

# Gerontology Program Fall 2016 Community Project Presentations #2

December 9, 2016 ~ 8:30-4:00 ~ Union ~ Foothill Suite



Longevity Journey

## Introductions

8:30-8:35

Dr. Cheryl Osborne

8:35-8:55

## *A Journey of the Heart*

Elizabeth Romero

Agency: Yolo Hospice

Agency & Faculty Supervisors: Gwendolyn Kaltoff EdD & Carlye Wilder & Professor Stephanie Makis

Yolo Hospice is a non-profit organization that aims to give the best care at the end of life and educate the community. Society fears death because there are so many unknown factors involved in the topic. These unknown factors include: where do we go after death? Is there an afterlife? Will there be pain? When will I die? All of these questions are relevant to death. The intern has developed a presentation along with a co presenter to give students at Pioneer High School a safe environment where they can feel comfortable discussing death. Students will be left with the knowledge that it is ok to feel sad and remember the person. Handouts were distributed to the students about Gerontology and normal reactions of grief. Applying this knowledge to high school students lifted the death barrier that Yolo Hospice encounters when they offer their service to the community. The participants were voluntary to ensure that they chose to come in and hear about the topic on their own. The evaluation process allowed the intern to look at students' reflection of the presentation. The intern measured the presentation by providing an evaluation with seven questions. The questions involved a series of questions such as: what they thought was most interesting, if this presentation was helpful, and what else they would like to know about this topic. The results showed that these students are open to having a conversation about death and they are forming their own questions.

8:55-9:15

## *Exploring Nursing Retention and Turnover Reduction Within Eskaton*

Jeremiah Ramirez

Agency: Eskaton Quality & Compliance

Agency & Faculty Supervisors: Dr. Teri Tift & Dr. Cheryl Osborne

Eskaton, a long-term care (LTC) organization offering the full continuum of care for older adults, is experiencing high turnover of its licensed nursing staff, particularly within Assisted Living, and at times struggles to consistently fully staff to budget. This shortage of LTC nurses, experienced industry-wide, can result in heavy workload, high overtime utilization, and staff burnout that risks lower quality of care for residents. The goal of the project is to gather data on licensed nurses' motivations for either remaining at Eskaton or spurring a job change. The student and agency supervisor collaborated in developing a survey and interview questions. The student administered the survey and conducted brief interviews during the survey process. The project targeted licensed vocational nurses and registered nurses, seeking staff nurses' perceptions about Eskaton, the LTC industry, their motivations for either staying or wanting to leave, and what the organization can improve upon. Kanter's Organizational Empowerment Theory was applied in development of the survey and interview questions for the purpose of measuring the effects of employee engagement and stakeholder status on retention. The survey is designed to capture qualitative data through open ended questions, but included quantitative measurements of job satisfaction and perceived value to the organization. Results indicated nurses perceive themselves as underpaid for the heavy workload resulting from chronic short staffing, and at-risk of or experiencing burnout. Eskaton's community reputation, team work, employee decision-making, and patient population were the leading positive responses for retention. Project results, summary, and recommendations will be presented to Eskaton's Management Committee and Quality and Compliance Team.

**9:15-9:35**

***Making the Experience Memorable for Both Resident and Yourself: A Brochure***

**Daisy Rios**

**Agency:** Eskaton Gold River Memory Care

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Nizalyn Panal & Professor Stephanie Makis

Volunteers and interns are very valuable in places like Memory Care Units. They can have a huge impact on the lives of the residents as well as have it be a rewarding experience for themselves. Eskaton Lodge Gold River is a non-profit organization that strives to make residents life's better. After having spent some time in their Memory Care Unit, the student felt the need to create a tool that would help future volunteers and interns. There was no physical reference that was provided for incoming volunteers and interns to read and refer to when working with the residents. The purpose of this project was to provide volunteers and interns at this cite with a brochure that gave them knowledge about dementia as well as tips that could be used when working with the residents. This brochure contains information about the definition of dementia, tips that can be applied when working with the residents, additional resources and Eskaton's mission statement so that they are aware of Eskaton's vision for their residents. The brochure will help volunteers gain more from their experience as well as be more productive with their time spent in the unit. Survey questions were given out to staff and family members to help measure the effectiveness of this project. All feedback in the twelve surveys handed out was positive. The results from the surveys showed that there was a clear need for a tool to further train volunteers and interns. The surveys all stated that the brochure would help guide volunteers and interns as far as what kind of things they should do to help the residents and have a better understanding of what dementia is. The brochure is intended to be given to volunteers and interns as a physical copy or an electronic copy.

