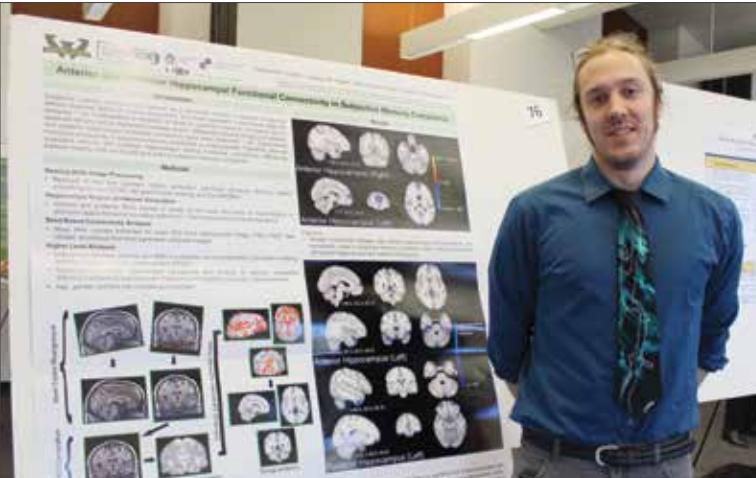




2016 & 2017 REPORT



Engage:



INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY
Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond

Contents

The Institute of Gerontology educates, engages the community, builds partnerships and conducts research in cognitive neuroscience and the social and behavioral sciences to address issues of aging and urban health.

Editor: Cheryl Deep / Designer: Catherine Blasio

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Dr. Lichtenberg (left), and Robert Turner, PhD, review a scholar's poster at the 2017 NIH meeting of the seven Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR).

What Does Engagement Have to Do with the Institute of Gerontology?

Everything.

To engage someone is to involve them with you or your work. It is an invitation to become part of something, to share, interact and connect. The IOG cannot function, let alone succeed, without engagement on multiple levels. Our ability to engage seniors and professionals in our hundreds of programs borders on legend. These trusting relationships underpin our success in recruiting volunteers for research, too. A few numbers from the past two years:

- 13,326 professionals and students educated in 218 programs
- 8,491 older adults attended 190 events, workshops and Lunch & Learns
- 1,385 older African Americans registered as research volunteers

Our research success relies on engagement. Every member of the IOG senior faculty has served as a mentor, guiding the development of future aging experts. They mentor junior faculty as they refine proposals to win federal funding. They mentor every IOG predoctoral trainee and post-doc fellow and advise dozens of undergraduate volunteers.

As an Institute, we are by design interdisciplinary, so almost all our faculty hold joint appointments with another department on campus. These connections are vital. They engage us with psychology, social work, medicine, neuroscience, anthropology, economics and more, informing our research to increase its relevance. Engagement doesn't stop at WSU. Our faculty travel the world, presenting research and engaging with colleagues in Israel, Germany, Thailand, Australia, the Netherlands, Rwanda, Sweden (to name a few) and throughout the U.S..

Engagement drives the science of gerontology. By engaging with Detroit, we noticed the struggles of older residents in shrinking neighborhoods and researched how they coped. By engaging with the U-M and MSU, we helped create the Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Core Center to study non-amyloid causes of dementia and look for early, non-invasive predictors of Alzheimer's. By engaging with the residents of Flint, MI, we saw the toll of the water crisis on older adults and researched its impact. By engaging with financial professionals and Adult Protective Services, we saw that seniors are vulnerable to financial exploitation, and created our Financial Safety & Health Initiative to provide solutions.

The strong connections we make require effort, trust, integrity and commitment. As Steve Jobs once said, "The only way to do great work is to love what you do." Please accept my proposal to continue your own engagement with the IOG by supporting our work and affirming our value. As you will see in this report, we engage well because we love what we do.

Sincerely,


Peter Lichtenberg, PhD, ABPP
Director

Cognitive Neuroscience, Aging and Alzheimer's Disease

Engaging Michigan's Big Three to Fight Alzheimer's

The National Institutes of Health awarded approximately \$9 million over five years to create a statewide center dedicated to enhancing the understanding and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Michigan's resulting Alzheimer's Disease Core Center (ADCC) is a collaboration between the U-M, MSU and WSU, known as the state's University Research Corridor.

"The collaboration between Michigan's three Level 1 research universities, combined with strong community outreach, represents an enormous opportunity for clinicians and researchers to understand persons suffering with Alzheimer's disease and to intervene," Dr. Lichtenberg said. He co-leads the center's Research Education Component Core, which trains junior faculty in topics related to Alzheimer's disease, including minority outreach and recruitment.

A Different Focus from Most AD Research

Over 5 million Americans 65 and older have Alzheimer's, yet no disease-slowing therapies currently exist. Alzheimer's is distinguished by the accumulation of protein deposits in the brain, known as plaques and tangles. Much of today's Alzheimer's research investigates beta-amyloid, the protein that forms those plaques.

The ADCC takes a different focus. "We study the many non-amyloid factors contributing to disease, because beta-amyloid, though unquestionably important, is already getting considerable attention," said Henry Paulson, MD, PhD, U-M neurologist and director of the Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Center. Researchers are also studying the strong links between dementia and heart disease, diabetes, metabolic disorders and depression.

Engaging with Detroit's Minorities

The team is joining with the IOG's Healthier Black



Dr. Hank Paulson (at podium) discusses research opportunities and a panel fields questions from guests at the 2017 Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Center appreciation lunch.

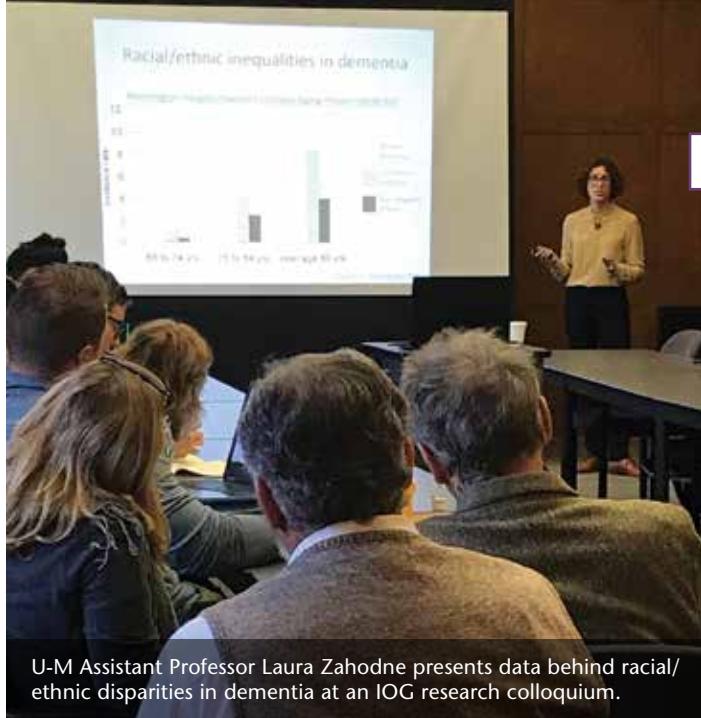
Elders Center to advance the understanding of dementia in underrepresented minorities. Outreach has included free Lunch & Learn's on brain health and recruiting study participants through the HBEC database of older African Americans. The largest study using the database for recruitment is U-M's Memory and Aging Project, which looks at cognitive changes over time to learn more about normal aging and disease. They used 126 members of HBEC's Participant Resource Pool database so far.

Training the Next Generation

As the co-leader of ADCC's Research Education Core, Dr. Lichtenberg coordinates the training of junior faculty across a wide variety of topics relevant to dementia, including how to conduct minority outreach in the Detroit area and recruit volunteers for research. Other IOG-related personnel include clinical core investigator

E. Mark Haacke, PhD, a professor of radiology in WSU's department of biomedical engineering and an expert in techniques that measure blood flow in brain imaging. He is analyzing microbleeds in the brain to identify pathological features of vascular dementia that are apparent long before symptoms appear.

An annual research symposium unites ADCC investigators from all three universities to facilitate collaboration and share advancement. "We are especially excited that this collaboration will extend the scientific and community engagement work on Alzheimer's disease in African Americans," said Dr. Lichtenberg. For 20 years, much of the IOG's research has centered on racial disparities in the health of older adults. "This grant allows us to focus more intently on early cognitive changes in minorities and the interventions that could slow or even stop dementia's progress," he said.



U-M Assistant Professor Laura Zahodne presents data behind racial/ethnic disparities in dementia at an IOG research colloquium.

LEARN MORE AT: <http://urcmich.org/partners/michigan-alzheimers-disease-core-center-adcc/>

"Newly developed biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease can facilitate early detection of risk. Earlier identification of high-risk patients using an optimal combination of these biomarkers can lead to earlier interventions for slowing or preventing further disease progression."

– Dr. John Woodard



Naftali Raz, PhD
Director, Lifespan Cognitive Neuroscience
Prof. of Psychology & Gerontology

Dr. Raz, a professor of psychology and director of the Lifespan Cognitive Neuroscience Program, is one of the world's foremost researchers in the cognitive neuroscience of aging. His career has been devoted to learning how and why the brain changes with age, how those changes affect the way we think and behave, and how vascular risk factors such as hypertension, blood sugar levels and inflammation influence the course of change. Dr. Raz has established close collaboration with his colleagues in Europe, especially with the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin where he holds a joint appointment as a research scientist.

Dr. Raz's research has been funded by the National Institute on Aging since 1993 and was recently extended through 2020. In addition to his main longitudinal study, Dr. Raz is collaborating with his colleague in the School of Medicine, Dr. Jeff Stanley, on investigating the

role of age differences in brain chemistry modulation and brain energy metabolism on learning and memory. Dr. Raz hopes his research will help to identify the predictors of successful aging as well as reliable early signs of transition from normal late-life development to age-related cognitive pathology, such as Alzheimer's disease.



Noa Ofen, PhD
Associate Professor
Psychology & Gerontology

Dr. Ofen investigates structural and functional brain development across a wide age range of typically developing children and adults. Using tests of cognitive abilities combined with neuroimaging techniques, she probes how brain structure and function shape human cognitive functioning across development. In particular, she has worked to explore the structure and function of the hippocampus, a crucial brain structure for learning and memory that is altered in several psychiatric disorders that have a neurodevelopmental basis.

