Social networking on the Web is not just for kids anymore. For elders, a virtual community is suited to best serve the real need for social interaction. In the late stages of life, and of course when one is living in a nursing home, there’s a good chance that family and friends are scattered geographically. Limited mobility leaves elders dependent on others for initiating visits. With email, suddenly no one is so far away.

While it’s great to be in touch with loved ones, it’s also nice to meet new people and the Web can help there as well. Inspired by the idea of MySpace (http://www.myspace.com/) – meeting new people around the world with whom you share interests – but finding it quite youth slanted, Marian Van Eyk McCain (http://www.elderwoman.org/bio.html) started ElderwomanSpace at http://www.elderwoman.org/elderwomanspace.html for social networking for women of the “third age.” It’s an offshoot of her Elderwoman site (http://www.elderwoman.org/)

So, how can we get folks in nursing homes on the Web? Do elders have access to computers at your facility? Any ideas about getting folks interested activities on the net? The Web is really the most immediate tool we have for combating the isolation elders face in nursing homes and it is right in front of our faces, literally. How can we put it to good use?