In Just Five..."Celebrating Older Americans"

May is Older Americans month - a time to honor people age 65+ with celebrations and special events for the contribution ‘older’ adults have made to the heritage and quality of life for everyone living in the United States. In 1963, President Kennedy designated May as "Senior Citizen's Month" and in 1980, President Carter issued a formal proclamation, changing the name, and formally declaring May as "Older Americans Month."

Below is a brief profile of our ‘aging cohorts’ as well as informational websites about aging trends in our society. (Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Administration on Aging, Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics)

The demographics of an aging population are changing dramatically as the wave of baby boomers reshape the social context of ‘aging in America.’

- **Population ‘boom’**:  
  - In the next thirty years, the population of individuals over age 65 will almost double to approximately 21 percent of the general population (86.7 million people).
  - Between the year 2000 and 2050, the increase in this age group is 147% compared to the rest of the world at only 49 percent.
  - The fastest growing segment of the population is adults 80 years and older.

- **Economics** - In the last 20 years, older adults have experienced more prosperity (increase in income and decrease in proportion of people with lower incomes) although many racial, ethnic, gender inequities still exist. Median income is up by 2.8 percent and the number of older adults in the work force will go up by 3 million in 2014, to 8.7 million people.

- **Education** - The number of high school and college graduates has tripled in the last 30 years.

- **Health status** - Although longevity in the U.S. continues to increase, life expectancy at age 65 is lower than that of other industrialized nations. However, functional limitations (walking, bathing, dressing etc.) of the 65+ population has declined in recent years. The increasing trend toward obesity which occurred between 1988 and 2006 is beginning to taper off.

Websites to Browse for More Information

- National Council on Aging - Celebrations during Older Americans Month
- Medline Plus - Seniors Fitness
- AARP Official Website - Information and Tools for Healthy Living
- Administration on Aging - Profile of Older Americans
- Aging Stats.gov - Older Americans 2008 - Key Indicators for Well Being