



Press Release ②

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“The healthiest way to care for another is to care for yourself”

-The Cyber University of Korea (formerly Korea Digital University) to establish an institute for professional education and research on caregiving

The Cyber University of Korea (Choong Soon Kim, President), in collaboration with the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving (RCI) of Georgia Southwestern State University, established RCI-Korea (Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving-Korea) - the very first professional caregiving research institute in Korea. The Cyber University of Korea and RCI-U.S.A will sign an MOU agreement to develop a professional education program on caregiving on March 22, 2010.

RCI-Korea's role will be to conduct systematic research and development on professional caregiving to suit Korean needs and cultural sensibility. RCI-U.S.A, which has more than 25 years of research experience in the caregiving field, will be a main collaborator in curriculum development.

As demographic aging has been rapidly progressing in Korean society, the population in need of care is also increasing dramatically. A more systematic and professional approach to caregiving is imperative if Korea is to avoid “the caregiving crisis.” In this respect, the commencement of research on caregiving in Korea has great significance.

▲ Background of establishment of RCI-Korea: Korea's impending “caregiving crisis”

What is the “caregiving crisis”? According to the ‘2009 Social Index of Korea’, published by the National Statistical Office last week, the percentage of population aging 65 and over reached 10.7% (5,193,000) out of the whole population (48,747,000), the highest in history. An aging society is one in which the population aging 65 and over account for over 7% and below 14% out of the total population. In Korea, since its entry into an aging society (7.2%) in 2000, the percentage of aging population is continuously increasing. The ‘Graying Index’ recorded 63.5 in 2009. This meant that for 100 teenagers, there were 60 senior citizens. This phenomenon has no precedent in history. The life expectancy in 2008 was 80.1 which is an increase by 5.3 years



since 1998 (74.8).

On the other hand, the birth rate in 2009 was 1.15, a 0.04 decrease from 1.19 in 2008. The teenage population under the age of 14 is continuously decreasing. The National Statistical Office is expecting Korea to enter into an aged society by 2018 (population aged 65 and over

reaching over 14%~below 20% in respect to the total population). In other words, whereas Korea is entering quickly into an aging society, the population able to support them is decreasing due to a low birth rate, increase in divorce rate and the increase of women's economic activity, who were, in the past, the major service providers of caregiving.

However, unlike in the past where the family took care of the elderly based on a tradition of filial duty, there are now many cases in Korea where families consign the elderly to a professional caregiver or other professional workers or facilities. Yet, it remains unchanged that the family still needs to be the one who takes interest and take care by bearing the recuperation expenses. However, families who need to provide long-term caregiving service are susceptible to physical and psychological burn-out. The volunteers, caregivers for the sick, geriatric care helpers, and other caregiving professionals face difficulties because they have never received systematic education or training to take care of themselves, which is key in providing better services.

To meet such needs of the time, The Cyber University of Korea, in collaboration with RCI-U.S.A, is establishing RCI-Korea in March, 2010. RCI(The Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving) is an institute hosted in Georgia Southwestern State University, established during the time when the need for caregiving research was first proposed in 1987. RCI was formed in honor of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, an alumna of GSW, to enhance her long-standing commitment to human development and mental health.

▲ What is caregiving?

Caregiving is a service which provides care for those who have difficulties in caring for themselves due to disabilities or impaired biological and psychological functions. Academically, caregiving is an educational field which researches and educates caregivers to enable them to provide high-quality caregiving service. Caregivers are people who provide care to those who are in need of it. They can be family members, volunteers, caregivers for the sick, and geriatric care helpers.



According to evidence-based research, as the result of providing professional education and systematic training to caregivers, there was dramatic improvement in their physical health, psychological stability, and the strength to overcome crises. Korea, which has entered into an aging society, is receiving requests to provide professional caregiving education and training for caregivers and their managers.

▲ Vision of RCI-Korea: Research and introduction to the program

RCI-Korea plans to provide professional caregiving education programs tailored to the Korean social and cultural reality. The idea is to keep the overall education content and level equal to that of the U.S., situated within a Korean socio-cultural context for Korean caregivers. This is the first time that professional caregiving education is provided online for caregivers to freely learn without time and place restrictions.

The professional caregiving education program of RCI-Korea is being prepared in two levels. First, RCI-Korea is offering a certificate program built on six credit-bearing courses developed jointly with RCI-U.S.A. The certificate will be jointly conferred with RCI-U.S.A. RCI-Korea is also preparing an exhaustion prevention program called CYCM (Caring for You, Caring for Me) which supports caregivers to prevent them from self exhaustion, and enable them to provide more developed caregiving service by recharging their body and mind. Any organization with caregivers may register for this program. The program will provide customized education to suit each institution.

This program is expected to not only strengthen the professionalism of the caregivers, but also to help counselors and social workers provide better services for their clients. In the case of social workers, they not only directly provide caregiving service, but also play the role of managing caregivers, such as family members and volunteers. If a social worker understands the characteristics of caregivers, the problem of exhaustion, and the problems that may arise in the process of caregiving and their solution techniques, he/she may be able to provide better service to his/her clients. Counselors may experience stress and exhaustion in the process of dealing with clients who face extreme difficulties or who had a traumatic experience in the past. Counselors can be seen as a sub-group of caregivers. If counselors' stress and exhaustion is prevented, the turnover rate will decrease, and this will ultimately lead to counselors providing more effective counseling service to their clients.



▲ RCI-Korea's future plans

RCI-Korea and RCI-U.S.A views the increase in the people needing care and the lack of personnel with systematic and professional education background as the caregiving crisis. Therefore, both institutions will share their on and offline education know-how and the achievements of caregiving research to inform every nation of the importance of caregiving. Through such collaboration, both institutions will strive for the development of the field of caregiving.

Seo Won Lee, Director of RCI-Korea, noted "RCI-Korea will successfully run the professional caregiving education program suited to Korea and do related research. Based on the research achievement of RCI-Korea, The Cyber University of Korea will consolidate its position as a leading education institute in the field of social welfare and counseling."