

The Post Rock Connection
Post Rock Extension District #1 Family and Consumer Sciences Column
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By Brenda Langdon, Family Resource Management Agent

Population of Older Americans Tops Young Children for First Time

For the first time in the United States, there are more older adults than young children.

The first of the Baby Boomers turned 65 in 2011, so the oldest of the Baby Boomers are just now turning 75, which means that this population is going to continue to rapidly grow.

Older Americans, those age 65 and up, has topped 54 million, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, experiencing rapid growth over the past 10 years. The youngest age group, those age 5 and younger, has remained mostly flat in the U.S. and is estimated at just under 20 million.

Further, current projections from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that America's older population will surpass those 18 and younger (currently at about 73 million) by the year 2035.

There are a lot of good things that happen as a result of having an older population. Older adults bring wisdom, historical perspectives and value to society. Because we are living longer, older adults are able to act as the glue to some inter-generational families. Some are even raising or providing regular care for their grandchildren. Older adults play a lot of roles in society, all of which are valued.

Kansas has the highest percentage in the country of older adults who volunteer. For older adults, even if they're working part or full-time, it's a lot easier to find time to give back because they're not necessarily dealing with the number of obligations they had when they were younger.

Your ability to age well is a life span challenge, or something we should be doing throughout our lives. decisions made as 18, 19 and 20 year old's will affect the ability to age well.

Our younger generation often thinks they're invincible and nothing is going to hurt them. It's important to work to help people understand the importance and value of their decisions across their lifespan.

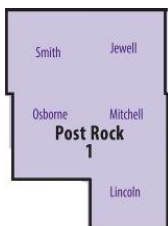
A concern for older adults is health. Medicine and other interventions are good at keeping us alive, but not so good at keeping us healthy.

It's estimated that by 2050, 12.7 million Americans will suffer from Alzheimer's dementia. More older adults will be living in long-term care facilities.

There's not a whole lot of people that have the goal to live in long term care facilities. Most of us want to age in our home and live independently as long as possible.

As we age, there are some simple home modifications that we can do to make the home a safer place to live. Some of the modifications include removing such trip hazards as rugs, installing grab bars and sturdy handrails, moving frequently used items to lower shelves in the kitchen, and arranging furniture strategically to reduce hazards.

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