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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Embracing Aging: A Community Conversation
Event will focus on aging in today's society

YORK, PA – Conversations around issues of aging are difficult for many people, and often are never held at all. York County Community Foundation wants to change that. The Foundation's Hahn Home Fund for Women, along with York College of Pennsylvania, is sponsoring a community-wide conversation on the issues of aging featuring Dr. Ruth Garrett, a nationally known author and lecturer on the topic. The event will also include a panel of York elders sharing their stories of aging well.

Embracing Aging: A Community Conversation, will take place Monday, October 17, from 9 am – 11:30 am at York College's DeMeester Recital Hall located in Wolf Hall.

This free event will bring together York Countians of all ages to look at ways we can embrace aging ... for ourselves, our families and our community. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are more than 86,000 adults over the age of 60 in York County, ranking the county 10th of 67 counties in the state. "Our older residents enhance the fabric of our community," says Michael Hady, Foundation board member and chair of the Hahn Home Committee. "Unfortunately, negative attitudes towards aging impact how we view growing older and thus our treatment of elders. If we truly want to support our elders, then we have to work at changing these attitudes." The goal of this event is to dispel myths about aging, teach how to appreciate oneself at every age, and emphasize the importance of seeking fulfillment throughout one's life. Dr. Garrett will also meet with aging service providers to discuss how communities around the world are creating livable neighborhoods where elders thrive.

The community conversation event is an initiative of the Foundation's new Hahn Home Grant Program, which is a competitive grant program that will help women in York County age with dignity, independence and health. The amount available to grant is \$175,000 and proposals are due on October 1, 2011. The Hahn Home Fund for Women will be a catalyst to create a community where our older residents are well-cared for and thrive by improving access to quality services for aging women and caregivers.

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The Foundation's partner in the event, York College, began offering a gerontology concentration for students majoring in Behavioral Sciences in the fall of 2009. The program is good preparation for careers that may include advocacy, program planning/evaluation, research, direct service positions, education/training, management/administration, and marketing. The gerontology concentration replaced one in long-term care administration, because York wanted "to take a broader approach to aging," according to Assistant Professor of Behavioral Science Mary Ligon.

"Rather than focus primarily on preparing students to work in long-term care facilities, we now focus on understanding aging from a bio-psycho-social perspective. The basic philosophy of gerontology at York College is that in order to improve the well-being of older adults, students must be exposed to educational programs that address the psychological, social, physical and political needs of our elderly population. Students learn about opportunities and challenges facing an aging society and about how to respond with informed sensitivity."

York College's gerontology faculty, including Ligon and Assistant Professor Kelly Niles-Yokum, have worked with many agencies serving the needs of elders in the York area, including Country Meadows-Leaders Heights, Lutheran Social Services and Jewish Family Services. Through gerontology coursework, students have provided hours of service to the community. They have planned and implemented activities for elders in long-term care settings and have conducted numerous oral history interviews with elders in the York community.

About York County Community Foundation: Celebrating 50 years of philanthropy in 2011, York County Community Foundation creates a vibrant York County by engaging donors, providing community leadership, and investing in high impact initiatives while building endowment for future generations. York County Community Foundation granted \$3 million in 2010.

About York College of Pennsylvania: Located in southcentral Pennsylvania, York College offers more than 50 baccalaureate majors in professional programs, the sciences and humanities to its 4,600 undergraduate students. The College also offers master's programs in business, education and nursing, and a doctorate in nursing practice. A center of affordable academic excellence, York is dedicated to the intellectual, professional and social growth of its students. The College helps them develop a concrete plan to attain academic growth and career success; encourages them to try in the "real world" what they learn in the classroom; and prepares them to be professionals in whatever career they pursue.