**9:35-9:55**

***Tuck-In Program***

**Megan Werner-Maalouf**

**Agency:** First Call Hospice

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Rachele Doty & Dr. Tara Sharpp

First Call Hospice is a small agency that offers several levels of holistic care wherever they are needed, in homes and in facilities. The holistic team that is provided by First Call Hospice consists of a doctor, nurse, home health aide, and social worker, with an optional chaplain, and volunteer. Patients have either a formal or informal caregiver at all times who takes care of their every need from medication management to assistance with their activities of daily living. Although hospice at home is viewed as the best way to die by many, there are often limitations to this type of care as there are not as many resources in-home as there are in residential homes for older adults. A way to help create competent and confident in-home caregivers is by ensuring that they are prepared with all of the necessary tools to care for the patient. This not only includes physical equipment such as briefs or medications, but also that the caregiver and patient are mentally healthy throughout the dying process. The First Call Hospice Tuck-In Program will give volunteers the opportunity to provide in-home caregivers with a call every Thursday to ensure that they have all the needed supplies and support for the weekend, ideally increasing their confidence in carrying out their roles. This program will likely increase the quality of life for the patient and caregiver since it will bring ease to the caregiver's mind and will keep the patient comfortable with all the needed supplies and information from the agency. As many in-home caregivers call First Call Hospice after hours for questions that are not necessarily urgent, hopefully this program can lessen these calls by instilling confidence in the caregivers and patients. This program was evaluated by volunteers at the agency who received a presentation on the program. After the presentation, they filled out a survey where many stated that they would complete these phone calls and that they understood the primary goals of the program.

**9:55-10:15**

***Bridging the Past to the Present***

**Julie Vangvichit**

**Agency:** First Call Hospice

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Rachele Doty & Dr. Cheryl Osborne

First Call Hospice is a for-profit organization that provides palliative care for individuals who are in their last stages of life. First Call's mission is to provide quality of care to the individual and their loved ones, by meeting physical, psychosocial, and spiritual needs. The interdisciplinary team at First Call involves the medical doctor, registered nurses, home health aids, social worker, spiritual chaplain, and volunteers. Volunteers serve an important role in the agency by providing companionship visits with patients and respite care for families who are in need of those services. Despite the wonderful services that volunteers provide, there may be times where conversing and connecting with patients can be challenging. Bridging the Past to the Present is a project that helps both the volunteers in starting meaningful conversation as well as helping patients reminisce about positive aspects of their lives. The goal of the project was to help in building a positive relationship between the patient and volunteer. Another goal of the project was to have the patient experience feelings of self-worth, self-identity, and recognize that he/she lived a meaningful and fulfilling life, as well as decrease feelings of depression and anxiety about death and dying by incorporating reminiscence therapy and the Continuity Theory. Continuity theory states that people maintain the same activities, personalities, relationships, and behaviors throughout life, therefore using this theory in addition to reminisce therapy can help patients bridge over positive attitudes about past memories to the present time. Bridging the Past to the Present includes 5 reminiscence questions that were laminated onto a card so that the volunteers can carry them with their ID badge. The project was evaluated through a survey given to and completed by 14 volunteers. The survey asked the volunteers if they thought each question was beneficial or not for the patient, as well as open-ended questions for improving the project. Results included appreciation of the project and that the questions were beneficial. Suggestions included rewording the questions so that it could be better understood and answered. After receiving the volunteers' feedback, changes were made to the questions so that they will be easier to comprehend. Ultimately, the volunteer department and staff showed great support in making Bridging the Past to the Present a part of First Call Hospice and future volunteer trainings.

