

Unificationist Creates Senior and Youth Mutual Support Platform

Catriona Valenta
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SHY, which stands for Seniors Helping Youth, is the brainchild of Unificationist Catriona Valenta of Giessen, Germany. The idea is to match seniors with youth as a way to support each other in different capacities, from foreign mission work to babysitting. “It’s not a new idea, matching ‘senior wisdom’ with unmet needs,” she states on her website, “but offering such a service within the Unification community can tap into our tremendous resources as a worldwide movement with a well-developed idea of ‘one family under God.’”



The website will act as a matching service: Participants will register with their needs or skills and then be matched accordingly. Catriona believes that many seniors are eager and willing to lend a hand to young people. “Many older Unificationists have reached an age where they no longer are tied to jobs or household, have maintained a reasonable level of health and a pioneer spirit, and are looking for an outlet for their creativity and energy,” she says. She also sees the possibility of youth lending a hand to seniors in many different capacities.

Catriona grew up in Glasgow, Scotland, and qualified as a medical practitioner from Glasgow University in 1974. She joined the Unification Church in San Francisco in 1979 and, after six years as a missionary in the United States, relocated to Germany in 1985 to join her Austrian husband, Peter, with whom she has three adult children. She continued to practice medicine as a primary care physician with the U.S. Army in Europe until her retirement in 2010. Now she looks forward to bringing this project to life and hopes for a chance to do some traveling and lend a hand herself! The project is in the early phases of development, but Catriona encourages anyone who is interested to register.

To find out more and to register, visit seniorshelpingyouth.org.