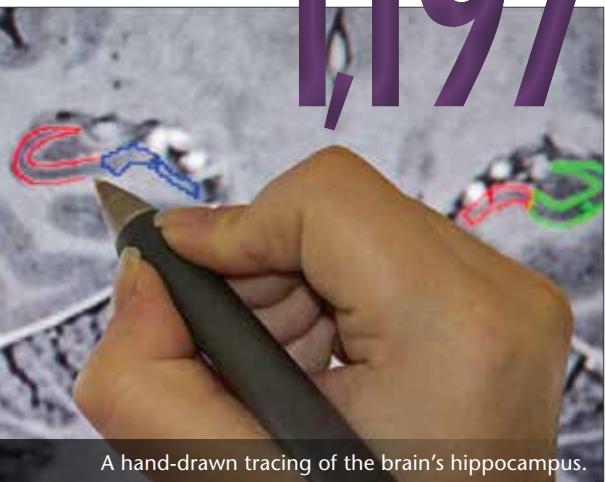
Dr. Ofen also uses cutting edge methodology to investigate neuronal activity that supports memory in pediatric epilepsy patients. In the past two years, she co-authored 17 papers, most of them exploring developmental effects in memory ability and their neural substrates. Dr. Ofen was recently selected as a member of the Memory Disorders Research Society, and serves in various roles in the Cognitive Neuroscience Society and Flux: the Society for Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience.



Jessica Damoiseaux, PhD
Associate Professor
Psychology & Gerontology

Dr. Damoiseaux is an expert in cognitive neuroscience of aging and Alzheimer's disease. Her work examines the impact of aging and Alzheimer's disease on cognitive performance and brain structure and function to detect early brain changes that predict future cognitive decline. Over the past two years, Dr. Damoiseaux continued her work, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Re-

TOTAL
MRI SCANS
1,197



A hand-drawn tracing of the brain's hippocampus.

"My heartfelt gratitude goes to the people who contribute their time and effort to advance this knowledge that cannot be gained in any other way.

But we desperately need new volunteers to test new hypotheses and refine research methods that gradually bring us closer to the goal of this whole enterprise: extending the healthy span of adults."

– Dr. Naftali Raz

Grant Marks 23 Years of Brain Aging Research

Naftali Raz, PhD, received a \$3.6 million research grant from the National Institute on Aging to continue his work on brain aging, its relation to cognitive performance, and the role of common vascular and metabolic risk factors in shaping the trajectories of aging. The 5-year grant continues his decades-long study of healthy volunteers, and marks the rare accomplishment of 23 years of continuous NIH funding for this project.

The focus is healthy aging. "Dementia is a major health concern, and its prevention is the ultimate aim of many leading programs of basic and clinical research," Dr. Raz said. "But advanced age is still the major risk factor for developing neurodegenerative disease. Progress toward that goal necessitates an understanding of normal aging." Dr. Raz is the study's principal investigator, a professor of psychology, and director of the IOG's Lifespan Cognitive Neuroscience Program.

His research involves noninvasive evaluation of the brain through MRI scans, assessment of cognitive performance, and examination of blood biomarkers and genetic variants with known links to vascular and metabolic diseases. "We strive to elucidate the relationships between changes in brain properties (regional volume, cortical thickness, iron content, energy metabolism, myelin content and connectivity among brain regions), and changes in cognitive performance across the multiple domains of memory, processing speed, and complex reasoning skills," Dr. Raz said. He also investigates how risk factors for vascular and metabolic disease can modify these relationships.

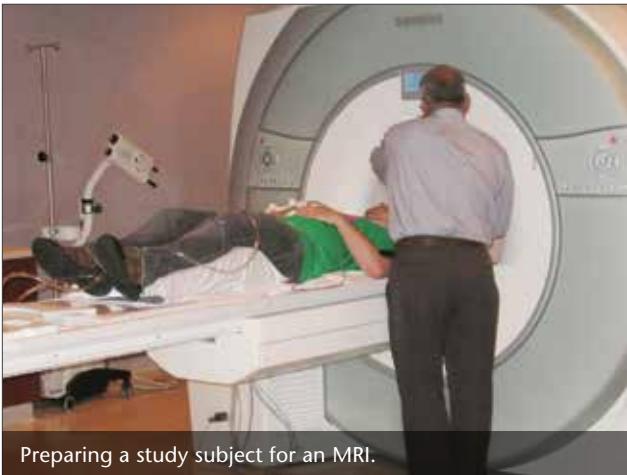
This ongoing study has yielded novel findings. In

one first-of-its-kind longitudinal study, Drs. Raz and Ana Daugherty (a graduate student at the time) found that a higher iron content in the striatum increases shrinkage of that region and negatively affects working memory, the ability to keep track of thoughts and external stimuli while maintaining information in short-term memory.

The lab's earlier studies showed distinct brain regions that are particularly vulnerable to aging: the hippocampus, orbital-frontal cortex, entorhinal/parahippocampal cortex and cerebellum. Age-related changes, however, are not uniform across individuals. Two common risk factors, arterial hypertension, and genetic markers of increased pro-inflammatory response, made those negative changes worse. While little can be done about genetics, vascular risk factors like hypertension are amenable to pharmaceutical and lifestyle interventions such as diet and exercise.

"Longitudinal studies are indispensable for understanding the process of aging," Dr. Raz said. "Although lifestyle and behavior changes can mitigate brain aging to some extent, gauging these effects in a complex system and developing individualized intervention approaches takes long-term follow-up with multiple assessment points over time." A project of such span and complexity requires multidisciplinary engagement and collaboration. Dr. Raz is grateful for the NIH support and the continuous confidence of his peers that make this study possible. He also forged fruitful partnerships with WSU colleagues Drs. Jeffrey Stanley and E. Mark Haacke, and international collaborators Drs. Ulman Lindenberger of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development (Berlin, Germany) and Paolo Ghisletta (University of Geneva, Switzerland).

LEARN MORE OR VOLUNTEER VISIT: www.agingbrain.wayne.edu



Preparing a study subject for an MRI.



Dr. Raz discusses some of his decades-long research in "Neural Correlates and Modifiers of Cognitive Aging" at an IOG colloquium for students and faculty.

search, investigating differences in brain function in older adults with and without subjective memory complaints. This study is conducted at WSU and at Leiden University, the Netherlands, where Dr. Damoiseaux has an affiliation.

Dr. Damoiseaux is also working on several pilot projects, including an investigation funded by the Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Core Center, examining brain connectivity within memory systems in patients with mild cognitive impairment. She publishes her research in international journals and presents at national and international conferences. Dr. Damoiseaux teaches in the Department of Psychology and the Translational Neuroscience Program, and currently advises three graduate students and two post-doctoral fellows.



Voyko Kavcic, PhD
Assistant Professor
Cognitive Neuroscience

Dr. Kavcic joined the IOG from the University of Rochester in New York in 2010. The general goals of his research are to investigate how advanced age and/or neu-

rodegenerative diseases (primarily Alzheimer's disease), affect cerebral structures and functions. His research looks for converging experimental evidence from a variety of methodological approaches, including self-evaluation of cognitive abilities, paper/pencil and computerized neuropsychological testing, human psychophysics, baseline electroencephalography, event-related potentials, and MRI diffusion tensor imaging. His theoretical framework centers on spatiotemporal and interhemispheric integration during visual perception with emphasis on perception of motion and spatial navigation.

His current research aims to develop reasonable, economically viable, and culturally acceptable methods of early detection of healthy older minority adults at risk of developing MCI or later Alzheimer's. He is conducting community-based computerized cognitive tests and recording electroencephalographic signals to better characterize MCI in African Americans. In addition, he is currently investigating the effectiveness of cognitive training for older adults using a virtual maze navigation approach. Dr. Kavcic believes it is particularly important to develop new non-pharmacological interventions to slow cognitive decline or attenuate its progression, since no clear pharmacological treatment is yet available.



John Woodard, PhD
Professor
Psychology

Dr. Woodard is a clinical neuropsychologist and professor of psychology at WSU, and a member of the IOG training faculty. His research focuses on evaluating early changes in semantic memory as a leading indicator of incipient Alzheimer's disease. Over the last two years, he has established an international collaboration with the Université catholique de Louvain and St. Luc University Clinics in Brussels, Belgium, to investigate optimal combinations of neuroimaging, genetic and laboratory biomarkers for predicting risk for Alzheimer's disease.

Dr. Woodard is a co-investigator on a new \$8.8 million longitudinal NIH grant investigating the role of physical activity-induced changes in immune functioning for preventing or delaying the onset of Alzheimer's disease. He is an associate editor of the *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society* and is on the editorial boards of three additional journals focused on, neuropsychology and aging.

Aging, Health & the Environment

Making Our World a Healthier Place to Live

The urban environment is not always conducive to well-being. Industrial waste, air and water pollution, and lead-based pipes and paint assault physical health. Mental health suffers, too, when neighborhoods struggle against blight, abandonment and violence. WSU's Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors (CURES), now in its fourth year, studies these problems and offers solutions. CURES' Community Outreach and Engagement Core, directed by Dr. Lichtenberg with the IOG's Carrie Leach as program manager, builds communication walkways between Detroiters and CURES.

"Our approach is grassroots. We know the programs are relevant since they're co-created with our CAB (Community Advisory Board) of local leaders who know their constituents well," said Carrie. The CURES team videos two live Environmental Health Chats per year and then offer them free, with a moderator, to any group. With these spin-offs, "the info has more legs. It isn't confined to the day it is presented." In the past two years, CURES held 59 events, reaching 1,615 Detroiters.

Windshield Tours and In-Reach

Innovation is a hallmark of the CURES approach to engaging the community. Simply talking about environmental stressors falls short; Carrie and CURES Outreach Coordinator Brian Smith prefer an immersive experience. "Our driving tour lets students experience firsthand some of the biggest environmental offenders. When they get out of the car in Delray and get smacked by the smell of sulfur they're surprised. They see people that live in it 24/7," Carrie said.