10:15-10:30

**BREAK**

10:30-10:50

***Neighborhood Reference Guide to a Healthy You***

**April T. Ceballos**

**Agency:** Agency on Aging Area 4

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Pam Miller & Professor Deon Batchelder

Agency on Aging Area 4 (AAA4) is one of 33 in the state of California. AAA4 covers seven counties. AAA4 manages federal and state funds to provide services to aid older adults and disabled persons to live as independent as possible. A few of the services provided include: nutrition services, health education, peer counseling, and congregate meals. In the education portion, AAA4 provides workshops about the importance of healthy eating and exercise to the participants of the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program at the congregate meal sites and low income senior and disabled housing. Information at the four-class workshop teaches the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the consequences of not living a healthy lifestyle. The project was to create The Neighborhood Reference Guide to a Healthy You (NRGHY) which is in concurrence with the existing program and is comprised of an all-in-one, easy to read, magnetic, quick reference guide. The reference guide includes available transportation, farmer's markets, senior exercise classes with site information, and food shelters. The goal of this project is to sustain the lessons the workshop taught in the SNAP Ed, Eat Smart, Live Strong program, by providing accessible nutrition and exercise options to the older adult participants. The guides were given out in week three along with surveys. Surveys were returned week four. 100% of the surveys were returned. 100% of those surveyed stated they would use the guide and found it useful. To conclude: The Neighborhood Reference Guide to a Healthy You adds to the existing SNAP Ed Eat Smart, Live Strong Workshop. The template used to create the guide was given to the agency on a flash drive. AAA4 will continue to use the guide.

10:50-11:10

***Agency on Aging Service Provider Reference Guide***

**Judi Byrnes**

**Agency:** Agency on Aging Area 4

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Pam Miller & Professor Deon Batchelder

Agency on Aging Area 4 (AAA4) provides service programs through a collaborative of stakeholders for individuals 60 years old in a seven-county area in northern California. Funding for services is received from federal and state money allocated from the Older Americans Act (OAA) which was enacted in 1965. Collaboration with service providers is performed daily at AAA4 and service providers change their operation over time, for this reason it is important the service provider's information is up to date. The project, Service Provider Reference Guide, was to update the outdated service guide to help staff connect to contracted service providers, which in turn helps older adults' needs in the areas it serves. The needs of older adults in these areas also affect families of older adults, if service provider information is not updated regularly; the amount of time to retrieve provider contact information would be consuming and costly. The methodology used by the intern to compile updated information for the project, has been extracted from the internet as well as, networking with staff at AAA4. After meeting with Pam Miller, the director of AAA4, it was decided an updated version in Microsoft Excel would be a welcomed project. As a result, the intern compiled and entered updated information into the service provider reference guide. Now staff may easily update the material in the reference by retrieving the Excel spreadsheet on their computers, which in turn helps to meet the needs of older adults and their families. To conclude, the new reference guide is not only updated, but has also been put into a data base for sustainability at AAA4 in the Sacramento office for years to come.

11:10-11:30

***Stepping into Kaiser***

**Nila Huynh**

**Agency:** Kaiser Hospice

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Yvonne Speer & Professor Lisa Harris-Chavez

Kaiser Hospice is a non-profit organization which provides support and care for persons in the phases of end of life as well bereavement services. Kaiser Hospice has an interdisciplinary team serving the North Valley and South Sacramento areas to ensure pain and symptom management are the focus of care. Within the team, volunteers and interns are an important and big contribution to the organization. They devote their time to serve for the community whether it is of their interest or to gain experience. Often, they do not feel they are a part of the organization due to their limitations and duties assigned. The student intern created a project to develop and welcome new volunteers and interns to Kaiser Hospice. The project, "Stepping Into Kaiser Hospice" focused mainly on the volunteers/interns to gain knowledge about hospice and experiences with patients and staff. The intern implemented the project by presenting to volunteers during a scheduled volunteer meeting. The intern gathered the information for the presentation by personal experiences when entering the agency as well as research throughout the internship. The information provided served to benefit for the volunteer when working with the patients and families. It also helped fulfill the agency's mission statement by being educated to thrive. A digital copy of the presentation is with the agency in case of changes or updates. Also, surveys were conducted to the volunteers asking why they choose to volunteer for hospice and if there were any changes to be made or added. The surveys indicated, volunteers' motives were altruism and civic responsibility.

