

## **Regional Institute on Aging Fifth Year Highlights 12/12**

The Regional Institute on Aging (RIA) is a virtual research organization designed to serve the citizens of metropolitan Wichita, Sedgwick and the adjacent counties, and, eventually the surrounding Midwestern states. This annual report presents highlights of work in community based programs and projects, competitive research programs, community and organizational services, and collaborative work with KU School of Medicine.

### **Community Based Programs and Projects**

**Older Adult Pet Adoption Program:** This new collaborative program grew out of discussions with Dr. Mary Carman, VP for Older Adult Services, Prairie View. Dr. Carman is committed to rescuing and fostering small dogs. She is also committed to improving the quality of life of older frail adults. While Dr. Carman had the general idea for the program, Dr. Radebaugh conducted literature reviews, explored existing similar programs and provided a program and research framework for the development of the Older Adult Pet Adoption Program (OAPA). This is a collaborative effort between Prairie View, Caring Hands, Inc., the Harvey County Department on Aging, and WSU Regional Institute on Aging.

The major impediment to the adoption of pets by older adults is concern about the fate of the pet should the adopter become unable to provide care. OAPA provides solutions to these problems and assures the adopter that the pet will be cared for or re-homed should the adopter become temporarily or permanently incapacitated. OAPA also provides support in terms of regular home visits during the early months after the adoption to intervene and address any problems that may arise. Mood and other assessments are made before and after adoption in an effort to determine the impact of the adoption on the life of the older adult. These data are collected and will be analyzed by Prairie View psychometric staff.

It is known (and documented) that pets provide much support and comfort to older adults, particularly those who are more isolated. There are tens of millions of unwanted cats and dogs who are euthanized annually in the U.S. OAPA is working to help both groups.

**Falling Less in Kansas (Falling LinKS):** The next phase of Falling LinKS has commenced: dissemination and implementation. The implementation and dissemination research team includes: LaDonna Hale, Teresa Radebaugh, Michael Rogers, Nicole Rogers, Rosemary Wright, and Karen Kendrick and Shannon Riley from Envision.

The Toolkit which was completed in year 4 is now available online for free download. The Research Team is making presentations to groups and organizations in Kansas about the Toolkit, its development and potential, including to the:

- Kansas Public Health Association (Wichita, September 22, 2011),
- Envision Conference (St. Louis, September 21-24, 2011),
- Kansas State University Research and Extension agents (Hesston, April 19, 2012),
- North Central Regional Trauma Council (Salina, May 22, 2012)
- Positive Aging Day (Wichita, June 19, 2012).

One of the longer range goals had been to make an arrangement with Envision Low Vision Rehabilitation Center to offer printed, bound copies for sale. The arrangement is now complete, and Toolkits can be purchased via the Envision Everyday Store website for a nominal price. We will maintain the Toolkit online for free download so people can print individual copies, but we also wanted to make it available for groups and organizations that require large numbers for educational or training purposes.

A revision of the 2010 Toolkit is underway. The intent is to issue an updated version for early 2013. The new version will include the same instruments but will incorporate updated data and improved images.

Individual members of the Falling LinkS Research Team have made application for research awards to continue investigations of the Toolkit, its implementation and usefulness. Dr. Nicole Rogers was awarded a MURPA grant in a partnership with Mr. Michael Steinberg, Home Instead Senior Care, to develop training materials for home health aides who can use the Toolkit with the community residing but frail older adult clients. The product of the MURPA will be a training video that can be incorporated into the training materials of Home Instead Senior Care franchises as well as other home health agencies.

Further, the team has been asked by Kansas State University Research and Extension to allow them to roll out the Toolkit to all county based agents with family and aging responsibilities. This request occurred as a result of pilot use by a select set of agents. These extension agents felt the Toolkit was so helpful that they wanted it to be made available state-wide.

The meeting on the rollout will occur in early February 2013. We anticipate significant cooperative research opportunities around the implementation of the Toolkit in various counties.

The primary paper for Falling LinkS was published: Journal of Aging Research. 2011: 532079. Published online 9/19/2011. doi: [10.4061/2011/532079](https://doi.org/10.4061/2011/532079)

## **Competitive Research Programs**

**(Internal) Graduate Assistantship Program:** The Graduate School and the Regional Institute on Aging announced the availability of three graduate research assistantships (GRAs), funded at \$10,000 each, for 20 hours per week, for 12 months. Many tools are required to support and expand a research program. Assistance of well-trained graduate students is one important tool. This program aimed to provide (1) support for faculty research programs and (2) research experience for graduate students. The format of the application was a poster. At a minimum, the poster included (1) the scientific problem and its relevance to human aging research, (2) the design and methods to be employed, and (3) the tasks of the GRA, including the plan for supervision and the benefits from the research experience. The posters were displayed in major academic buildings so faculty, staff and students had an opportunity to view them. The review was conducted by a committee of external scientists and science administrators drawn from diverse research backgrounds.

Awards were made to: Sue Nyberg (Physician Assistant), Nicole Rogers (Public Health Science), David Eichhorn (Chemistry).

