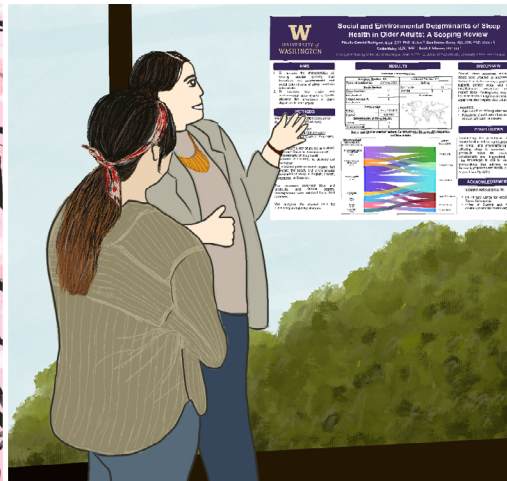


de Tornyay Center for Healthy Aging

2024 - 2025 Annual Report



Illustrations by Lalipat Phianhasin

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." - C.S. Lewis

The de Tornyay Center for Healthy Aging serves as a catalyst for promoting healthy aging through its support of research and education in gerontology. Our annual report highlights center achievements in healthy aging over the last year.

Research Impact

The center's Research and Intramural Funding (RIFP) grants are a vital part of how the de Tornyay Center supports nursing research. RIFP grants provide critical funds for faculty to launch new areas of research. The data collected serve as building blocks for larger-scale research studies, potentially leading to new innovations and breakthroughs in the field of gerontological nursing research.

Spotlight on a Current RIFP

Using AI to analyze coughs

UW School of Nursing faculty member, Oleg Zaslavsky, received a de Tornyay Center RIFP grant for a pilot study investigating the possible use of artificial intelligence (AI) to help identify pneumonia in people with dementia, based on the sounds of their coughs.

Pneumonia is one of the leading causes of hospitalization for people with dementia. Early identification for this population is critical and potentially lifesaving. The initial RIFP funding will help Zaslavsky and colleagues determine if adapting an AI model for this purpose is feasible, laying the groundwork for further study.



The Impact of our RIFPs

Frances Lewis' 'Field Test of the Partners in Care (PIC) Caregiver Program' RIFP established a strong partnership with nurses and leadership at the Seattle Care Alliance, which led to additional research on caregivers for bone marrow transplant recipients.



Maya Elias' 'Identifying the Optimal Timing of a Daily Cognitive Training Intervention for Older Intensive Care Unit Survivors' RIFP led to a federal grant. Reviewers mentioned the RIFP funded research was a strong part of the grant application.

Shaoqing Ge's 'Understanding the Engaging with Aging (EWA) Experience Among Independently Residing Older Adults: A Validation Study' RIFP led to several publications and presentations highlighting the experiences of older adults in the EWA framework.



Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting

The de Tornyay Center was proud to see an impressive showing of over 20 UW School of Nursing faculty and students at the 2024 Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting, held in Seattle. The conference serves as a valuable opportunity for faculty and students to network, learn best practices, and further disseminate their work. A few of their presentations are showcased below.

Exploring the Impact of the EnhanceFitness Exercise Program

Center director Basia Belza was featured in a panel about the locally-founded and nationally implemented program, EnhanceFitness. Belza and other researchers at the University of Washington have conducted extensive research on the program for everything from arthritis to fall prevention. Learn more about the panel in the center's Northwest Primetime article:

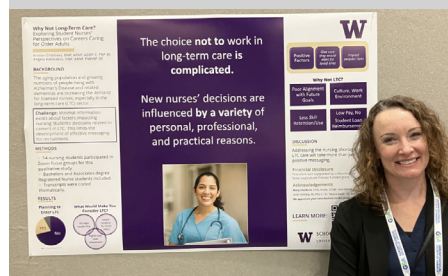


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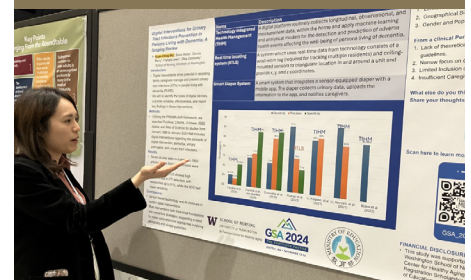
"Why not Long Term Care?"