The tour includes a visit to the Detroit incinerator, the largest solid waste incinerator in the U.S. and home to ongoing environmental and social justice fights. More than 76,000 children live within a 5-mile radius, and asthma related hospitalizations are five times higher than the state average. The tour visits the industrialized Zug

Island, through Delray, home to several facilities that exceed the EPA's toxic release, south to the Ambassador Bridge. "This is the busiest international crossing in North America. Students can't believe people live right below it." The noise, shaking, idling, and carcinogenic diesel emissions from the

10,000 semis that cross the bridge every day are clearly a health hazard.

"But I love a counterpoint," Carrie said, so the tour turns brighter as it visits Eastern Market, the Dequindre cut recreational path, urban farms, and community gardens. "We want people to also see what's right amidst what's wrong," she said.

"In-reach" within WSU engages a different set of stakeholders: students training for caregiving professions. College of Nursing students have acted as health resources at CURES events, and taken the windshield tour. Exposure to real situations will help sensitize students to the life challenges of future patients. "We hope they'll have a deeper understanding of the environmental burdens that people shoulder," Carrie said. "It isn't enough to tell a parent to avoid asthma triggers for their son, if they live next to the incinerator." So far, 268 students have participated.

True Partnerships

Carrie uses the word bi-directional often – and she means it. From the family of four to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (a CURES partner), interactions are two-way. CURES is fortunate to have enough human



CURES Community Outreach Coordinator (front right) conducts tours through polluted areas of Detroit, as well as thriving, healthy sections like Eastern Market.

resources to provide these consistent high-touch interactions. Events are not lectures; they are Health Chats with plenty of time for discussion. "We work hard to find out what the community needs and wants and then match those with information and resources," Carrie said. This extends to their 28 member CAB. The Core supports their work by attending fund-raisers, sponsoring events, and distributing mini-grants of up to \$5,000 for projects that advance CURE's mission, such as testing lead in soil before gardens are planted.

Communication matters as she works to find the right vehicle to engage and connect. "Truly translating and synthesizing complex information is hard, but without it people can't make good choices," she said. Carrie collaborates on publications that advance the science of community engagement by sharing CURES' successful model. "I'm always thinking about how best to communicate in a way that resonates with people, that's ecologically sensitized to who they are," Carrie said. "That's how I see the world."

1,615
DETROITERS
REACHED
THROUGH
GRASSROOTS
EFFORTS

**Mark Luborsky, PhD**

Director, Aging & Health Disparities
Professor
Anthropology & Gerontology

As a professor of anthropology and gerontology, Dr. Luborsky answers questions concerning the way culture shapes our responses to life's changes and the kinds of challenges we face as we age. As director of Aging and Health Disparities research, he works closely with the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research mentoring minority scholars to develop research and interventions to improve minority health. He worked with the CDC/EPA and Michigan Department of Health to develop harm reduction strategies for older anglers and families who rely on fish from the Detroit River for food. His team developed a successful intervention to reduce hospital workplace violence. He worked with Rwanda's National Ministries of Health to develop HIV prevention interventions and expand the country's research, and in Thailand to promote minority elders' wellbeing. He is principal investigator on NIH grants, teaches anthropology, advises students, and serves on the Johns Hopkins / Harvard University mixed methods training program. He is regularly invited to present at national and international conferences.

**Catherine Lysack, PhD, OT(C)**

Deputy Director
Professor
Occupational Therapy & Gerontology

Dr. Lysack researches the social and cultural forces that shape health and well-being. She is most interested in understanding how older adults and people with disability return to active and meaningful lives after illness and injury. She has studied successful aging, aging and depression, the independence and safety of older adults who live alone, the impact of spinal cord injury on community participation, mobility loss after falls and hip fracture, as well as driving retirement and downsizing residential moves in

later life. Her research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the Retirement Research Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Defense. In 2007, Dr. Lysack was inducted into the American Occupational Therapy Foundation's Academy of Research for "having made exemplary contributions toward the science of occupational therapy." She has more than 60 peer-reviewed publications and numerous book chapters.

**Jessica Robbins, PhD**

Assistant Professor
Anthropology & Gerontology

Dr. Robbins' research seeks to understand how some older people become valued and socially included, while others are devalued and socially excluded. Since 2006, she has conducted research in Poland, where radical social change occurred in the lifetime of the oldest generations. Currently she has two new ethnographic projects in Michigan: a study of gardening and wellbeing among older African Americans in Detroit, and a collaborative project with Co-PI Dr. Tam Perry (School of Social Work) on older adults' experiences of the Flint water crisis. Dr. Robbins teaches in the Department of Anthropology, advises graduate students, and frequently presents at national and international conferences.

She has received over \$200,000 in grants and fellowships from the MCUAAAR, the National Science Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the International Research Exchange Board, Elderhostel/Road Scholar, and several units at U-M and WSU.

**Heather Fritz, PhD, OTR/L**

Assistant Professor
Occupational Therapy & Gerontology

Dr. Fritz' focus is on health promotion and disease pre-

vention in middle adulthood and later life. She is especially interested in the role of habits and habit modification in health behavior change, translating the principles of habit development into behavioral interventions, and combining traditional rehabilitative approaches with behavioral science. Her work is informed by a transactional theoretical perspective with a focus on socio-cultural environments and engagement in daily occupations. She incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods, and she is committed to translating scholarship to practice.

Dr. Fritz is the lead investigator on a recently funded Michigan Health Endowment grant aimed at preventing and delaying the progression of frailty among Detroit's older African Americans. Her recent research has been published in leading occupational therapy and gerontology journals including *Journal of Gerontology, Social Sciences, Disability and Rehabilitation, and the Journal of Occupational Science*. Dr. Fritz teaches three classes in the Masters of Occupational Therapy program.

**Carrie Leach, MPA**

Health Communication and Engagement

Carrie Leach splits her time between the IOG and the Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors (CURES). At the IOG, she has spent the last decade co-authoring community-based participatory older adult needs assessments at the municipal, county and regional level. At CURES, she manages Community Outreach and Engagement Core activities and communication to foster connections and co-learning between researchers and Detroiters impacted by their environment. Carrie is a PhD candidate in WSU's Department of Communication, currently completing her dissertation. She leads a project funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to enhance communication between academic researchers and decision makers to improve multi-directional learning and the translation of environmental health science to inform decision making.

Neighborhood Needs: the Real Lives of Older Detroiters

As an occupational therapist, Heather Fritz, PhD, helps patients master the basic activities of everyday life. As a researcher, she focuses on themes of activity and participation. "How do the mundane activities of daily life promote or reduce health and wellness?" she asks. "How does a person's environment affect those activities?"

Stress in a Changing Neighborhood

Dr. Fritz and team journeyed deep into Detroit's most dire neighborhoods to ask residents about stress. The interviews are part of a larger look at the relationship between daily activities, neighborhood stressors and stress response in African Americans with an average age of 79. One hundred people participated, all from the HBEC Participant Resource Pool.

Each participant completed measurements of stress and coping methods, and had hair and saliva samples measured for the stress hormone cortisol. Recruits also received a smartphone for a week to input daily activities. "Does the who, what, when, where, why and how of daily activities protect you or exacerbate your stress?" Dr. Fritz asked. This approach, connecting behavior with biologic samples, is quantitative. A good start, but Dr. Fritz wanted another dimension.

"How did these people *feel* about the situations around them?" she asked. "What did Detroit's older adults consider stressful?" This required a qualitative component, sometimes overlooked in neighborhood stress and health research. They already had a smartphone, why not take some photos?

Twenty participants from the original 100 were asked to take at least 20 photos in their community



The gleam of Detroit's iconic GM Renaissance Center contrasts sharply against the bleak landscape of a deteriorated residential neighborhood.

while going about their day. The photos could be anything, other than people, that was important to daily activity or caused stress. Stress was defined as things that are irritating, frustrating, make you feel unsafe, or just bother you. As the team interviewed the photographers about what they shot, a model of neighborhood change emerged across four dimensions: environmental, institutional, knowledge and social. One core characteristic connected all of them . . .

Loss of Trustworthiness

Houses in ruins, neighbors gone, sidewalks broken, rising crime, slow police response: all can trigger fear in older residents. They no longer trust the neighborhoods they call home. Many avoid going out at night. Several women said they have a permit to carry a concealed handgun, or are considering getting one, even though gun ownership came with emotional costs. The women

expressed fear, panic, frustration and regret about needing a gun to feel safe.

Trustworthiness can, however, be restored. Repairing street lights in Detroit neighborhoods reduced crime. Demolishing abandoned houses improved the aesthetic and removed potential crime spots. Older adults themselves are showing resilience by taking action to preserve and protect their neighborhoods, like forming clean-up committees and block clubs. "The City of Detroit should pay attention to these voices," said Dr. Fritz. "Most of them own their homes and are incredibly invested in their neighborhoods. They understand what they need."

Dr. Fritz is concerned about restrictions on time and space in these neighborhoods. If residents can't go out after dark,

if sidewalks are uneven, if vacant homes harbor criminals, it becomes too difficult to exercise, or to socialize, so they stop. Neighbors said they didn't feel safe leaving home for long periods like a vacation. They didn't engage with new neighbors very much and preferred to stick to themselves. "This is an issue of occupational justice," Dr. Fritz says. "Everyone should have the right to engage in meaningful and valuable daily activities. It is unjust when the environment stops you."

The team did find an unexpected silver lining regarding technology. Many researchers think older adults can't participate in studies that require technological sophistication. "That perception is wrong," Dr. Fritz said. "Our participants used all the technology we gave them: cell phones, photos, alarms. With the right training, we had incredible success with technology." This resilience offers assurance that Detroit's older adults will continue to survive and thrive.

Urban Health Equity



Dr. Jankowski is a featured presenter at an Age Wave conference organized by the Community Foundation of Greater Flint to discuss poverty, health, housing and retirement in aging baby boomers.

"The quality of research tends to improve when scholars with different perspectives collaborate. It also makes doing the work a lot more fun."

