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**SEIDENBERG SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

**News Byte #25**

***Intergenerational Gerontechnology Program Receives National Recognition***

Pace University in conjunction with Westchester Community College, the United Hebrew Geriatric Center, and several Westchester County agencies that comprise the Consortium for Multi-faceted Gerontechnology Research is a recipient of the **2009 MindAlert Award for General Mental Fitness**. The award, which is supported by the MetLife Foundation, was recently announced by the American Society on Aging (ASA) and is given in recognition of innovative community-based programs that translate research into practical activities that promote cognitive health in older adults.

Specifically, the award recognizes the research program in intergenerational computing that was conceived and implemented by **Jean Coppola**, **PhD**, from the Technology Systems Department of the Seidenberg School. Begun in 2005, the program was designed to bridge the “digital divide” between older adults and their ability to access and use computer technology.

Pace undergraduates enrolled in CIS 102T Intergenerational Computing receive instruction in social gerontology theory and in how to teach older adults. They then go out to a senior facility where they work one-on-one with an assigned senior over a seven week period. Seniors learn how to access the Internet, send e-mail and photos to family and friends, create greeting cards, and search the Web for medical, financial, and other information. This pairing of college students with older adults has proved beneficial to both. Learning how to use technology has resulted in a greater sense of well-being and self-worth, increased cognitive functioning, and a reduced sense of social isolation on the part of the seniors. Additional benefits include satisfaction in learning something new and in developing friendships with their young mentors. The students, on the other hand, learn to appreciate the ability of older citizens to acquire new skills and gain a sense of satisfaction from helping them to do so.

This innovative program, which has been refined and modified over time, has grown in size and popularity. It has also attracted considerable press coverage, received numerous awards, and has been the recipient of several modest research grants.

Dr. Coppola will accept the award at a special event to be held during the American Society on Aging/National Council on *Aging in America* Conference, in Las Vegas, Nevada in mid-March where she will also present her latest research findings in gerontechnology.