



Age 60 is the new age 40, and it's prime time



"Boomers are going to redefine aging," says Sherry Lansing, head of the Sherry Lansing Foundation.

Sixty million Americans today are 55 years or older. One in ten of us is approaching age sixty. By 2025 one in seven of us will be sixty, and that represents more than 100 million people.

Aging Americans and their numbers are causing a stir. The boomers will revolutionize retirement and transform America, says Sherry Lansing, newly retired CEO of Paramount Pictures. A former Los Angeles schoolteacher turned showbiz executive, Lansing now heads her own Sherry Lansing Foundation.

California's governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former California Secretary of Education Richard Riorden have joined her to support a Los Angeles Unified

School District project called *EnCorps*. EnCorps (pronounced encore) is founded on a firm belief that those approaching "the new 40" will buy into the concept of "pay it forward" and begin new career activities in teaching. Schwarzenegger is well aware of

California needs some 33,000 new science and math teachers. Many of the movers in EnCorps are also shakers in Prime Time. Charlie Reed, Chancellor of the California State University System, is involved in teacher credentialing. Barry Munitz, former CSU System Chancellor,

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today's teacher shortage, and he says he hopes the new pilot project will expand nationwide from L.A.

Lansing supports another project called Prime Time. With a retired Navy vice admiral at the helm of the L.A. schools, Superintendent David Brewer describes himself as a retiree on the comeback trail, quipping "I'm doing an 'encore in prime time.'"

These two pilot projects are recruiting capable individuals who are interested in taking on challenges in the L.A. public schools. Meanwhile, "Boomers are going to redefine aging," Lansing excitedly told me. Teachers, tutors, and school administrators are wanted from the ranks of former engineers, salespeople, marketers, even entertainers.

What's desired also is a welcome re-definition of the tired term "senior citizen."

Retired doesn't necessarily mean tired

The beneficiaries will be our children and grandchildren...L.A.'s students.

and Ted Mitchell, president of the NewSchools Venture Fund, are articulate supporters.

The thought occurs that retirees are among those few who can afford to teach. That thought drew a comment from California Teachers Association president Barbara Kerr, who said, "This part of the idea broke my heart. We need to seriously support making teacher and staff salaries competitive, and we must make sure schools are a great place to work."

Do EnCorps and Prime Time have legs? Will boomers respond in numbers? Will the teacher credentialing issues be resolved to enable retired boomers to contribute in the schools? Will there be an "experience dividend" for young students? Stay tuned. ■



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