– Dr. Jensen Summers



Gail Jensen Summers, PhD
Director of Training
Professor Economics & Gerontology

Dr. Jensen Summers deftly combines a talent for teaching (she consistently ranks as one of the best economics teachers at WSU) with an instinct for important research projects. She is currently collaborating with Dr. Wassim Tarraf on a study of the effects of the Affordable Care Act on foreign-born vs. U.S.-born adults, and on healthcare disparities between these populations. In another study recently completed with colleagues Xiao Xu at Yale University and Yong Li at Humana Inc., she examined the effects of drug insurance on the occurrence of cost-related non-adherence to prescribed medications (CRN) among adults in their 50s, and the subsequent effects of CRN on the occurrence of adverse health events.



Thomas B. Jankowski, PhD
Associate Director for Research
Assistant Professor Gerontology

Dr. Jankowski is the associate director for research at the IOG and the adjacent Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child & Family Development. He insures that faculty and staff of both institutes have the computer and network resources, data security, communication facilities, technical support, and office and lab space needed to work effectively and efficiently.

As principal investigator on several externally funded projects, Dr. Jankowski has led senior needs assessments for various Michigan communities, helping them plan programs and services to support a growing older population. He has worked with state government agencies such as the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and the Michigan Aging and Adult Services Agency on issues affecting older adults, and with non-profit advocacy groups, social service agencies, and community based organiza-

tions devoted to serving the older adult community.

His currently works with the Luella Hannan Memorial Foundation in Detroit to evaluate its creative aging programs, and to help develop and assess "Next Shift," a pilot program funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to train and support working family caregivers. He also continues his work with the Southeast Michigan Senior Regional Collaborative to measure the effectiveness and impact of non-profit aging service providers and programs. Dr. Jankowski is vice-chair of the board of directors at The Senior Alliance, Area Agency on Aging 1-C, and serves on the boards of directors of the Senior Regional Collaborative, the Michigan Society of Gerontology, the Luella Hannan Memorial Foundation, and the American House Foundation.



Wassim Tarraf, MBA, PhD
Assistant Professor
Occupational Therapy & Gerontology

Dr. Tarraf is a co-Investigator and lead statistician on three National Institute on Aging grants aimed at examining the prevalence and sociodemographic, biological, and genetic determinants of cognitive dysfunction among middle-aged and older Latinos in the U.S. His recent research has been published in leading medical, public health, and policy journals including the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, *Neurology*, and *Health Services Research*. Dr. Tarraf teaches the Research Methods class in his home department, and advises several doctoral students on their dissertation work.

Dr. Tarraf recently completed a grant funded by the Institute of Population Studies, Health Assessment, Administration, Services and Economics (INPHAASE) to examine the "Effects of the Affordable Care Act on Preventive Care Use and Disparities in Use." He also finished a pilot project funded by the NIH, and the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research examining access to Patient Centered Medical Home care among minorities in the U.S., and the effect of access to such care on disparities in healthcare utilization and expenditures.

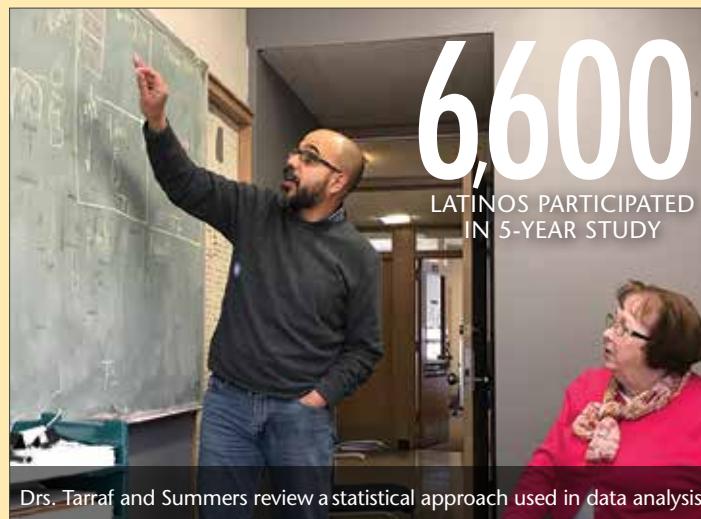
First Longitudinal Study on Preserving Brain Health in Latinos

Wassim Tarraf, PhD, is a busy man, juggling significant responsibilities across three large research studies of Latino health. The first is the five-year, 6,600 person Study of Latinos - Investigation of Neurocognitive Aging (SOL-INCA), the largest epidemiologic study of Latino cognitive health in the U.S. The other two, on sleep and on the link between brain and cardiovascular disease, exist in part from the success of SOL-INCA. Dr. Tarraf, an expert on epidemiological studies and analysis of large, complex survey data, is supervising data collection, integrating genetics and neurocognitive data, and analyzing results in the studies.

Recruiting 6,600 research participants is never easy. SOL-INCA volunteers, age 50 and up, complete neurocognitive tests and provide cultural, genetic and other biomarkers that could be precursors to dementia. The aim is to determine who has mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and which biomarkers are more pronounced or specific in Latinos as possible genetic influences on the MCI. "It's going very well," Dr. Tarraf said of the 5,200 Latinos recruited so far. "Participants are excited to be involved, which was interesting since some have argued that minorities are somewhat resistant to participating in health studies." Participants were invited from the 16,000-person Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos. More than 90% said yes.

Dr. Hector González (formerly at the IOG), is the lead PI on SOL-INCA. He now works in the Department of Neuroscience at UC San Diego, and the Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and has done a Herculean job setting the structure and providing the intellectual leadership to allow SOL-INCA to happen. "Every time I talk to Hector, I learn something new and exciting about how to approach and conduct research," Dr. Tarraf said.

Engagement may make the difference. The parent project dedicated many resources to build trust and connect with the community – not just with participants but the institutions they care about. "The staff included a lot



Drs. Tarraf and Summers review a statistical approach used in data analysis.

of dedicated men and women who can relate to their concerns and speak their language. All tests were tailored to the participants' linguistic needs," he said. "It's costly, but if you want good results, you have to invest in the resources."

Sleep and Dementia in Latinos

This two-year NIH grant marks the first longitudinal study of Latinos on how sleep impacts brain performance over time. "We need good data about associations. How do sleep disorders and disturbances link to cognitive change and ultimately to cognitive disorders? Does sleep impact, cardiovascular and environmental risk factors?" he asked. Most participants will self-report sleep habits, but about 1,000 will undergo objective measurements to assess sleep patterns and quality.

"SOL is special because it attempts to collect the whole spectrum of data – cultural, biological, genetic, neurologic, subjective and objective – to understand complex interactions," he said. He feels fortunate to work with the study's lead PI, sleep neurologist expert Dr. Alberto Ramos of the University of Miami. "It's been a fascinating learning experience," Dr. Tarraf said. With this rich platform of Latino-specific data, they hope to generate precise answers to what protects against cognitive disease or becomes a risk

factor in this largely understudied population.

MRIs of Brain Injury & Alzheimer's

Identifying early markers of Alzheimer's – before symptoms appear – could be a game-changer for treatment. Early interventions could slow and even stop its course. This five-year NIH study will conduct MRIs across all Latino subgroups searching for connections between cerebrovascular injury (primarily stroke) and neurocognitive decline. Participants will be selected from the SOL-INCA group: 1,200 diagnosed with MCI, 1,200 with nothing identifiable, and about 400 aged 35 to 45 as controls. The study's lead PI is Charles DeCarli, MD, of UC Davis along with Dr. González as MPI.

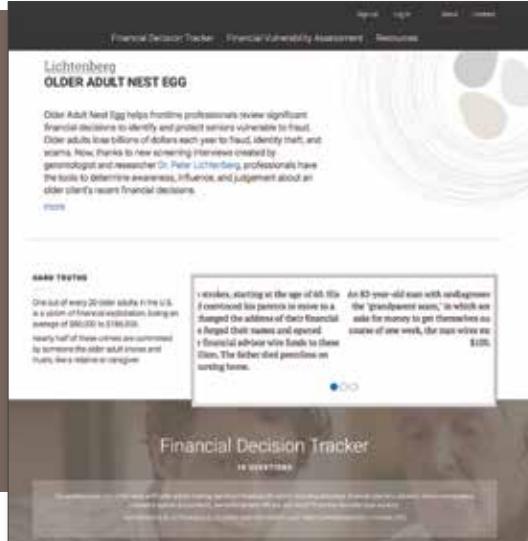
This project is another first: The largest study to quantify brain markers of stroke and cognitive disease in Latinos. "The strength is in the cohort's diversity: U.S. Latinos of Mexican, Dominican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Central and South American origin, are all represented," Dr. Tarraf said. The aim is to leverage the SOL and SOL-INCA data with cutting edge MRI data to determine the relationship between vascular risk and markers of brain disease across a wide age spectrum.

Dr. Tarraf is "delighted" to work in an interdisciplinary team alongside trailblazers in the fields of stroke neurology, vascular disease, neuropsychology, cognitive aging and genetics, and with people at the forefront of computational methods and data analytics. "I am particularly excited about working with Dr. DeCarli who, along with Dr. González, is one of the most knowledgeable people in the nation on this topic," he said. "We hope these results can help guide future treatment and therapeutics to reduce health disparities among Latinos."

Regardless of the research, Dr. Tarraf knows the importance of engagement. "The staff at our SOL-INCA field centers is amazingly dedicated and passionate. I used to think of engagement and research as two tracks that sometimes overlap and sometimes do not. But they should intertwine," he said. "The power of any data I get draws directly from the investment our staff and community make in recruiting and engaging participants."

Financial Safety & Health Initiative

Dr. Lichtenberg's new Older Adult Nest Egg website homepage





LaToya Hall teaches older adults in Farmington how to stay safe from financial predators.

2,500

PROFESSIONALS EDUCATED TO
HELP PREVENT FINANCIAL ABUSE

The IOG leads the area in education and prevention of financial scams and exploitation. The IOG's Success After Financial Exploitation (SAFE) program offers free one-on-one counseling to victims of identity theft, plus free workshops on financial literacy. The newly launched [OlderAdultNestEgg.com](#) website provides resources for professionals to identify seniors at risk of financial exploitation and protect them from costly financial decisions. In the past two years, financial gerontology projects at the IOG won four major grant awards, and Dr. Lichtenberg educated more than 2,500 professionals on his newly created tools to help prevent financial abuse.

