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EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF  
GOVERNMENTS



# PRESS RELEASE

## 23rd Annual Conference for Regional Education on Aging, Caregiving & Healthcare (REACH) Next Week

October 8-9 at Maude Cobb Convention Center

**Longview, TX, October 2, 2014:** Approximately 500 East Texans who work with the elderly will receive training next week at the 23rd Annual Regional Education on Aging, Caregiving & Healthcare (REACH) Conference at Maude Cobb Convention Center in Longview on October 8-9 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Conference is hosted each year by the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) which is administered by the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG).

The conference, themed "*REACH for the Stars: Turning Knowledge into Action*," is a collaborative effort to provide educational workshops, plenary sessions and networking opportunities for professionals, caregivers, and anyone interested in Aging issues. REACH provides attendees a choice of 40 workshops over the two-day event, access to 64 exhibit booths, and accreditation and/or continuing education hours relative to the attendees' field of work. Accreditation/continuing education hours are offered for the following: Ethics, Social Work, Activity Professionals, Licensed Professional Counselors, Licensed Nursing Facility Administrators, Assisted Living Managers, Adult Day Care Directors, Guardianship, and Ombudsman.

"The REACH Conference celebrates 23 years of collaborating, educating and enhancing consumers, caregivers and practitioners in building skills and developing expertise to better serve our older population. The conference is one of the larger conferences in East Texas, providing an opportunity for attendees to network, enhance their professional and personal development. We are thankful for the expertise shared by our speakers. We have 14 sponsors this year, who give generously year after year for the ongoing and success of this conference. We are indebted to our outstanding planning committee who works through the year to ensure the success of this conference for the last 23 years," says Bettye Mitchell, Director of Aging Programs for the Area Agency on Aging.

Opening keynote speakers for REACH 2014 include Wendy Lustbader, MSW and Dr. T.F. Freeman with conference-favorite Jim Vanden Bosch, as the closing keynote for the conference.

Ms. Lustbader is the author of several books and essays that have earned her a national reputation in the field of aging. She is also a popular speaker at conferences throughout the United States and Canada, using storytelling to animate complex subjects. Additionally, she is a skilled psychotherapist, having worked almost twenty years with people from all walks of life. Equally passionate as a writer, teacher, and therapist, Ms. Lustbader brings a social worker's lived experience to her writing, teaching, and service to older people. Currently,

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she is an Affiliate Associate Professor at the University of Washington School of Social Work in Seattle. Ms. Lustbaders library of books she's written includes *Taking Care of Aging Family Members*, *Counting on Kindness*, and *What's Worth Knowing*. Her newest book, *Life Gets Better*, explores how life improves as we get older, on every level except the physical.

Long-time Texas Southern University professor and founder/coach of the highly acclaimed debate team, Dr. Thomas F. Freeman will be the opening keynote speaker on October 9. Recognized as an 'Institution within the Institution', Dr. Freeman's illustrious career spans almost seven decades of teaching psychology and philosophy, motivating and mentoring hundreds of students. Among his many accolades and accomplishments, Freeman is the founding dean of the Thomas F. Freeman Honors College, as well as, the Distinguished Director of Forensics, having directed the TSU Debate team for 69 years. Most recently, Dr. Freeman trained Academy Award winner Denzel Washington and his cast in the movie about East Texas' Wiley College and "The Great Debaters" which was nominated for a Golden Globe Award.

The Closing Keynote Speaker, James Vanden Bosch, is a filmmaker and the founder and Executive Director of Terra Nova Films, a not-for-profit company specializing in producing and distributing films and videos on a wide variety of aging related issues. Throughout the years he has produced over 40 videos, including a recent series on elder abuse; and a series on geriatric healthcare for the American Journal of Nursing. As the director of Terra Nova Films, he also oversees the marketing and distribution of more than 200 videos on a wide array of aging issues. Vanden Bosch is also an associate editor in the arts and humanities section of *The Gerontologist*, the main academic journal of the Gerontological Society of America. In this position he writes reviews of mainstream feature films that deal with aging themes. He also presents frequently at conferences and workshops on aging, using a multimedia approach that incorporates relevant video stories into a thematic Powerpoint presentation.

The luncheon keynote speakers are Jim Comer, president of Comer Communication in Austin, and Andrew B. Crocker, BA, MS an extension program specialist at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Amarillo.

"I want to thank Priscilla Jones LBSW and staff, as well as, Nancy Capet-Davis for their continued efforts in making REACH a success! For 23 years – without a doubt – Priscilla has put on one of the best conferences in East Texas on education, aging, caregiving and healthcare. The time and effort she puts into REACH each year, along with her duties as Community Care Coordinator is abundant. And for almost 10 years, Nancy with DAD's Regulatory Services has been able to provide our conference attendees with continuing education hours to apply toward their licenses in their professional work," says Mitchell.

REACH is partially funded by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services and the following sponsoring agencies: Texas Home Health and Hospice, East Texas Aging and Disability Resource Center, Money Follows the Person/Home By Choice (ADRC), Caring Companions at Home, Buckner Westminster Place, Heart to Heart Hospice of Tyler, Heart's Way Hospice of NE Texas, At Home Healthcare, Gateway Dental Mgmt. Svcs LLC, Wesley House Assisted Living/Wesley Oaks Memory Care, Premiere Home Care, Right at Home, Haven Care Nursing & Rehab & Eden Specialty Care and Highland Pines Nursing & Rehab. REACH is organized by a planning committee made up of fourteen State and Local agencies.

Additional information can be obtained by calling the Area Agency on Aging at ETCOG at (903)218-6500 or on our website <http://www.etcog.org/404/REACH-Conference.htm> or [www.reachconference.net](http://www.reachconference.net).

### **About East Texas Area Agency on Aging**

The Area Agency on Aging of East Texas is designated by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services to coordinate services for persons in East Texas who are 60 or older, with particular attention to low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas. Programs include, but are not limited to: Information, Referral and Assistance, Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance, Nursing home Ombudsman, Care Coordination, Caregiver Support Program and transportation provided by GOBUS. The Area Agency on Aging provides Nutrition programs delivering hot, nutritious meals to eligible homebound senior and providing congregate meals at local senior center. The Area Agency on Aging is a program of ETCOG serving its 14 county region.

### **About ETCOG**

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within the fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. Established in 1970, ETCOG, either directly, or through its contractors, provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG and its contractors also build the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provide peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and deliver rural transportation services, business finance programs, and environmental grant funding for the region.