Associate Teaching Professor Kristen Childress presented her work investigating the reasons nursing students decide not to go into long-term care. This important research lays groundwork for addressing the shortage of nursing staff in long-term care settings.



Preventing UTIs for people with dementia

Kuan-Ching Wu, former de Tornyay Scholar and current post doc at Emory University presented her important work investigating the state of nursing research on preventing UTIs in people with dementia, including identifying current large gaps in the research literature.



Explore more UW School of Nursing GSA presentations

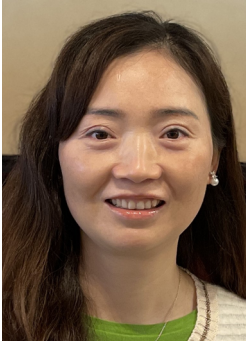
Learn more about presentations by UW School of Nursing students, faculty, and alumni at the GSA meeting by scanning the QR code to the right:



tinyurl.com/UWatGSA

Center Healthy Aging Scholars

Each year, the center awards scholarships to graduate and undergraduate students who are conducting research or clinical improvement projects that will help to advance healthy aging. These scholarships support students interested in the field of gerontological nursing, encourage work that is helping people to age well, and help future nurse practitioners and researchers build vital skills in the field of gerontology.



Sera Madsen (DNP), Germaine Krysan Doctoral Scholar

Project: Expanding Dementia Awareness through Faith-Based Organizations in Rural or Underserved Washington Communities

"By expanding dementia awareness through trusted community networks, we can help reduce stigma, promote understanding, and better support individuals living with dementia and their caregivers."

Lydia Chen (DNP), Healthy Aging Doctoral Research Scholar

Project: Using Artificial Intelligence in Improving Nursing Documentation in Skilled Nursing Facilities

"The more time [nurses] spend on documenting, the less time they have for the physical presence with the patient."



Ashley Gougouehi (DNP), Healthy Aging Doctoral Research Scholar

Project: Age-Friendly Health Systems Needs Assessment

"It is... important to get a sense of what initiatives are out there that support our older adults, and see how we can support these health systems, because we need more of them."

Jun Heo (BSN), Healthy Aging Undergraduate Research Scholar

Project: Exploring Healthcare and Housing Differences Between Older Veterans and Non-Veterans in Permanent Supportive Housing: Barriers to Healthy Aging

"The veteran population, they have their own unique struggles, like military PTSD and their veterans status, that sometimes cause further blockages to receiving care."





Madison McKee (ABSN), Myrene C. McAninch Undergraduate Scholar

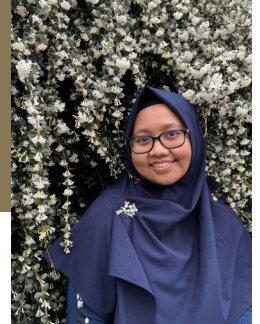
Project: Examining the Impacts of Facilitated Garden Activities for Individuals Living with Dementia and their Caregivers

"Our vision is that we can create this easily replicated program, so that other gardens and hospitals or medical spaces could also do this program."

Eriska Fajriyati (BSN), Healthy Aging Undergraduate Research Scholar

Project: Exploring Perceptions of Aging and Menopause in Somali and Indonesian Older Adults: A Qualitative Study

"This project is not just about learning for myself, but also about providing valuable insights that can lead to more culturally sensitive healthcare in the future."



Jessica Japra (BSN), Healthy Aging Undergraduate Research Scholar

Project: The Roles of Chronotype and Cognitive Function on Feasibility of Cognitive Training for Older Intensive Care Unit Survivors

"In the future, we want to develop personalized treatments that consider sleep patterns and thinking skills to reduce delirium and cognitive decline."