For nearly a decade, Dr. Lichtenberg researched older adult vulnerabilities that can lead to dangerous financial decisions and exploitation. His findings inspired his creation of several interview tools, based on decision-making skills, to help financial services and other professionals determine if an older adult client could be or has been exploited. Professionals access them free through the [OlderAdultNestEgg](#) website, which analyzes, scores

and stores them. In early 2018, the site will also host an interview designed for the friends and family of an older adult who may be at risk. "If they have suspicions, these validated interview questions can help them confirm or remove them," Dr. Lichtenberg said.

SAFE financial literacy workshops have been equally successful, educating more than 2,000 older adults, primarily in small, interactive groups. The free one-on-one counseling service is particularly helpful to victims of identity theft. LaToya Hall, a social worker and financial literacy expert, helps overwhelmed seniors file police reports, check credit reports and set up fraud alerts. Navigating the process is complicated, especially for older adults without internet access. LaToya makes house calls, bringing her laptop and portable Wi-Fi directly to the client's home. "We do it all in a few hours," she said. "I see their anxiety instantly lessen."

To learn more, call LaToya Hall at **313-664-2604**

Top Honors Recognize Lifelong Commitment to Older Adults

IOG Director Dr. Peter Lichtenberg has worked with older adults for more than 30 years, earning him two recent special recognitions. In 2016, Michigan's governor appointed Dr. Lichtenberg to the Commission on Services to the Aging, a 15-member committee that oversees the administration of state programs affecting older Michiganders. "This is a great honor and responsibility to be able to impact the lives of older adults across the entire state," Dr. Lichtenberg said.

He set ambitious goals for his commission term. He wants to keep a broad perspective on what older adults need for optimal vitality and independence while insuring the oldest frail adults receive sufficient care and attention. "We are at the forefront of a dramatic increase in residents older than 85. Michigan must respond appropriately and successfully," he said. He wants to insure state money is spent equitably. "Regardless of zip code, all older adults deserve support." Lastly, he would like the commission to combat ageism in attitudes and policies. "The words we use, stereotypes, humor – all of it can fuel a disrespect and even dislike of older adults," Dr. Lichtenberg said. "It's insidious."

In 2017, Dr. Lichtenberg won the Powell Lawton Distinguished Contribution Award, given to quality programs and practices that significantly improve the lives of older adults. The award is singular in its emphasis on applied gerontology, for which Dr. Lichtenberg's 31-year career is particularly well suited.

Nomination letters cited his work in detecting



Dr. Lichtenberg addresses the Issues in Aging Conference to explain the science behind the interviews he created to assess financial decision making in older adults.

cognitive decline, depression testing and interventions, caregiver and therapist training, and creating assessments to prevent financial abuse.

"Powell Lawton was a role model for me," Dr. Lichtenberg said. "All my research, assessment and training programs are oriented toward providing a direct benefit to older adults, many of them underrepresented and vulnerable." The American Psychological Association Division 20 presented the award at its annual convention in Washington, D.C.. The Lawton Award is one of its highest honors.

Dr. Lichtenberg commends the entire IOG for the recognition. "Our faculty and staff are deeply committed to applying their work in gerontology so that it has a significant impact on seniors," he said. "Working with such amazing colleagues, including the former students who nominated me, Drs. Ben Mast and Brian Yochim, has been my greatest career joy."



Financial planner and IOG board member Sandy Adams (center) offers expert consultations to guests at an IOG Financial Safety & Health Workshop.



Peter Lichtenberg, PhD
Director, Institute of Gerontology
Professor Psychology

Dr. Lichtenberg is the director of both the IOG (since 1998) and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child & Family Development (since 2008). He is a national expert in financial capacity assessment and preventing the financial exploitation of older adults. He authored 13 articles on psychological vulnerability and fraud, and on his new interview tools: the Lichtenberg Financial Decision Tracker and the Financial Vulnerability Assessment. Dr. Lichtenberg launched the website Older Adult Nest Egg (olderadultnestegg.com) to allow professionals and their clients to complete and score these assessments online. An assessment for the friends and family of older adults suspected of being financial exploited will be available in 2018.

Dr. Lichtenberg is the author of seven books including the two-volume *APA Handbook of Clinical Geropsychology* (2015), and the *Handbook of Assessment in Clinical Gerontology* (2nd edition, 2010). He authored or co-authored more

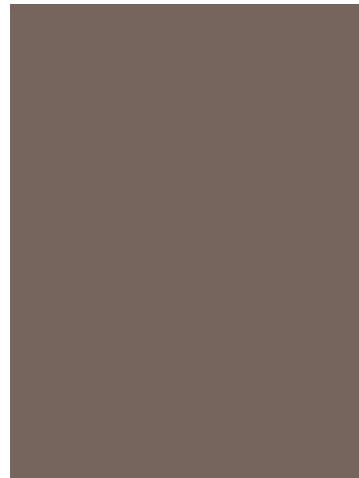
To learn more about the Financial Safety & Health Initiative visit: <https://iog.wayne.edu/research/financial-decision-making>



Financial and physical safety took priority as a Detroit police officer shared tips with Art of Aging Successfully guests.



Lisa Ficker explains the IOG's research into financial vulnerability at an HBEC Lunch & Learn on Medicare.



than 200 peer reviewed journal articles on topics including mental health in long-term care, geriatric depression, and the early detection and management of Alzheimer's disease. He has conducted independent medical evaluations and acted as an expert witness in more than 200 cases over the past decade on issues related to older adults and capacity. Under Dr. Lichtenberg's leadership, the IOG has won record levels of research funding, and created a community engagement and outreach program serving more than 10,000 older adults and professionals each year.

Throughout his career, Dr. Lichtenberg has received more than a dozen awards of distinction. Most recently, he received the 2017 Powell Lawton Distinguished Contribution Award for programs and practices that significantly improve the lives of older adults. In 2016, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder appointed him to the Commission on Services to the Aging, which oversees state programs that affect seniors (see sidebar). Dr. Lichtenberg's extensive community service includes the APA Presidential Task Force on Integrated Care for an Aging Population, presidency of the APA's Adult Development and Aging Section (2010), and membership on the board of directors of the American Board of Professional Psychology to

create a specialty in geropsychology. He became one of the nation's first Diplomates in Clinical Geropsychology (ABPP) in 2013.



Lisa Ficker, PhD
Clinical Psychology
Research Assessments

Dr. Ficker's research has focused on intergenerational relationships across the lifespan, cognitive changes that occur with aging, the perception of impairment, and social-emotional-health challenges that accompany cognitive impairments. She graduated with a degree in clinical psychology in 2010 and engages in private practice clinical work. She coordinates Dr. Lichtenberg's financial decision-making project at the IOG and participates in the SAFE program (Success After Financial Exploitation) serving metro Detroit seniors. In addition, Dr. Ficker leads an academic and community partnership that designed a program evaluation of Students Leading Students, a substance abuse prevention program for adolescents, through the Merrill Palmer Skill-

man Institute. Students Leading Students was recently listed on SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. Dr. Ficker also collaborates with the U-M Memory and Aging Project of the MADC to expand recruitment to Detroit's African American elders.



LaToya Hall, MSW
SAFE Program Coordinator

LaToya earned dual Bachelor of Arts degrees at WSU and a Master of Social Work degree from Washington University in St. Louis. Throughout her graduate career and early social work experience, LaToya focused on asset building and creating financial stability programs for vulnerable populations. In her current position, she coordinates the Success After Financial Exploitation (SAFE) program. SAFE educates seniors and others on protecting their finances against threats and provides free one-on-one assistance to help seniors recover financially and emotionally after being victimized by financial scams or identity theft.

MCUAAAR

Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research



MCUAAAR scholars attend the 2016 summer workshop to learn about publishing, grant writing, recruitment and other topics important to successful research.



HBEC volunteer Pat Mullins (left) attends the local "Aging Matters" event to explain the IOG and how to volunteer for research.

The Gift of Good Health to Minorities

Older African Americans across the country are at higher risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and certain cancers than their Caucasian counterparts. Detroit is no exception, but it does have one advantage. The Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research (MCUAAAR), at the IOG and the U-M, has studied Detroit residents for decades, looking for ways to reduce these disparities. The Center has been so successful that it received three grant renewals from the National Institute on Aging, providing continuous funding for 22 years. The three prongs of MCUAAAR – education, research and faculty development – interweave for maximum success.

Education

At the IOG, MCUAAAR's outreach arm is the Healthier Black Elders Center, which sponsors free Lunch & Learn events throughout the city. Lunch & Learns let residents interact with health experts to learn how to prevent or treat high-risk diseases. The events cover topics like eye changes in diabetes, prostate cancer prevention, and

brain health. They are also the perfect opportunity to explain the benefits of research participation and recruit guests into the Participant Resource Pool (PRP), a database of roughly 1,300 older African Americans in the Detroit area willing to consider volunteering for research projects.

Research

African Americans have been historically under-represented in research, so building trust is paramount. "All projects are carefully vetted before being offered to our volunteers," said the HBEC's Vanessa Rorai. "And, of course, enrollees are always free to say no." This year more than 20 different studies are using the PRP. A few recent projects are: *Predicting Memory Loss in African Americans*, *Social Class and Brain Health*, and *Early Identification of Mild Cognitive Impairment in at-Risk African Americans*.

