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AT HOME IN THE WORLD

Ann Ziebarth

Housing Education and Research Association (HERA) members are in a unique position to make a difference for the lives of individuals and families as well as improving communities around the world. Yet, for many of us the global nature of housing is rarely considered in our everyday work. The purpose of this commentary is to articulate the dual nature of housing as both local and global; grounded in place, yet influenced by global factors. As we move toward the second decade of the 21st century it is my hope that we will expand our thinking, extend our research, and develop our teaching strategies to encompass the global—as well as the individual, family, and community—aspects of our work. (pp. 137-147)

HOME AS IDENTITY: PLACE-MAKING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF OLDER PERSONS

Laura L. Lien

The need for appropriate and affordable housing among all individuals is severe, regardless of age, sex, income, race, or ethnicity. The need for such housing is particularly great, however, among the elderly population as they tend to face significant changes in their housing status as they continue to age. Current housing options available to the elderly are neither vast nor favorable, as a significant portion of this population would identify “aging in place” as their ideal housing preference. The reality of aging typically includes a new or continued need for acute or permanent care, emotional and physical support, and appropriate and affordable shelter, which characteristically eliminates the option of growing older in current locales. This review of literature aims to explore links between four theoretical frameworks surrounding the concept of “housing as identity” in order to create a better working definition of an individual’s self-proclaimed meaning of home and place that can influence research, the design of housing, and programs for older adults. Determining how identities are formed and perpetuated within a home setting has implications on how housing is created and developed to influence a better future for individuals as they age. Since housing preferences within the aging population often point to the ideal of “aging in place,” the concept that allows individuals to maintain their habits, routines, memories, and daily activities makes the focus of “home as identity” a feasible, warranted, and necessary course of research. (pp. 149-170)

ENERGY PRACTICE CLUSTERS OF VIRGINIA LIMITED-RESOURCE HOUSEHOLDS

Hyun-Jeong Lee and JoAnn M. Emmel

The purpose of this study was to identify Virginia limited-resource households' current energy cost burdens and energy saving efforts. There were five research objectives related to this limited-resource sample: (1) To examine energy cost burdens and current energy saving efforts; (2) to group households based on their perceived energy cost burdens and current energy saving efforts; (3) to identify demographic and housing characteristics; (4) to examine changes in energy saving efforts; and (5) to investigate their interests in further energy saving information. In 2005, a questionnaire survey was conducted with limited-resource households in Virginia and 941 usable responses were collected. Based on their perceived energy cost burdens and current energy saving efforts, the respondents were clustered into four different Energy Clusters: Energy-Conscious, Motivated, Achieved, and Help-Needed. Households in different clusters showed distinctive demographic and housing characteristics (household income, presence of children, if headed by a single-adult, tenure and home structure type, and residential location), as well as different levels of changes in their energy saving efforts over the last five years and interest in further energy saving information. Findings indicated that having a large energy cost burden was not necessarily related to substantial energy saving efforts or interest in more information on how to save energy. (pp. 171-194)

Program Note:

THE GEORGIA INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING

Karen Tinsley and Jane Massey

Quality, affordable housing, and healthy neighborhoods are critical needs for residents and their communities. With proper planning, local leaders can foster an environment that creates opportunities for families and communities to prosper. This paper describes a program, the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (Initiative or GICH), developed to address housing issues in rural communities and build community capital. GICH offers collaboration, training, and facilitation to Georgia's cities and enables them to create a locally-based action plan for housing and community development. The Initiative represents a partnership of the Georgia Municipal Association, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and the University of Georgia Housing and Demographics Research Center, with supplemental funding from the private sector. The Initiative helps rural and small- to medium-sized communities access funding, organize a housing strategy, and address their housing needs through partnerships and coordinated action. (pp. 195-211)