**11:30-11:50**

***The Person Past Dementia***

**Olesya Karniayenka**

**Agency:** Eskaton Village Carmichael Memory Care

**Agency & Faculty Supervisor:** Tighe Hammam & Professor Stephanie Makis

“Dawn of a New Day” Memory Care is a transitional program at Eskaton Village Carmichael with a healthy and protected environment for residents experiencing cognitive impairment. “Dawn of New Day” inspires each resident to engage in activities, and challenges their cognitive state. Dementia is a chronic deterioration of cognitive function beyond normal ageing. There is no treatment currently available to cure dementia or to stop its progression. However, reminiscence therapy has been found to have a strong impact on the quality of life in older adults with dementia. Reminiscence therapy is a recollection of past events and can be done in a one on one conversation or group setting, with help of visual aids. Reminiscing results in increased life satisfaction through increased self-esteem and improved cognitive function. Reminiscing improves relationships between the dementia patient, their family and staff as they begin to see the person past dementia. Therefore, the goal of this project was to enhance quality of life for residents of Memory Care at Eskaton Village Carmichael by implementing reminiscing into their daily life. The student conducted research on reminiscence and collected necessary components for activities that elicit memories of older adults. The student created a sensory box as a reminiscence tool that was later used in one-on-one and group reminiscence activities. The sensory box provided an opportunity for staff to get acquainted with residents, who they were before the disease, and made it easier to hold a meaningful conversation while providing care. The intern gathered the resident’s feedback by surveying them directly after an hour of the activity. During one-on-one discussion, results on the surveys of resident’s showed a more positive feedback. Remembering the past can bring a great deal of satisfaction and understanding for anyone. For the elderly with dementia, it is a way to affirm who they are, what they’ve accomplished in their lives, and a chance to relive happy times.

**11:50-12:30**

**LUNCH**

**12:30-12:50**

***Get to Know Your Neighbors***

**Vadim Koval**

**Agency:** Eskaton Village Carmichael Memory Care

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Pristina Zhang & Dr. Tara Sharpp

According to the World Health Organization (2015), it is estimated that 47.5 million people worldwide have dementia and there are 7.7 million new cases every year. Evidence-based research shows that people with regular social ties are less likely to demonstrate cognitive decline and may live up to twenty percent longer compared to those who are lonely or isolated (Ristau, 2011). Activity theory explains the importance in socializing and engaging in activities and encourages older adults to become more active. The goal of the project “Get to Know your Neighbors” was to help staff and volunteers at Eskaton Village Carmichael, Memory Care Unit to socialize with residents who are living with dementia through a scrapbook and instructional template made by the intern. The scrapbook will allow and encourage residents to learn, connect, and socialize with one another and for volunteers to engage with the residents. It may benefit the residents by increasing social participation which may improve their well-being. Staff and volunteers’ feedback was collected when scrapbook was presented on unit and received positive feedback. Instructions and an electronic template of the scrapbook page was left for use with future residents.

**12:50-1:10**

***Developing and Cultivating Skills with Seniors through Sensory Tactile Balls***

**Trena Duong**

**Agency:** Eskaton Village Carmichael Memory Care

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Pristina Zhang & Professor Deon Batchelder

Eskaton consistently strives for innovative ideas to improve their services and educational programs for their residents and staff members. The project, Developing & Cultivating with seniors through Sensory Tactile Balls, is designed to create a holistic environment approach to wellness for the resident, provide staff with procedures specific to improving cognitive and sensory activities. The intern designed sensory tactile balls including balls with soft and fidget materials to help residents with sensory stimulation and cognitive abilities. The project’s concept is to keep the resident’s hands busy, to ease the anxiety, and exercise their fingers and hands. By using sensory tactile balls, the project’s goal is for the staff to assist residents with their sensory coordination, identify numbers, shapes, texture, and color. Using the Activity Theory through the project, the participants responded with positive feedback. There were a total fourteen resident participants who filled out a short survey of six questions. The outcome of the surveys consisted of fourteen residents and two staff, which provided feedback on how well the student has met her goal of designing an activity for the residents. The project’s sustainability is for a new student intern to use my project as a guideline for the development of new sensory tactile activities for the agency. The concept was to either develop a new activity or change various aspects of the original activity to appeal to new and/or a more diverse group of

residents. The project aimed to address a holistic approach to assist older adults with sensory, social, and cognitive activities and finding ways to promote interaction to benefit the residents.