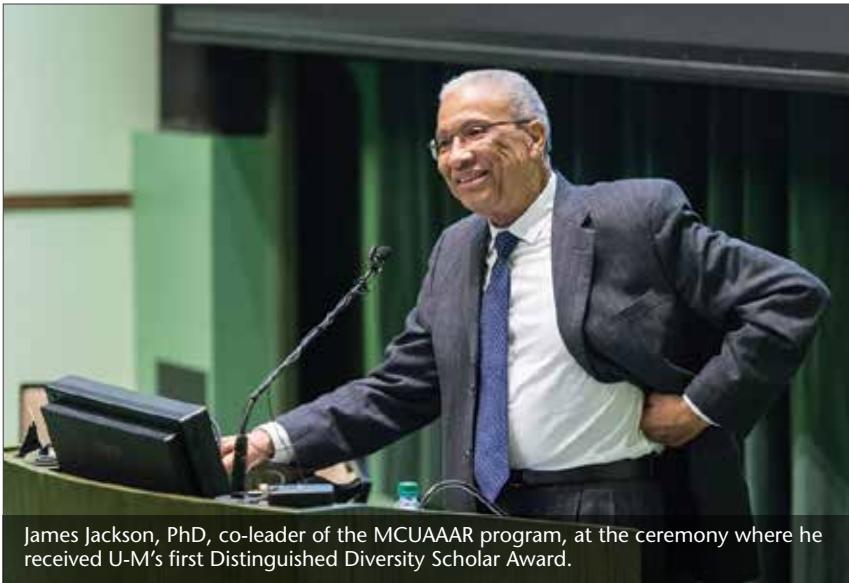
Faculty Development

MCUAAAR recruits and trains minority scholars to conduct research into health disparities. It designates

three junior faculty each year as MCUAAAR Scholars, who receive special training, funding and intensive mentoring. They attend a summer workshop with in-depth presentations in topics like grant writing and publishing. Scholars also have access to the PRP for their research. A little support goes a long way in an academic career. "Many of these scholars go on to be tenured faculty with NIH funded projects of their own," said Dr. Lichtenberg, who co-directs MCUAAAR's administrative core and has mentored several scholars. "One day their research will help put an end to these health disparities."

22 YEARS

OF CONTINUOUS NIA FUNDING



James Jackson, PhD, co-leader of the MCUAAR program, at the ceremony where he received U-M's first Distinguished Diversity Scholar Award.



Ed-Dee Williams, LLSW, engages his audience at a men-only HBEC Lunch & Learn with insights into mental health, depression and gender.



Volunteer Wins Award as a Senior Helping Seniors

Patricia Watkins loves to help. She's been volunteering in the Healthier Black Elders office since 2012, calling older adults to talk about how they can assist with research or reminding them to attend an event. Her warmth and concern flow through the phone. For some older adults, her call is the only social contact of the day.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan recognized Pat's special gifts by awarding her the 2017 Claude Pepper Community Service Award. The honor goes to outstanding senior citizen advocates whose efforts positively impact older adults. HBEC shares Pat with other volunteer groups. She was nominated by Cindy Lozon, then director of Catholic Social Services, which runs Wayne County's Senior Companion Program. As a senior companion, Pat visits frail older adults and adults with disabilities or terminal illnesses, and helps with simple chores and transportation. Her nomination letter said Pat goes wherever needed: "She is a delightful and caring individual who feels the key to happiness is to share her joy."

Pat was speechless when she learned she'd won the Pepper

Award and felt honored to represent Michigan's seniors. "I really got excited when I learned there was a monetary award to my favorite charity," she said. She will divide the amount between her top two.

Pat's volunteerism began as a high school Girl Scout helping neighborhood children with disabilities safely board the bus to day camp. Her interest in helping seniors started when her family lived next door to her grandmother, who sometimes wandered outside. Pat found ways to keep Grandma busy and in the house. "I learned a lot about why she behaved the way she did," she said. "She was lonely and needed some attention. I told myself I should try to help older people, in case I lived to be old, too."

In addition to HBEC and Senior Companion, Pat volunteers at Crossroads of Michigan helping less fortunate residents receive assistance, Community Social Services as a senior companion, and Detroit's Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The reactions and responses she receives when volunteering motivate her to do more. "Life is good when you enjoy giving back," she said.



Community Outreach

Engagement with Seniors and Professionals Continues to Boom

The IOG's programs reach more people in southeast Michigan than any other center, institute or college at WSU. In the past five years, we've engaged with 18,787 older adults and 30,660 professionals who care for them. That totals 49,447 persons (!) reached through education and service – a huge number for an academic institute also committed to research and student training.

Even Donna MacDonald, director of community outreach, was surprised by the number. "I knew I was organizing a lot of presentations, but I had no idea we'd gotten to this level," she said. "I'm so proud of the quality of what we offer and the variety of topics. We provide what people here in Michigan need and want."

Some of the IOG's most well attended professional seminars are Financial Decision-Making and Exploitation; Ethics in Elder Care; End of Life Concerns; Pain Management, and Human Trafficking. Popular presentations for older adults and families include Brainstorm: A Workout for the Mind; Meditation and Stress Relief; Eat Well, Live Well; Avoiding Scams, Fraud and Identity Theft; and Caring for the Caregiver. "With this number of choices, we have something for everyone," Donna said.

The IOG also engages with the hundreds of people who attend its two signature events each year: The Art of Aging Successfully for older adults, and Issues in Aging for professionals and caregivers. The Art of Aging, designed to bring out the creativity in every senior, displays amateur artwork and offers a full day of interactive workshops, exercise and a hot, sit-down lunch. Nearly 900 people attended over the past two



The IOG is a leader in brain health training for older adults; here professionals learn to conduct trainings on their own. From left: Janet Horan, Rhonda Hamborsky and Audra Calhoun.



Questions are welcomed a

years at its new, easier-to-navigate location in Detroit's Fellowship Hall. The Art of Aging started in 1995 as a writing contest with about 30 entries. Today it consistently sells out with a sizeable waiting list.

Issues in Aging, the IOG's two-day continuing education conference, celebrated its 30-year anniversary in 2017 with a record-breaking 261 attendees. While Issues always addresses Alzheimer's and dementia, the various topics strike a balance between the latest clinical approaches, advocacy, legal concerns, and firsthand accounts. Attendees consistently praise the quality of the information as timely, relevant, and easily incorporated into their care practice. "If I could attend only one conference a year, it would be Issues in Aging," a Providence Park nurse wrote. "It enables me to better serve my older patients."

Seven years ago, the IOG created *A Meaningful Life with Alzheimer's*, a unique conference in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association Greater Michigan Chapter, that unites professionals and caregivers. Presenters and topics are carefully curated to provide relevant information to both groups simultaneously. Topics like "Positive Dementia Care Strategies: A Toolkit for Implementation" and "Sensory Stimulation's Effects on



The many creative and energetic members of the Art of Aging advisory committee.

Dementia" attract about 250 persons each year.

"I love to see professionals and caregivers sitting together at the tables and learning from each other," Donna said. "When you're dealing with dementia, you need all the support you can get."

8,451
2016 & 2017
SENIORS ENGAGED



at the Art of Aging Successfully conference.



IOG Board Vice-Chair Barb Kopasz (standing) helps with a craft workshop at Art of Aging.



Fitness workshops, like this strength training, are very popular at Art of Aging.



Record numbers of professionals attend the 2017 Issues in Aging CE conference.



At Community Advisory Board meetings for the Healthier Black Elders program, members provide valuable feedback on research studies and workshop topics.

13,326
2016 & 2017
PROFESSIONALS EDUCATED

Alumni Highlights



Elham Mahmoudi, PhD, (2012) spent 18 years in the business world, with degrees in accounting, business administration and computer information systems before enrolling at WSU to earn a doctorate in economics. As an IOG pre-doc trainee, Dr. Mahmoudi became interested in the economics of health disparities in older adults, evaluating public policies with the potential to reduce disparities. She has published more than 30 peer-reviewed articles on the economics of healthcare disparities. "Dr. Mahmoudi is a committed researcher and an original thinker," said IOG faculty mentor Dr. Gail Jensen. "Much of the industry knowledge about Medicare Part D and its effects on disparities comes from her research."

At WSU, Dr. Mahmoudi won a competitive national dissertation fellowship from the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College to support her dissertation. She won other national awards, including the 2010 Carroll Estes Award from the Gerontology Society of America (GSA), and the GSA's 2010 Senior Service America Junior Scholar Award, as well as several WSU economics department honors. After her post-doc training at U-M, Dr. Mahmoudi, a native of Iran, won the 2014 Exemplary Scholar Award from the National Center for Institutional Diversity.

Dr. Mahmoudi is currently a tenure-track assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at U-M's School of Medicine. "I will continue my research on health disparities until every last one of them is eliminated in this country," she said.



Brian Yochim, PhD, ABPP, (2003), co-edited *Psychology of Aging: A Biopsychosocial Perspective* in 2017 with Erin Woodhead, an assistant professor at San Jose State University. Reviews of the textbook are overwhelmingly positive, calling it "the resource that geropsychologists have needed for years," and a "must read for undergraduate and graduate students studying aging." Dr. Yochim wrote or co-wrote five of the chapters. He is a board-certified clinical neuropsychologist at the VA St. Louis Health Care System, where he works primarily with older adults in a neuropsychology clinic and a Community Living Center.

Psychology of Aging is the first graduate-level text to offer a comprehensive, in-depth chronicle of issues surrounding the psychology of aging with a foundation in biology, and an expansion into aging's sociological aspects. Written for graduate students in multiple gerontology-related disciplines, the text is also of value to students of nursing, medicine, social work, biology, and occupational, physical, and speech therapies. The book is published by Springer and available on Amazon.

Students

Our pre-doctoral trainees work hard and achieve high. They divide their time between their home department (listed below) and the IOG. We match them with a faculty mentor, encourage participation at gerontology conferences, fund travel so they can present their research and help provide the aging perspective they seek in their research. Our trainees have a particularly impressive list of awards and honors, including 36 publications (17 as first author) and four research grants.

Pre-Doctoral Trainees & Honors

ANTHROPOLOGY & SOCIAL WORK

Caitlin Cassady (2016-present)

- Five research presentations, all as first author
- Assoc. for Gerontology Ed. in Social Work Pre-Dissertation Initiative, 2016
- 1st place, WSU Graduate Research Symposium, 2016

CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

Rebecca Campbell (2017-present)

- One publication
- Two research presentations as first author

Evan Gross (2015-present)

- One publication
- 11 research presentations, five as first author

Jonathan Sober (2016-present)

- One publication, first author
- Two research presentations as first author

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Andria Norman (2013-2017)

- 12 research presentations, six as first author
- 3rd Place Poster, WSU Graduate Exhibition
- Thomas Rumble Graduate Fellowship, 2015

Christina Wong (2015-2016)

- One publication, first author
- Six research presentations, three as first author
- 1st place poster, Lifespan Alliance Research Day, 2016
- 1st place poster, WSU Graduate Exhibition, 2016
- Charles Gdowski Memorial Award, 2016

COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE

Chaitali Anand (2016-present)

- Five research presentations, two as first author
- 2nd place, WSU Graduate Research Symposium, 2017
- PI, National Institutes on Aging F31 pre-doctoral training



A gathering of students in the IOG's training program after a fall orientation session.



grant, 2017-2019, *Age-related differences in hippocampal glutamate modulation during associative learning*.

