

HOLIDAY

THE AGE BLOG



AGE Executive Director, April Morganti visiting FUYI Elder Care in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, Southwest China, 2019

Looking out my office window at the ice-covered trees and gentle dusting of snow on the ground, I'm beginning to feel the excitement of the holiday season. I love this time of year, it offers an opportunity to get together with family and friends from far and near. As I was putting up the Christmas tree, I reflected on how fast time passes. My children are now teenagers, but I have such vivid memories of their faces when they were little and we would prepare a snack for Rudolph and Santa. I remember how they would rush downstairs on Christmas morning, wide-eyed in anticipation of gifts from Santa. While I miss those times, I still have the memories.



What we remember

"We do not remember days, we remember moments."

~ Cesare Pavese,
Italian poet, novelist
and literary critic

Those living with dementia, however, are not always as fortunate.

One of my favourite quotes reads, "We do not remember days, we remember moments." Persons living with dementia are still able to enjoy special moments. For those working at the point of care over the holidays and those of us celebrating with family members or friends living with dementia, it is vitally important to keep making memories and enjoying moments with them. [Click here to read a wonderful](#)

[post on helping someone living with dementia capture and preserve memories.](#)

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This fall, I was given a wonderful opportunity to talk about **Gentle Persuasive Approaches** (GPA), AGE's dementia care curriculum. **Guanghua International Education Association (GIEA)** and the **Sino-Canada International Academy for Health Studies (S-CIAHS)** asked me to speak at the China Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (CAGG) Conference in Beijing, China. Of course, my topic was the *urgent* need for dementia education for those who work with older adults at the point of care.

By the middle of 2019, China's population reached 1,433,783,686. According to a 2019 *World Health Organization Bulletin (Research)*, the country has the world's largest population of people living with dementia. The overall prevalence of the disease among people at least 60 years old is projected to increase from 5.8% in 2020 to 6.7% in 2030. Although dementia is not a normal part of aging, by sheer population numbers it is imperative that China put practical dementia care models in place.



(Top left) Presenting at the CAGG conference. (Top right) Visiting long-term care in Chengdu. (bottom) CAGG Conference delegates



Presenting at the conference and visiting long-term care and a dementia village (see photos) in southwest China offered a marvellous opportunity to talk about the importance of dementia education. On a more personal level, I came home with some cherished memories.

Perhaps most important, after speaking with leadership and those who work with older adults in China, I came back with a heightened sense of purpose. Dementia is a universal issue — the disease transcends culture, language and borders. AGE's experience in developing and delivering practical, evidence-based dementia education makes us uniquely qualified to reach out and work with others around the world to help them implement person-centred dementia care. China is committed to responding to the issue of dementia in an aging population. Over the next few months, AGE, GIEA and Sino Canada will work together to develop a GPA pilot project for long-term care and post-secondary nursing programs.

I thank all of our valued partners and stakeholders, as well as all healthcare providers who believe in the importance of dementia education. Gentle Persuasive Approaches has experienced

Why did GIEA choose GPA?

A message From Lisa Gong, Secretary General of Guanghua International Education Association (GIEA). GIEA is a leader in international nursing education and committed to international cooperation in scientific research.

“Guanghua International Education Association (GIEA) invited AGE to China to introduce Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA) at our annual conference, jointly hosted with the China Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (CAGG), following General Secretary Xinjingping’s call for change by “actively responding to the aging of the population” and “promoting elderly health and wellness”.

GIEA recognizes GPA as the leading practical evidence based dementia education curriculum which exemplifies the same ideals and values that our organization holds. With GPA and the partnership of local innovative partners such as Quan Hu Fu Yi Zhang Zhe Jia Yuan (Dementia Village), we hope to continue the advancement in China of person centred care, best practice and standardization of care for seniors living with dementia.”

tremendous growth over the past few years. Such growth means that the healthcare sector is realizing and reacting to the urgent need for dementia education for those who work at the point of care. A sincere thank you to everyone who is helping to make this happen.

From the entire team at AGE, I wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and all the best for the coming new year. ■

April Morganti, AGE Executive Director

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