Antonia Cai, Healthy Aging Undergraduate Research Scholar

Project: The influence of physical activity and diet quality on the symptom experience of older adults with HIV

"This experience has reinforced the importance of precision and attention to detail—not just in research but also in clinical practice."



Wenchi Lai (BSN), Healthy Aging Undergraduate

Project: The effects of exercise training on symptoms experienced by older adults with HIV

"There may be other people with HIV that are struggling with some of these symptoms, and then they realize there's a study with evidence and proof that you should be doing this exercise."

Predoctoral Scholars

The de Tornyay Center supports doctoral students through our pre-doctoral scholarship program. Our current and past pre-doctoral students continue to do cutting edge research and push forward the field of gerontological nursing research. Find a few highlights of our predoctoral scholars' accomplishments below:



Wenting Peng

Peng's current research focuses on the timely topic of how older adults use technology. She presented two posters on the subject at the GSA conference. Peng is also investigating the impact that the de Tornyay Center has had on research, through analyzing the numerous publications from center-associated researchers.



Priscilla Carmiol-Rodriguez

Carmiol-Rodriguez was chosen as the 2025-2026 Magnuson Scholar for the UW School of Nursing.

"Priscilla's research in improving sleep health and exploring cardiometabolic health disparities may reduce the risk for diabetes and improve disease management in the context of diabetes diagnosis."

- SoN faculty Jonika Hash about Carmiol-Rodriguez, from the Magnuson Scholars webpage



Yanjing Liang

Liang co-presented at the UW School of Nursing Dawg Tank, a forum that helps to fund nursing research ideas. Liang also shared her work on 'Perceptions of Digital Health Solutions for Supporting Chinese American Caregivers' at the GSA conference. This critical research will help to ensure culturally-adapted support for caregivers.

UW Aging Research Group

UW School of Nursing PhD student Sarah McKiddy, one of the center's past predoctoral scholars, co-founded a UW Aging Research Group, which recently secured funding from the Simpson Center for Humanities. The group brings together students interested in aging topics from a variety of fields to collaborate and learn.



Annual Events

Ignite Aging Symposium 2024: Living a Brain-Healthy Life

The 2024 Ignite Aging Symposium featured short presentations by students, faculty, and alumni on cognitive health. Topics ranged from an Alzheimer's cafe tailored to the Chinese American community, exercise and cognition, and the importance of fiber.



"Thank you so much for the fabulous event and 'igniting' these connections! Looking forward to seeing where they take us." - Ignite Aging 2024 attendee



Nursing Science Scholarship Day 2025

The de Tornyay Center and PhD Coordinating Committee co-hosted the 2025 Nursing Science Scholarship Day, featuring poster and podium presentations by de Tornyay scholars and UW School of Nursing PhD in Nursing Science students.



de Tornyay Center Leadership

Our Team



*Basia Belza,
Director,
Professor*



*Casey Thomson,
Manager*



*Paige Bartlett,
Public Information
Specialist*



*Lalipat Phianhasin,
Illustrator, PhD
Candidate*

Advisory Board



*Peg
Heitkemper,
Professor*



*Weichao
Yuwen,
Associate
Professor*



*Jingyi Li,
Assistant
Professor*



*Jean Tang,
Associate
Professor*



*Kristen
Childress,
Associate
Teaching
Professor*

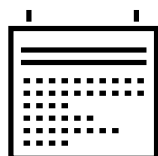


*Maya Elias,
Assistant
Professor*



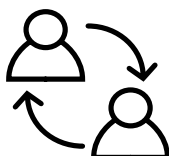
*Oleg
Zaslavsky,
Associate
Professor*

How to Get Involved



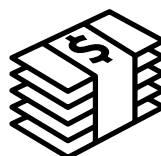
ATTEND OUR EVENTS

including our annual
Ignite Aging and
quarterly journal club



COLLABORATE WITH THE CENTER

if you are part
of a community
organization



APPLY FOR FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

if you are faculty or
a student at the UW
School of Nursing





SUPPORT BY GIVING A GIFT

and help the
advancement of
healthy aging research

Learn More

 agingcenter.org

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 Contact us at agingctr@uw.edu



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