for her English and calligraphy classes.

Appendix K – Interview Results Charlene Martin

**Dean of Continuing Education at Assumption College in Worcester, MA
November 19, 2004**

Interviewer: Eric Young

Secretary: Matt Hazel

1. What is your role in continuing education?

- She is the Dean of the Continuing Education program at Assumption College, which includes both Worcester Institute for Senior Education (W.I.S.E.) and standard Continuing educational programs.
- Usually interacts with people who are seeking a degree, or in the case of W.I.S.E., are attending to try and build skills

2. Why did you become involved in continuing education?

- She was working at Assumption when they first started their continuing education program in 1979
- She liked being able to create a new program from scratch
- She enjoys how continuing education offers a second chance for the people involved

3. What kinds of things do the program you are involved in offer?

- W.I.S.E. is a membership organization for retired individuals
- Full Year membership fee of 120 dollars
- Half year membership fee of 70 dollars
- 5-week courses, held during the day, and are not for credit
- 1 special event a month (field trip, concert, speaker, etc)
- WISE is run entirely by its members
 - has its own governing body: “the council”
- Charlene, as Dean, is the liaison between WISE and Assumption
- Program is 12 years old

4. What do you think are the benefits of adult and continuing education?

- The W.I.S.E. program is purely for the intellectual joy of learning
- Secondly is the socialization aspect it offers
- 2 Benefits she noted were:
 - having W.I.S.E. be run by the members is an empowering experience for the members

- the program is fulfilling and meaningful for these people, who may have never thought that they would be able to meet new people, and learn new skills

5. What are some similar Third Age programs, and how are they different from WISE?

- Originally, the organization ElderHostel offered travel study programs
- these were trips abroad that also had some educational value
- Around 20-30 years ago, ElderHostel established local programs, which were member run and taught
- The Elderhostel Institute Network is a listing of all the member run/member taught local Elderhostel institutions
- Worcester State College offers a credit bearing program for seniors
 - courses are assigned, it is very structured, and a degree can be earned
- Some seniors like this, but others are turned off by test taking, and a structured course selection
- Senior Centers offer seniors a place to get together and socialize, however they are not academic institutes

6. What do you think are some activities that senior citizens would most enjoy?

- Most senior citizens enjoy participating in the arts, and learning about literature and music
- There is a growing interest in learning how to use technology, especially things like e-mail and the internet, however it is not the predominant interest
- W.I.S.E. typically doesn't offer courses in learning to use computers, but it's usually because there is insufficient classroom space, as the computer labs are in use all day long
- Sometimes a computer course is offered during school vacations, and they generally draw large numbers

7. What is the typical level of education for seniors participating in WISE?

- Seniors are typically well educated
- The majority of both men and women involved have college degrees
 - some are doctors, lawyers, teachers and social workers

- A small number don't have High School degrees, however reasons for this could be that they were drafted into a war before they finished high school
- Charlene roughly estimated that 80% had high school degrees, and 60% had college degrees

8. As a self run organization, how did WISE originally structure itself?

- When W.I.S.E. first started, the members organized elections for many different positions:
 - President, vice president, secretary, treasurer
- Also held election for chair persons to fill specific positions
 - membership chair, courses chair, newsletter chair, special events chair etc.
- W.I.S.E. started with 90 members, and has grown to over 400
- Most members are 70+, with a few in their 50s and 60s
- Most members are either from Worcester or the surrounding towns
- No advertising is done for W.I.S.E., it spreads by word of mouth

9. What are some possible improvements that you would like to implement with WISE?

- Charlene noted that it is going to be very intriguing when the Baby Boomer generation retires
- As a member run organization, W.I.S.E. could dramatically change once the Baby Boomers are in control
- Most baby Boomers are well educated, and Charlene noted the trend of seniors wanting to retire and live near a college campus, because they generally offer many events and activities that seniors can participate in
 - Some colleges are even building their own retirement communities
- The only real shortcoming of W.I.S.E. was that Charlene wished that they could have their own dedicated building, so that they could have a centralized meeting place, rather than jumping to whatever classroom is available.

10. If you could start your own Third Age program, how would you structure it?

- Charlene stressed that she would definitely let the seniors run the program themselves

- By doing so, it gives the seniors involved the benefit and satisfaction of running their own program
- She has noticed that seniors that may be suffering from physical illnesses do not even make mention of them while they are attending a W.I.S.E. event. They enjoy the W.I.S.E. program so much, that they don't even discuss health issues.
- Also, by having the program run by the members, it creates a sense of community that is not reproducible any other way.

Appendix L – Interview Results Dr. Robert Young

Department of Psychology, University of Hong Kong

February 24, 2005

Interviewer: Open Discussion Format. All asked questions.

Secretary: All

1. How does the government view the elderly?

The government spends lots of money helping universities offer courses for older people during their part time studies. It gives new importance for their lives. It helps them to enrich their and enjoy themselves, in lifelong education. They believe in education from the cradle to the grave. Evergreen College is trying to fulfill this as well.

2. What does Third Age education offer the elderly?

It gives them a better outlook on life. It broadens their horizons.

3. What changes do you like to see for Third Age education programs?

Exchange of students with other programs will enrich their outlook even better. A good exchange program would be beneficial.

4. When did Third Age education start in Hong Kong?

He thinks it started about 40 years ago with a very small unit.

5. How well educated are the elderly in Hong Kong today?

The elderly people are much better informed than those in mainland China.

6. Do you think there are enough available programs for the elderly?

No, this is a big problem. The expansion of the elderly population is a big problem. The population is growing much faster now due to medical care, good hygiene, and fewer health problems.

7. Do you know of any other Third Age programs in Hong Kong?

There are other Third Age programs. The ones located in universities charge higher fees.

8. How do these programs get funding?

They might get about 10,000 HK. Certain programs that can be seen as helping the economy in the end. You can get an refund from the government, but you have to apply. This is associated with the Adult and Higher Education services of Caritas. If you have a university degree, then you are not eligible.

9. Do you know of any other programs that cater specifically to the elderly and offer classes for their enjoyment?

Not all of the courses offered at these universities are for learning how to work, a lot are for enjoyment too. There are courses in floral arrangement, for instance. These are for any kind of adults though, not just elderly.

10. What are some common problems among these programs?

Space and teacher shortage are two major ones. In the case of elderly education, the elderly might have symptoms of illnesses so there might be problems. They need places that are convenient for the elderly. Another problem is that they easily get ill. They need first aid to look after their safety.

11. Can you think of any ways to increase male membership?

Men typically like to remain at home. That is why more women attend the day courses; maybe more men would attend classes in the evening, but centers have difficulty maintaining later courses. All types of programs are run by Caritas, and usually more women than men attend, regardless of age. Women like to learn more than males perhaps in all kinds of programs. Men seem to be less eager to attend these programs; they would rather just go and find a job. It also has to do with male psychology- men do not like to be seen as inadequate. Women care less about this. When the men go to learn with the women, they do not like being on the same level. Men and women are still not quite equal in Hong Kong as much as within the U.S. today. Psychology courses are more interesting to females, but physical science courses are more male oriented. Women may be more inclined to attend social sciences courses than men. The only way to solve the problem is the introduce physical science courses to the men. Because the physical science courses have more laboratories, it's difficult for physical science courses to be run because of the requirement of facilities.

12. Do you think that females will become equal in the future?

The attitude that males are more important than females is changing for the future. This will change.