**1:10-1:30**

### ***Never 2 Late for Reminiscence***

**Tanasha Brock**

**Agency:** Oakmont of Carmichael

**Agency & Faculty Supervisor:** Eddie Souza LVN & Professor Deon Batchelder

Oakmont of Carmichael is a senior living facility that provides care for residents of all living levels from independent to assisted living. Adhering to Oakmont's values the student gathered current evidence based research indicating how reminiscence has had a positive effect on residents in memory care and their overall wellbeing and quality of life. The purpose of the project was to inform and teach care staff and residents how to use a computer program located within the facility called It's Never 2 Late. The goal of the project was to utilize an activity inside the program called My Story, and to help residents psychologically and socially, redirect them if agitated or confused, and keep them engaged over time. The need for this project is because older adults must have the opportunity to continue to be social, remember things from their past, age successfully, and maintain their overall quality of life. The methodology, entailed gathering background and informational data from residents to create a profile, "My Story," for each resident. The interviews took place in the activity room and dining area of the Memory Care Unit, as group or one on one. In total 11 residents participated and 4 care staff completed the surveys which exhibited a response rate of about 33%. This project was evaluated using a 5 question survey in which asked the care staff about the activity and how they felt the residents responded. The results concluded that the staff enjoyed doing the activity with the residents and were happy to have another tool in redirecting agitated residents.

**1:30-1:50**

### ***Educating the Community Through an Engaging and Comprehensive Presentation Experience***

**April Agan**

**Agency:** Elder Care Management of Northern California

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Ginger McMurchie & Dr. Donna Jensen

Elder Care Management of Northern California, or ECMNCA, is a care management agency that provides guidance and support to older adults and their families who need help navigating resources. ECMNCA also gives presentations to the community on topics related to aging, which include how to deal with a sudden change of condition, financial or legal concerns, chronic disease management, levels of care, fall prevention, and communication techniques. As the population ages, there are more community-dwelling elders who are remaining independent at home, and most of whom have a family member as their primary caregiver. Most of these presentations are targeted to these older adults and their families to educate them on aging topics, inform them of available resources, and encourage them to make important life arrangements accordingly. The student updated the agency's current PowerPoint presentations and introduced a different presentation software called Haiku Deck. This new software gave a new face to the presentations by advancing them in the technology world, thus making the new presentations more visually appealing to better capture the audience's attention. The project was evaluated by all seven members of the agency's staff who were given the old and new presentations to compare and the staff felt the new updates had colorful, high quality graphics that were refreshing to look at.

**1:50-2:10**

### ***Chair Tai Chi: A Way to Heathy Mind and Body***

**Nghia Vo**

**Agency:** Triple R Adult Day Care Center

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors:** Nina Moran & Professor Deon Batchelder

Triple R is a non-for-profit licensed adult day care program that aims to providing a safe and enriching environment for older adults with different level of memory loss through variety of recreational activities, while giving caregivers relief from caregiving. With the aging population growing exponentially, one age-related ailment that is experience by many older adults is dementia. Older adults with dementia often exhibit challenging behavior such as agitation, aggressive, anxiety, and wondering. Through collaboration with supervisor, team leader, and multiple research articles discussing the beneficial health effects of mind-body (Tai Chi) exercise in people with dementia. A modified Tai Chi exercise was created in efforts to help enhance mood, reduce anxiety, improving balance, and flexibility among participants at Triple R. The student conducted classes for approximately 30 minutes to 40 minutes and included deep breathing exercise. The participants were instructed to followed the student performing different forms of Qi Gong Tai Chi in a seated position. Attendance varied from eleven to twenty-one participants for each class. The class was evaluated through observing and documenting any positive behaviors exhibit after every class, their willingness, and eagerness in participating the class. The project received positive feedbacks from the participants and staff about the soothing and relaxing the movements and music are. They proved that the class was enjoyable and easy to learn type of exercise. Additional, less challenging behavioral were observed after every class. The staff has shown interest in conducting

future Chair Tai Chi exercise. The student provided easy step-by-step illustrations with written instruction booklet. The final program was reviewed by the site supervisor and was found to be a suitable exercise in preserving and maintaining their participants cognitive and physical strength.