**(Internal) Graduate Student Research Funding:** The Regional Institute on Aging, through the generosity of the Evelyn D. Cassat Estate gift, announced a program of funding for graduate student research. One of the important missions of the Regional Institute on Aging is training the next generation of leaders in aging research. It is often true that research during graduate studies helps focus the student's lifelong career emphasis. Therefore, the program of student research support was developed. The student had to (1) be enrolled, full or part time, in a graduate degree program, either master's, Ph.D. or DNP degree; (2) be in good standing in the department; (3) have completed all non-research required course work; (4) have approval by the Thesis, Supervisory (Dissertation) Committee or Committee for the DNP Project of a topic that is scientifically relevant to human aging research. Two graduate student research awards were funded at \$3000 each for a one year period for direct research costs. The winners were Bobby Berry (Human Performance Studies) and Kari Nilsen (Psychology).

**(External) NIA MSTEM: Advancing Diversity in Aging Research (ADAR) through Undergraduate Education (R25):** A major effort beginning in late 2011 was to gather information and assemble a team to respond to this National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging, funding opportunity announcement. The purpose of this announcement is to support undergraduate competency and completion in pre-medicine, science, technology, engineering and mathematics, to enhance rates of successful transition to graduate and professional schools, and to diversify the health care and research work forces to more closely mirror the demographics of the U.S. population.

After several large meetings to discuss the announcement and WSU's fit with the criteria, Drs. Alex Chaparro, Larry Whitman and Teresa Radebaugh assumed responsibility for preparing the application. The application will focus on providing additional supports for undergraduates interested in MSTEM disciplines, enhancing the outreach and information programs to high school students, developing research opportunities for undergraduates from the beginning of their tenure at WSU until graduation, working to smooth the transition for Butler Community College MSTEM students to WSU and to provide supports through to graduation, and providing programs to enhance the skills of faculty members in mentoring diverse students.

Many programs and groups are partners or play major supporting roles in the construction of this application including Butler Community College, the WSU OFDSS, WSU TRIO programs and KUSM-W Pathways into Health Careers. The target receipt date is January 25, 2013.

### **Faculty and Student Research Development**

In addition to the creation of opportunities for WSU faculty and students to compete for research resources, the RIA also mentors both faculty and students in the development of research careers and projects while providing significant information and guidance on the development of applications for the National Institutes of Health. Some of this work is ongoing, e.g. regular meetings with a newly recruited faculty during the course of the academic year; while for others, it is sporadic and may be connected to the preparation of a tenure package or a research grant application or the development of a research idea. The Director also serves as an outside member of thesis and dissertation committees.

### **Community and Organizational Service**

The Director served on the

- Accreditation Committee for Senior Services, Inc.;
- the Wichita Medical Research and Education Foundation Board;
- the Aging Services Transformation Alliance (ASTRA) of Kansas LeadingAge;
- Center for Community Support and Research Advisory Committee;
- External Advisory Committee, University of Kansas Alzheimer's Disease Center.

She also spoke on "Aging on the Plains: the Challenges" at the Robert J. Dole Veteran's Administration Conference on Dementia, October 6, 2011.

Secretary Shawn Sullivan, formerly the Kansas Department on Aging, now Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services, spoke on November 11, 2011 on "Transforming the State of Aging in Kansas" in the Marcus Welcome Center. The presentation was co-sponsored by the KU School of Medicine-

Wichita, and the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging.

## **Collaborations with University of Kansas Medical School-Wichita.**

**Western Kansas Listening Tour:** KSUM-W and WSU conducted a “listening tour” in four towns in Western Kansas, June 14-15, 2011. Those on the tour were: H. David Wilson, M.D., Dean, KUSM-W, M. Michele Mariscalco, M.D., Associate Dean for Research and Professor of Pediatrics, KUSM-W, Zulma Toro-Ramos, Ph.D., Dean, College of Engineering, WSU, and Teresa S. Radebaugh, Sc.D., Cassat Professor in Aging and Director, Regional Institute on Aging, WSU.

The tour had two major goals: (1) understand the challenges that physicians in rural and frontier Kansas confront when providing care to their patients, and (2) hear what physicians see as the roles of our respective universities in addressing those challenges and how our universities may engage and assist them. Furthermore, as Dr. Wilson stated “we believe that these conversations will help our universities, over the long term, to develop more focused and relevant research programs.” The tour group met with physicians and toured facilities in Anthony/Hardtner, the Dodge City Medical Center, Kinsley and the new Kiowa County Memorial Hospital, Greensburg.

Although, much was learned about the situations and circumstances of small town medicine and health care and older adults, the important message for WSU was of a very different sort. The major message received was the university has inadequate marketing and recruiting in Western Kansas. Simply, our presence is almost non-existent. One of the physicians commented that when his son was working with the high school counselor regarding college choices and opportunities Wichita State was never mentioned. With the changing population and influx of Hispanic families and students who do not have a historical family allegiance to K State or KU, WSU has an opportunity to recruit.

### **Wichita Women in Science:**

The purpose of the Wichita Women in Science (WWiS) is to provide a neutral forum for women scientists, clinical investigators and senior science administrators to meet and establish relationships which then serve as the foundation for building new research collaborations. Wichita Women in Science is focused on a city and region and crosses scientific, technical and professional boundaries. The long range goal is to establish a strong core group of scientists, clinical investigators and senior science administrators to help construct and solidify the research relationships between the two universities as well as linking with businesses, foundations, medical centers, community organizations and other colleges in the south central Kansas region.

WWiS is an informal organization. The group meets monthly. The mailing list currently contains approximately 60 names and adds new names monthly. Each gathering is typically attended by 15-25 people. While not focused exclusively on aging, WWiS has proved a very effective, inexpensive networking tool for the region.

WWiS was created in 2010 by the Director, RIA, and the Associate Dean for Research, KU School of Medicine- Wichita.