Muzamil Arshad (2013-2017)

- Four publications, two as first author
- Three research presentations as first author

Roya Homayouni (2017-present)

- Five research presentations

Lingfei Tang (2014-present)

- Two publications, one as first author
- 18 research presentations, nine as first author
- Julie Thomas Memorial Scholarship Award, 2017
- 2nd place poster ('16), 3rd place poster ('17), WSU Graduate Research Symposium
- Best Podium Presentation, Lifespan Research Day, 2016
- Department of Psychology Award, 2016, 2017

Raymond Viviano (2016-present)

- Four publications, one as first author
- Three research presentations as first author
- Thomas Rumble Graduate Fellowship, 2016

Qijing Yu (2014-present)

- Five publications, one as first author
- 21 research presentations, 12 as first author
- Betty Neitzel Summer Research Award, 2017
- Julie Thomas Memorial Scholarship, 2016, 2017
- Olson Award for Best Gerontology Paper, 2016, 2017
- Steven Lewis Memorial Research Award, 2016

- 3rd place, WSU Graduate Research Symposium, 2016
- 1st place, Graduate Poster Day, Beh & Cog Neuro, 2015

HEALTH ECONOMICS

Adit Doza (2017-present)

- One research presentation as first author

Rajendra Dyal (2015-2016)

- Three publications, two as first author
- Five research presentations, all as first author
- Mendelson Award, WSU Dept. of Economics, 2016

Nasim Ferdows (2014-2016)

- Two publications, one as first author
- Eight research presentations, seven as first author
- Olson Award for Best Gerontology Paper, 2016
- 2nd place poster, WSU Research Symposium, 2016
- PI, BCBS of Mi Foundation Dissertation Grant, '16: *Determinants of Healthy Aging: The Role of Childhood Circumstances and Lifecycle Factors*

Indrakshi Roy (2016-present)

- Three research presentations as first author
- 1st place poster, WSU Graduate Research Symposium, 2017
- PI, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation Dissertation Grant, 2017: *Effects of the Great Recession on Older Workers and their Compensation including Fringe Benefits*

Mohammad Toseef (2016-present)

- Two research presentations as first author
- Best Presentation, Lifespan Graduate Research Day, '17

- Levin Award, WSU Department of Economics, 2016
- PI, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mi. Foundation Dissertation Grant, 2017: *Effects of Medicaid HMOs on Care Quality and Racial/Ethnic Healthcare Disparities*.

INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Reed Bramble (2016-2017)

- Six publications
- Nine research presentations, four as first author
- Top poster, Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology Conference, Orlando, FL, 2017
- Betty Neitzel Memorial Award, 2017
- Thomas Rumble Graduate Fellowship, 2016
- 3rd place poster, WSU Graduate Symposium, 2016
- 1st place, WSU Psychology Graduate Poster Day, 2015

Greg Thrasher (2015-2016)

- Three publications as first author
- 11 research presentations, seven as first author
- Thomas Rumble Graduate Fellowship, 2015
- Top poster, Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology Conference, Orlando, FL, 2017
- Betty Neitzel Memorial Award, 2016.

KINESIOLOGY

Brad Kendall (2015-present)

- Four publications, two as first author
- Seven research presentations, three as first author

Research Grants

\$2,718,926	2017
\$2,238,962	2016
\$2,295,231	2015
\$1,745,529	2014
\$1,888,369	2013

COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE, AGING & ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Neural Correlates and Modifiers of Cognitive Aging MERIT Award, – N. Raz, PI. The NIH awarded this \$3.6 million, five-year grant to research the modifiers of normal cognitive aging from a neuroscience perspective. MERIT (Method to Extend Research in Time) awards give select researchers long-term support, without the burden of constantly applying for new grant funding. Fewer than 5% of NIH-funded investigators to receive MERIT awards.

Development of Memory Networks in Children, – N. Ofen, PI. A \$1.9 million over five years to investigate brain activity that predicts memory formation in children. Dr. Ofen will study children who are undergoing surgery to manage epilepsy not controlled through other treatments, analyzing data collected from electrodes implanted for the epilepsy treatment.

MRI Measures of Cerebrovascular Injury and AD Atrophy in the Study of Latinos, – W. Tarraf, PI. The NIH granted \$554,000 over five years to conduct comprehensive MRIs of 2,800 Latinos with normal and impaired

cognition. The team will measure vascular brain injury, cortical volume and thickness, and hippocampal volume to estimate degrees of Alzheimer's atrophy. The data will point to the impact of disparities on vascular risks of brain health and characterize the biological substrates of stroke, mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's in various Latino racial admixtures.

Study of Latinos – Investigation of Neurocognitive Aging, – H. González (MSU), PI, W. Tarraf, Co-Investigator and Lead Statistician. A five-year study of 6,600 Latino and Hispanic older adults to better understand the progression from mild cognitive impairment to Alzheimer's. The National Institute on Aging granted \$5.67 million with \$440,000 to Dr. Tarraf. He will help supervise data collection across four sites, integrate genetics and neurocognitive data, and lead statistical analysis for reports and publications.

Community-Based Early Identification of Mild Cognitive Impairment in At-Risk African Americans – V. Kavcic, PI. The NIH awarded \$413,000 over two years to use low-cost computerized tests and EEGs to detect early cognitive changes in otherwise healthy older African Americans and determine those at risk for later mild cognitive changes or Alzheimer's disease. African Americans have faster rates of cognitive decline than other racial groups and are less likely to be diagnosed or receive treatment in its early stages.

Subjective Cognitive Impairment: A Sign of Incipient Alzheimer's Disease? – J. Damoiseaux, PI. Dr. Damoiseaux is conducting a longitudinal study of functional and structural brain changes in healthy older adults with and without cognitive complaints, funded by a 4-year grant of \$345,000 from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research.

Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Core Center – P. Lichtenberg, Co REC (Research Education Core) Director. The National Institute on Aging granted WSU \$292,000 over

five years for a regional center linking U-M, WSU and MSU to train junior faculty in Alzheimer's research and recruitment, study vascular changes preceding dementia, and organize an annual symposium on research into non-amyloid precursors to Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Sleep Apnea, Neurocognitive Decline and Alzheimer's in Latinos – *W. Tarraf, PI.* A two-year, NIH grant of \$86,000 to analyze sleep measures and neurocognitive tests from the 16,415 person Study of Latinos. The goal is to determine the effect of sleep apnea on neurocognitive decline and the association between cardiovascular risk factors, sleep apnea and mild cognitive impairment.

Changes in Brain Energetics and Structure in the Course of Cognitive Training – *N. Raz, PI.* A \$50,000 WSU Research Enhancement grant for a one-year study on changes in brain structure, myelin content and energy metabolism in response to cognitive training to determine the near and far transfer of any cognitive gains.

Subjective Cognitive Impairment: A Sign of Early Alzheimer's Disease? – *J. Damoiseaux, Co-PI.* A one-year, \$45,000 grant from the Veteran's Administration / Dept. of Psychiatry to ascertain whether personal complaints of diminished memory could predict Alzheimer's disease.

Conversational Engagement to Delay Alzheimer's Disease Onset, *P. Lichtenberg, Co-I.* Recruiting older African American volunteers for a research study on social interactions to prevent persons with mild cognitive impairment from progressing to dementia and other adverse health outcomes. The NIH/NIA granted \$37,000 over five years for the recruitment portion of a larger study.

Hippocampal Connectivity in Pre-Clinical Alzheimer's Disease, *J. Damoiseau, PI.* A one-year, \$35,000 MADC pilot grant to chart differences in hippocampal functional and structural connectivity, and their association with cognitive performance, in older adults from healthy to

mild cognitive impairment, to find ways to earlier identify emerging Alzheimer's.

Characterizing Typical Development of Memory Systems in the Brain, *N. Ofen, PI.* Multiple awards to fund research assistance in the Ofen Lab for Cognitive and Brain Development: \$30,000 from WSU for a post-doc fellow; a \$3,000 Research Enhancement grant; and \$2,500 from the School of Medicine Graduate School for summer research.

AGING, HEALTH & THE ENVIRONMENT

Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors (CURES) – *P. Lichtenberg, Director, Community Outreach and Education Core; Runge-Morris, MD, PI.* Approximately \$2.28 million of the eight-year, \$7.5 million grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to develop and implement a model of community engagement, interaction and training to detect and prevent common environmental stressors. The grant creates community learning and discussion forums, a community advisory board, and communication and educational materials for Detroit and nearby at-risk communities.

Using a System-Wide Database to Reduce Workplace Violence in Hospitals – *M. Luborsky, Co-PI.* The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are providing \$1.6 million over four years to develop a standardized surveillance and risk assessment reporting system at several Detroit-area hospitals. The data from this system will evaluate the effectiveness of two interventions to curb workplace violence in hospitals.

Acrobatic Functioning and Mobility – *P. Lichtenberg, WSU PI.* This 4-year NIH grant of \$123,000 supports research through the Claude Pepper Older American Independence Center at U-M.

Effectiveness of Information Communication Technology Social Network for Older Adults – *C. Lysack, Co-I.*

A collaboration with the University of New Hampshire to design the interviews with older adults and analyze the results for \$17,000 over 18 months of the larger NIH grant. The goal is to demonstrate reproducible strategies that enhance the use of ICT among older adults to improve health and social participation.