**2:10-2:20  
BREAK**

**2:20-2:40**

***Yolo County Local Informational Resource & Services Guide***

**Maricela Valdivia**

**Agency: Yolo APS**

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors: Melinda Meeken & Professor Lisa Harris-Chavez**

Yolo County Adult Protective Services (APS) is a state-mandated program designed to provide limited interventions in the form of case management, assessment, and referrals to older individuals who are 65 years and older and dependent adults (18-64) who are experiencing neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation. APS helps provide services and resources to prevent any unfortunate circumstances of mistreatment or exploitation for individuals who are unable to protect themselves and their own interests. APS seeks to keep individuals safe in their own environment by strengthening their own capacity to keep their independence and well-being. This may be met by providing assistance and linking the individual with appropriate community services and resources. This project "Local Informational Resource and Services Guide", is focused on providing resources and services that are available within Yolo County. The project was developed with the idea of creating an accessible guide with a variety of resources and services that are offered to older adults in the community. The purpose of this project is to be used by the APS staff to help provide clients with the service that meets their needs. This is a useful tool to access services with various listings for adult day care, home care, legal services, food banks, and transportation. Staff members evaluated the resource guide and determined it was a helpful and beneficial guide for the agency which will help the staff provide resources to older individuals in Yolo County. Overall feedback was positive and the guide was accepted as an essential tool for APS.

**2:40-3:00**

***Brain Donation Program***

**Nicole Torio**

**Agency: UDC Alzheimer's Disease Diagnostic Center**

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors: Jayne LaGrande & Dr. Donna Jensen**

The UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center is a research center that conducts clinical trials and evaluations to further the understanding of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. They provide community and professional education outreach, as well as research training. For her project, the extern created a webpage to provide information and resources about the center's brain donation program and to educate the community about the significance of donating brain tissue for Alzheimer's research and related dementias. In addition, it is to encourage patients and their families to participate in the center's longitudinal research studies which give them the opportunity to donate their brain for Alzheimer's research. The empathy-altruism theory was integrated throughout to support the formation of the project. In the process, many patients and their families were reached by phone call in regards to their participation to the program. During implementation, feedback received from patients and their families was used as a foundation to create the brain donation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) section for the webpage. In the evaluation process, several staff members and the agency supervisor collaborated in critiquing the project. Suggestions were given to make the webpage interactive by including pictures and additional resources for individuals who are not enrolled through the agency's longitudinal research program. In the outcome, thirteen brain donation FAQ's were finalized and with help from the webpage designer, the content is added on the center's website and is successfully active for the community to view.

**3:00-3:20**

***Aging with Perseverance: A Collection of Achievements with NO Age Limit***

**Brittany Walton**

**Agency: CSUS Cardiovascular Wellness Program**

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors: Linda Paumer & Professor Stephanie Makis**

The CSUS Cardiovascular Wellness Program is a non-profit organization that is supported by the partnership between California State University, Sacramento and The Foundation for Health through Knowledge and Action. The program serves individuals within the community who have cardiovascular disease or at risk for developing the disease. The program is run by a complete voluntary staff, dedicated to serving individuals within the community. The program offers educational lectures from a multidisciplinary team of professionals within the healthcare field, as well as an exercise training program. Many of the participants at this program have remained static for over twenty years, in which by identifying this unique attribute the project proposed questioned how each individual had achieved wellness throughout their time at the program. The project involved conducting interviews, utilizing techniques common in reminiscence therapy to identify how the participant's personal attributes gained throughout their lives have influenced their motivation and perseverance to overcome cardiovascular disease in order to achieve wellness. The information gathered was formatted and placed into a hard copy book, which was given to the program. After completion, the book was able to successfully represent the true strides each participant had made towards achieving wellness, including weight loss, stress management, education and healthy diet which all amount to lowering the risk factors associated with experiencing additional symptoms of heart disease. The evaluations were conducted and measured based on each dimension and stage of both theories applied, which were used to demonstrate the percentage of the respondents that represented having transcended

