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Grant funds courses for older adults

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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Grant funds courses for older adults" (2006). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 19951.
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The University of
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NEWS RELEASE

Sept. 18, 2006

Contact: Sharon Alexander, UM Continuing Education dean, 406-243-2983.

GRANT FUNDS COURSES FOR OLDER ADULTS

MISSOULA —

The University of Montana's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute has received a \$300,000 grant from the Bernard Osher Foundation to fund courses for older adults in the greater Missoula area.

The first installment of the grant arrived just in time for the fall term and open house. The open house will introduce the Montana Osher Lifelong Learning Institute to prospective and returning MOLLI members and give them a chance to meet instructors and the volunteer council members who guide the institute.

The public is invited to the free open house and dessert reception at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 20, in the University Center Ballroom. Attendees may join MOLLI and register for classes.

UM's Continuing Education Program tested the lifelong learning waters last fall by offering two short courses, and found them overwhelmingly appealing to area residents. The winter and spring terms attracted 180 members to the institute, and many are awaiting this fall's term of eight classes taught by some of UM's most experienced current and retired faculty members and community members.

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Then, at the suggestion of UM President George Dennison and with assistance from the lifelong learning institute's founding council, Continuing Education submitted a funding proposal to the Osher Foundation, a San Francisco-based foundation founded by businessman and community leader Bernard Osher. The Osher Foundation seeks to improve quality of life for older adults throughout the country by funding academically rigorous programs at nearly 100 universities throughout the United States. MOLLI is Montana's first recipient.

The Osher grant provides \$100,000 per year for three years, said Continuing Education Dean Sharon Alexander. If MOLLI proves successful and membership increases to 500, chances are good UM will receive a \$1 million endowment to sustain and promote the program while allowing for expansion beyond the Missoula area. Plans are currently under way to initiate an extension of the program at the Daly Mansion in **Hamilton**.

Alexander said the mission of MOLLI is to provide educational access and opportunities that address the continuing intellectual curiosity of older adult students.

"Receiving this grant ensures that the mission of MOLLI will be fulfilled," she said. "MOLLI students are interested in many topics, and they seek learning opportunities that satisfy that intellectual thirst. MOLLI meets these needs, and we are grateful to the Osher Foundation for enabling us to bring this resource to our community."

This fall's classes are:

- "Evolution and Ethics" taught by Albert Borgmann;
- "Yes, You Can Draw!" by Marilyn Bruya;
- "From Washington to Warhol: The History of American Art" by Rafael Chacon;
- "Anaconda: Another Look at 'the Company'" by Dave Emmons;
- "History of Popular Music Theater: 'The Golden Oldies' 1929-1940" by Esther England;

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- “Biology of Birds” by Erik Greene, Ken Dial and Dick Hutto;
- “The Philosophy of Law in Our Supreme Court’s Decisions” by Tom Huff; and
- “The History and Literature of World War II” by Jim and Donna Koch.

Classes are interactive sessions with no projects or examinations that meet on six consecutive Fridays beginning Oct. 6. There are three six-week terms offered each year. In addition to a \$25 annual membership, MOLLI members pay a \$50 fee per course with discounts for couples enrolled in the same class.

For more information, call Continuing Education at 406-243-2905 or visit <http://www.umt.edu/ce/plus55>.

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