

newsworthy trends

Working Through The Golden Years

(NAPSA)—Reaching the golden retirement age of 65 once meant leaving the daily grind of a 9-to-5 job to chip balls at the golf course or travel cross-country in an RV. But today, according to the Department of Labor, more than 4.3 million Americans over the age of 65 are choosing work over retirement.

With improvements in health care, longer life spans and growing opportunities for elder workers, it's estimated that by 2010 there will be more workers over the age of 55 than under 24. While some retirees are too strapped financially to forgo working altogether in their golden years, many work not because they have to, but because they enjoy it.

Mary Wells, 83, has been working at a St. Louis-area Jack in the Box restaurant for more than two years. Wells, who keeps busy assisting with food preparation and maintaining the dining area, works as much for the camaraderie as she does for the paycheck.

"I like being with people and talking to customers in the dining room," said Wells.

"I really enjoy my job, and I'll work here as long as they'll have me and as long as I'm able."

While retirees enjoy the social interaction and the extra money in their bank accounts, business owners and managers benefit from the strong work ethic many seniors have as well as their enthusiasm in coming to work.

"Our customers and employees enjoy having Mary around," said



Dottie Banks, 80, has worked at a Jack in the Box restaurant in Oceanside, Calif. for five years.

Kelli Christian, restaurant manager for Jack in the Box. "The customers like to chat with her and welcome her assistance in the dining area. She's also very good at keeping our younger crew members on their toes and they really respect her for it."

Ben Connley, 78, has been a crew member at a Jack in the Box restaurant in Everett, Wash., for 13 years. As a maintenance worker, Connley is responsible for cleaning windows and restrooms, as well as hanging promotional decals and posters. It's physical work, but Connley prefers it over a sedentary lifestyle. And the paycheck is a welcome addition to his fixed income.

"Social Security doesn't go quite far enough," he said. "But this is an enjoyable place to work, and I'd rather get some fresh air and move around than sit in a chair all day."