



United Hebrew Geriatric Center Gerontech Program Awarded IBM Grant

New Rochelle, NY (July 21, 2006) -- The newly formed Consortium for Multi-Faceted Gerontechnology Research, a partnership among the United Hebrew Geriatric Center of New Rochelle (UHGC), Pace University's Ivan G. Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems and others, has been awarded a \$35,000 Web Adaptation Technology Grant from IBM which consists of software, services and support materials.

The grant will be used to help support the gerontechnology program at UHGC with IBM software that adapts computers for use by seniors with slight visual or motor skill impairments. "Research articles suggest that senior citizens would be less afraid of computers and more willing to use tools like the Internet and e-mail if computers and software were better adapted to their needs," says Linda Forman, Director of Community Relations at UHGC and one of the lead grant applicants. "With the IBM grant, we plan to test that theory by evaluating the effectiveness of assistive software that makes the computer screen easier to read, reads text out loud, and adjusts keyboard sensitivity to the touch of people with impaired hand and arm movements."

Dr. Jean Coppola, Assistant Professor of Technology Systems at Pace University, Professor Barbara Thomas (WCC nursing) and Dr. Fran Gustavson (Pace Intergenerational Computing course instructor) join Ms. Forman as co-investigators for the grant.

The assistive software enhances the new and highly successful gerontechnology program, which recently "graduated" its first class of 25 UHGC residents. Computer labs have been set up in three locations on the UHGC campus to allow seniors to work with 23 college-student instructors during a six-week course. Students helped lessen the "fear factor" regarding computers and taught seniors how to master the mouse, send e-mail to their family members, and instant message with grandchildren. A state-of-the-art UHGC residence, scheduled to be completed in 2007, will offer wireless internet capacity in rooms and common spaces.

"Our UHGC residents have the opportunity to improve the quality of their lives by interacting with students, faculty, and scientists and being a valuable part of a team," says Forman. "Through the gerontechnology program, they make new friends with students and each other, exercise their minds, and add to current understanding of the best ways to teach computer skills to older adults. Seniors who become "connected" can make an even greater contribution to society."

For further information, please contact Linda Forman at **914.632.2804, x 224** or lforman@uhgc.org.

About the United Hebrew Geriatric Center of New Rochelle:

UHGC is a vibrant not-for-profit, non-sectarian, multi-service senior living campus serving the Westchester metropolitan area since 1919. UHGC offers a rich array of skilled and community-based programs and services that encourages and supports a life of dignity and spirituality and promotes the highest possible quality of life. UHGC serves over 600 clients daily in its campus facilities -- Willow Towers, a 126 unit assisted living residence with The Phoenix Neighborhood for

those with memory impairment; a 270 bed Nursing Home; the 135 unit Low-Savin Apartments for seniors; a Long Term Home Health Care Program; and the Azor Home Health Agency. Its newest project, the renovation and expansion of its nursing home facility, combines world-class care with state-of-the-art features.

Website: www.uhgc.org

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