Older Adult Experiences and Understanding of the Flint Water Crisis – *J. Robbins, Co-I.* A grant of \$10,000 from the McFarland Corporation for a one-year qualitative study of 25 older adults living in Flint during the lead contamination crisis that made use of tap water unsafe. Researchers will conduct in-depth interviews on access to resources, caregiving, navigating everyday activities and the future.

Evaluating and Assessing Programs for Older Adults – *T. Jankowski, PI.* Dr. Jankowski received three grants from the Luella Hannan Memorial Foundation: A \$44,000 grant to evaluate a pilot program of Hannan's Working Caregiver Employee Assistance; an \$8,300 grant to conduct a Creative Aging Needs Assessment that asked members of the Healthier Black Elders research volunteer pool about their interest in programs offered by the Hannan Center for Lifelong Learning; and a \$5,000 grant to survey current users of the Lifelong Learning Program to evaluate its quality and effectiveness.

URBAN HEALTH EQUITY

Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research (MCUAAAR) – *P. Lichtenberg and J. Jackson (U-M), Co-PIs.* A \$3.4 million 5-year extension to the more than 15 years of previous grant funding from the National Institute on Aging to reduce health disparities between older African Americans and other ethnic groups through research, faculty mentoring and education. MCUAAAR is a joint project between the IOG and the U-M.

Social Class and Brain Health in Older African Americans – *P. Lichtenberg, PI, S. Crocrot, Diversity Scholar, A*

two-year \$109,000 Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (part of MCUAAAR) provides scholars with extensive mentoring (primary mentor Dr. Lichtenberg) as they refine the research that will inform their doctoral dissertation.

Impact of the Affordable Care Act on the Use of Preventive Services – *W. Tarraf, PI.* An 18-month grant of \$69,000 from WSU and Henry Ford Health System to study how implementation of the ACA has affected the use of preventive services, and whether disparities in usage exist between racial groups.

FINANCIAL SAFETY & HEALTH INITIATIVE

Integrating Improved Assessments of Financial Judgment: Conceptual and Measurement Advances – *P. Lichtenberg, PI.* A three-year \$468,000 grant from the National Institute of Justice to validate a newly created set of three screening tools that assess the capacity of older adults to make financial decisions. The study will also collect data to prepare for large-scale dissemination of these tools to professionals across multiple disciplines including lawyers, financial planners, social workers, law enforcement and adult protective services.

Center for Financial Safety & Health – *P. Lichtenberg, PI.* The Michigan Health Endowment Fund gave \$334,000 over two years to create a center tasked with protecting the financial, cognitive and emotional health of older adults by providing evidence-based services, education and professional training across the seven counties of southeast Michigan.

Evidence-based Tools and Programs for Detecting and Preventing Financial Exploitation and Assisting Older Scam and Identity Theft Victims – *P. Lichtenberg, PI.* A one-year grant of \$184,000 from the State of Michigan to partner with Lifespan in Rochester, New York, to implement their evidence-based practice of services to older adult scam and ID theft victims in Detroit and seven



Board member Frances Shani Parker (left) talks research with Professor Cathy Lysack at a holiday gathering.



Three past chairs of the IOG Board of Visitors: David Howell (left), Carol Edwards, Tom Trainer.

surrounding counties. The project will also create new tools to guide senior financial decisions and work with Michigan APS to implement them statewide.

Online Evidence-based Assessments of Financial Decision-Making in Older Adults – *P. Lichtenberg, PI.* The Michigan Aging and Adult Services PRVNT program granted \$117,000 for the creation of secure desktop and mobile platform websites to aid in detecting, assessing and preventing financial decision-making problems. This grant continues Dr. Lichtenberg's work with evidence-based assessment instruments for professional employees of Adult Protective Services and the legal and financial sectors to detect vulnerabilities in the financial decision-making process and swiftly intervene to help prevent financial exploitation. The funding expands the program to include all Michigan counties.

Financial Health after 60 – *P. Lichtenberg, PI.* Support of \$26,000 for one year from the Foundation for Financial Health for a series of 10 workshops across Wayne County for older adults on financial literacy, to include free personal sessions with a certified financial planner.

Financial Decision Making in Older Adults: Commercial Applications – *P. Lichtenberg, PI.* A \$25,000 Technology Commercialization grant to create a mobile application for his screening scale available on the BrainsFx Platform, to measure older adults' capacity for financial decision making and vulnerability to financial abuse.

TRAINING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM FUNDING

\$75,000 five-year grant from the Mary Thompson Foundation to support the IOG's Financial Health after 60 educational outreach series.

\$10,000 over two years from the Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Center to support Issues in Aging professional development conference, now in its 31st consecutive year.

\$5,000 from the Alzheimer's Association Greater Michigan Chapter to support Issues in Aging.

Giving



Donna MacDonald (left) and Art of Aging founding member Gloria Sniderman

American House Foundation Gives \$1 Million to Older Adults

Ten years ago, Rob Gillette was searching for a way to give back. As then vice-president of 31 successful American House Senior Living Residences, he appreciated the struggles of many older adults to live in their own homes on limited income. How best to help these seniors?

Rob sat on the IOG board, so he met with IOG Fund Development Officer Terri Bailey to discuss creating a foundation. Grants could help older adults pay for emergency needs not often covered by other philanthropies, like dentures, a roof repair or a new furnace. Rob looked toward the future, too, believing in the value of research to make long-term improvements to aging. Thirty percent of the money distributed could flow to the IOG for research into aging. Rob and Terri had hit on a winning formula. The American House Foundation, with its motto of "Resources for Today, Research for Tomorrow," was born.

Today, American House Foundation (AHF) raises about \$300,000 each year, recently reaching \$1.08 million in lifetime giving. AHF has distributed more than 1,000 grants, delivered 21,600 monthly meals and fresh produce packs, and served 23,180 older adults. "The success of the American House Foundation exceeded all expectations," Terri said. "It helps wheelchair-bound seniors build ramps to their front door. It helped a diabetic get special shoes to keep his feet healthy. It helped an 80-year-old woman remove a tree that had fallen on her roof. These are life-changing."

The money donated to the IOG – about \$330,000 – has funded more than a dozen projects, including early Alzheimer's detection, and tools to identify older adults at risk of financial exploitation. "Our researchers sometimes need initial funding to prove their project shows promise before applying for a federal grant," IOG Director Dr. Lichtenberg said. "The AHF gifts allow us to invest in talented faculty and good research ideas so they succeed."

The Foundation raises most of its funds through two major events: Holiday Hope for Seniors in December, and a silent auction each May called A Celebration of Dignity and Hope. AHF identifies recipients through numerous non-profit partners, including the Senior Alliance, Lighthouse of Oakland County, and Adult Well Being Services. "So many older adults are alone with no one to help them get what they need to thrive," Rob, now the American House COO, said. "These organizations are our eyes and ears in the community to spot struggling seniors and help us to help them. Whether it's a wheelchair, an access ramp, or a ride to the doctor, we're committed to making a difference."



Holly Ellis, executive director of the American House Foundation, packs holiday goodies for seniors in need with American House COO Rob Gillette.

"So many older adults are alone with no one to help them. Whether it's a wheelchair, an access ramp, or a ride to the doctor, we're committed to making a difference."

– Rob Gillette, COO
American House Senior Living

Board of Visitors

Board members represent a dynamic interplay of educators, executives, business owners, financial service advisors, attorney, advocates, health care professionals and retirees. They share a desire to help older adults. Board members represent the IOG to friends and colleagues, assist with fund-raising, and allow us to engage new partners and resources for continued success in improving the lives of older adults.

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A Tireless Advocate for the Rights of Older Adults

For more than 30 years, Esther Howell was passionately committed to improving the lives of older adults. She was an educator, an advocate, a leader, and a board member for several colleges and social service agencies. Her professional career spanned 17 years as Academic Program Director for the Social Gerontology curriculum at Wayne County Community College and 14 years as Commissioner to the Michigan Office to the Service of the Elderly. She also founded Services for Older Citizens (SOC) in Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

Esther co-chaired the IOG's Board of Visitors for six years, guiding fund-raising and outreach programs that personally impacted more than 2,000 Detroit seniors every year. Her husband David, a retired CPA, served as co-chair. The couple introduced a sponsorship approach to fundraising, a rarity in academic circles, which generated nearly \$3 million in donations since 2006. The Howells' sponsorship model remains a major contributor to the IOG's continued financial health.

"Who would have known from our first luncheon, that Esther would become my biggest champion, that we would accomplish so much?" said Dr. Lichtenberg. He remembers feeling "a little

intimidated" in that first meeting by Esther's intense demeanor and passion for her work. She quickly assessed his own dedication and gave him high marks. They became friends and colleagues. "She really believed in me and what we were working toward at the IOG," he said. "There was no better advocate to have at your side than Esther."

In Esther's ideal society, the older adult would be revered rather than ignored, and aging would be embraced rather than feared. "Aging is a natural part of the human life cycle, so we must learn how to accept and appreciate it," she said. "The wisdom, experience, patience and compassion of older adults should be tapped and elevated as a role model for younger generations." She was a vital force in changing these attitudes through her services to Michigan's seniors and strove to improve the physical and mental health of vulnerable older adults including minorities, the poor and the homeless.

Esther Howell's legacy continues in the older adults whose lives are enriched by the laws that protect their rights, and the caregivers trained to help them. Her dedication to the welfare of all our older citizens will inspire generations to come.



Esther Y. Howell
1931-2017

Corporate & Community Partners

Individual Gifts

\$10,000 - \$24,999 – Esther & David Howell
Martha & Robert Sachs

\$5,000 - \$9,999 – Gloria Sniderman

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Pam Feinberg
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James Speir, Jr.

\$1,000 - \$1,999 – Laurel Berger & Thomas Trainer
Michael Damone
Carol & Harry Groth
Thomas B. Jankowski
Patrick Simasko
Maria Marcantonio



BOV Chair Mike Damone (center) and Mike Gilliam chat with the IOG's Odessa Jackson at holiday gathering.

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COVER PHOTOS | From left: An Art of Aging guest is excited to begin the interactive conference; IOG trainee Ray Viviano displays his research; LaToya Hall (right) explains financial safety tips at free workshop provided by the IOG.

Help us continue to foster successful aging through research, student and professional training, and community engagement.

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