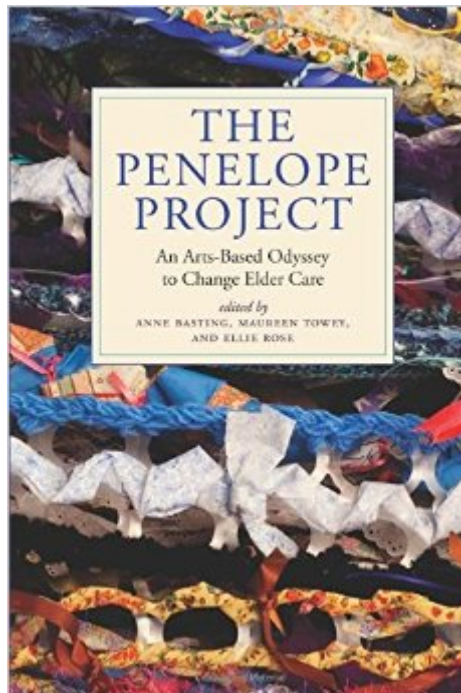


The book was found

The Penelope Project: An Arts-Based Odyssey To Change Elder Care (Humanities And Public Life)



Synopsis

Of the 15,000 nursing homes in the United States, how many are places you'd want to visit, much less live in? Now that people are living longer and more of the population are elderly, this question is more important than ever, particularly for people with disabilities. We must transform long-term care into an experience we and our loved ones can face without dread. It can be done. The Penelope Project shows how by taking readers on an ambitious journey to create a long-term care community that engages its residents in challenging, meaningful art-making. At Milwaukee's Luther Manor, a team of artists from the University of Wisconsin's theatre department and Sojourn Theatre Company, university students, staff, residents, and volunteers traded their bingo cards for copies of *The Odyssey*. They embarked on a two-year project to examine this ancient story from the perspective of the hero who never left home: Penelope, wife of Odysseus. Together, the team staged a play that engaged everyone and transcended the limits not just of old age and disability but also youth, institutional regulations, and disciplinary boundaries. Inviting readers to see through the eyes of residents, students, artists, staff, family members, and experts in the fields of education, long-term care, and civically engaged arts practice, this book underscores the essential role of the arts and humanities in living richly. Waiting, as Penelope waited, need not be a time of loss and neglect. The Penelope Project boldly dreams of how to make late life a time of growth and learning. If you dream of improving people's lives through creative endeavors, this book provides practical advice.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

How can we transform negative attitudes about older people, frailty, and long-term care? How can we persuade elders who do not have dementia or use walkers and wheelchairs to change their minds about those who do? How can college students be inspired to care about what goes on behind the walls of the long-term care residences? How can college and university faculty teach their students that civic engagement can not only be meaningful but also playful? How can long-term care administrators and employees benefit from collaborations with artists, students, and faculty? Put on a play! This book is inspiring, informative, and performative. It speaks to many audiences. However, you don't need to be planning to spend a couple of years figuring out how to present a play based on The Odyssey throughout a whole continuum of care community to benefit from reading it. It will stimulate you to imagine how the arts can change attitudes about aging, older people, and long-term care, and about how generations can come together in joyful creativity to accomplish this.

The book is a chorus of candid, thoughtful voices of people involved in a two-year partnership to shape a collaborative performance project between a longterm care community and university theatre students in Milwaukee and a Chicago-based theatre company. Juxtaposing the myth of Penelope, who waited 20 years for the return of Odysseus from the Trojan War, with the story of an elder in longterm care waiting for a long overdue visit from her daughter, The Penelope Project utilized a range of diverse art forms to create a site-specific work staged at the longterm care community itself. The book is not only a highly readable chronicle of one inspiring project, it provides a useful step-by-step guide for artists and anyone committed to infusing longterm care with creative possibilities

The Penelope Project by Anne Basting et. al. is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in early May. To begin with, this book is not a book, but a compilation of several retrospective scholarly articles, so it seems more like a series of interrogative project proposals than a way to therapeutically reform eldercare. Also, the sole reason that I'm giving The Penelope Project a four-star rating, instead of three, is for the too-few times that the authors refer to the seniors individually, rather than just 'the group' or 'a chorus.'

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