since attending the program in order to achieve meaningfulness in their lives while overcoming heart disease. On average, sixty-one percent had developed a transcendental view of life after developing heart disease, in addition to an average of seventy-nine percent having a high meaningfulness. The ultimate goal for this project was to demonstrate to the staff, participants, possible future funders and participants the uniqueness of this program and the strides each participant has made to achieve wellness while overcoming a chronic disease.

**3:20-3:40**

### ***Students on Behalf of Seniors***

**Mariya Babiychuk**

**Agency: California Senior Legislature**

**Agency & Faculty Supervisors: Janice Bailey & Jon Pointer & Dr. Donna Jensen**

California Senior Legislature (CSL) is a senior advocacy organization that is made up of 100 senior volunteers whose primary mission is to gather ideas for legislation at state and federal levels, work ideas into formal proposals and present the top ten prioritized proposals to the members of the Legislature or Congress, and advocate for laws implementing these ideas. The Students on Behalf of Seniors program is designed to help California Senior Legislature Assembly Members and Senators address those needs. This program provides the opportunity for students to be creative, research, and write a formal legislative proposal. This in turn, provides the CSL with input from Gerontology students on the most pressing issues in the California aging community. Over the last two semesters the student, proposed, developed, and implemented a Students on Behalf of Seniors assignment to support the agency by bringing forward the issues of seniors in their communities for the CSL members to properly address. The student collaborated with California State University Gerontology students, via their Social Policy for an Aging Society (GERO 102) course to develop an assignment that would both give students experience of writing a proposal and CSL members new ideas for legislative proposals. The student evaluated the assignment in order to assess the likeliness of the legislative proposals written by students to be accepted and used by CSL members. During the CSL Annual Legislative Session, two hearing sessions were selected, 30 surveys were handed out and 19 were returned. Results indicated that majority liked the idea of working with Sac State Gerontology students to gain new ideas of legislative proposals. Many of the surveys indicated that working with students would benefit CSL. In order to improve the assignment, it was indicated that wording of the description should be slightly changed to remove negative words such as "poor policies" to "existing policies that do not address the issues of senior population".

### **Graduate Thesis/Project**

**3:40-4:00**

### ***Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waiver as a Solution for the Disparity in Services Available for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury in California.***

**Karli Holkko**

**Thesis Supervisors: Dr. Cheryl Osborne, Dr. Donna Jensen & Professor Joseph Rodrigues**

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a significant injury resulting in devastating effects that can last a lifetime. It is reported that over 250,000 California residents had a non-fatal emergency department visit related to TBI in 2014 (CDPH, 2016). Individuals with TBI are a significantly underserved population in California and for those with Medicaid as their primary health insurance, there are very few options for long-term services and supports (LTSS) (DMH, 2010). Those in need of LTSS are left to navigate a fractured system of service providers attempting to piece together an effective treatment plan (Cusick et al., 2003). Current law directs the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to implement a Medicaid program designed to serve individuals with TBIs (Feuer, 2007; Monning, 2009), but this program has yet to be implemented. The purpose of this project was to determine what is needed for California to comply with the law and implement a Medicaid TBI program. Through extensive research and interviews with California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) staff it was determined that there is a lack of funding to implement and sustain a Medicaid TBI program. Regardless of the current lack of funding, California still has an opportunity to make TBI a priority and advocate for the legislature to appropriate the necessary funding. This project provides a concept paper in a format that is usable by advocates to demonstrate the need of a Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver for individuals with TBI to state legislators. The concept paper also recommends an overall program structure that would establish a continuum of care and provide the services necessary to significantly improve the overall health and quality of life for individuals with TBI.

### **Conclusions**

**Dr. Donna Jensen**

