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Stockton Professor to Lead Guided Autobiography Workshop at Shore Memorial Hospital

Stockton Center on Successful Aging and the School of Graduate and Continuing Studies Partner with Shore Memorial Hospital

For Immediate Release

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**Contact: Tim Kelly
Office of Public Relations
Galloway Township, NJ 08240
Tim.Kelly@stockton.edu
(609) 652-4950**

Somers Point, NJ- The Stockton Center on Successful Aging (SCOSA) and the Stockton School of Graduate and Continuing Studies have partnered with Shore Memorial Hospital of Somers Point to co-sponsor a 5-week Guided Autobiography (GAB) workshop.

Healthcare and social services professionals will learn to use the method of guided autobiography with clients. Guided autobiography (GAB) is a method for helping people document their life stories. Guided by a trained instructor, participants are led through themes and priming questions that evoke memories of events once known but filed away and seemingly forgotten.

The workshop, which meets on five Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., will begin February 24, 2011, at Shore Memorial Hospital's Jenkins Room. The workshop will meet on the last Thursday of February and on all Thursdays in March with the exception of March 17.

Dr. Lisa Cox, associate professor of social work, SCOSA research chair and a trained GAB instructor, will present the workshop.

The workshop is designed for professionals who are interested in learning the techniques of guided autobiography in order to offer classes or workshops in their own workplace or civic settings.

Participants of all ages have benefited from the insight and personal discovery guided autobiography provides.

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Guided Autobiography/ page 2

The process is especially beneficial for people seeking meaning and/or a new direction in life while dealing with significant life-struggles such as cancer treatment, dialysis, divorce and widowhood. Small sharing groups are particularly rich when the participants are of varied ages and backgrounds.

“We start by asking participants to write down the history of branching points in their lives,” said Dr. Cox.

In subsequent sessions, participants explore such topics as family, the role of money in one’s life, one’s major life work or career, health and body, and other topics that interweave to form the tapestry of a life.

The guided autobiography methodology was developed by Dr. James Birren, associate director of the UCLA Center on Aging, to help would-be-autobiographers find structure and meaning in the multitude of seemingly random events that compose a life. Over five decades, Dr. Birren found that writing about life experiences and sharing them with others is one of the best ways to give new meaning to our present lives by understanding the past more fully.

The 5-week course is approved for 12.5 CEs for social workers, marriage and family therapists, and licensed professional counselors. Registration is required, and seating is limited to 15 participants. To register online, go to www.stockton.edu/cs, click on “Browse All Courses” and select Guided Autobiography. For registration assistance or questions please call (609)-652-4227.

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