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### Local student studying problems of the aged

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## LOCAL STUDENT STUDYING PROBLEMS OF THE AGED

by Lisa Walser

MISSOULA --

When Jim Brennan came to the University of Montana, Missoula, he wanted to be a pediatrician. Now, a year later, the Stebbins High School graduate has spanned a generation and wants a career in gerontology.

"I always enjoyed working with kids," Brennan explained, "but it was coming to a point where there were so many people in that field that I thought my services could be used in an area that has not been developed."

"We shove people out at age 65 in this country," he said, "and all that knowledge they have collected goes to waste."

A degree in social work at UM will enable Brennan to enter a master's program in gerontology and finish in one year.

Brennan is also majoring in sociology and is studying the changing roles that people are given as they grow older, and the reactions to those roles.

Along with academic work in his field, Brennan is getting on-the-job experience in several community programs. He works in the Adopt-a-Grandparent program, where children who may have behavioral problems are matched up with retired persons who volunteer for the program. There is benefit to both, Brennan said.

He is also a member of Respite Care, an organization that assists families who have a developmentally disabled household member who requires extra care. "We do everything from making dinner for the family to dressing the patient," he said, "but mostly we go to give the parents a chance to get out of the home because you burn out when you are taking care of someone 24 hours a day."