



# THE MINKA MONTHLY

Official Newsletter for the Minka Learning Lab for Living Well



## GIVING BACK

By Thomas Engels, Intern and  
Dr. Lisa Fournier, DSL, MPM,  
Project Coordinator, Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program

The Minka Learning Lab Advisory Board exemplifies the meaning of "giving back" to the community. You might be asking, "what do they do?" The Advisory Board actively participates in the selection and testing of smart home technologies for the Minka house. In addition, the Advisory Board members mentor interns, participate in simulations and brainstorm with the USI GWEP Team about Living-in-Place innovations for older adults. We appreciate their time, commitment and effort to all the happenings at the Minka Learning Lab! Learning more about each member has been a pleasure since they all have amazing thoughts and ideas to contribute! If we did not have the Advisory Board, then the Minka would not be the building that it is today. This summer edition of the Minka Monthly highlights some Advisory Board members and their contributions. It is our way of saying, THANK YOU!

***Give back by becoming a Minka Learning Lab Advisory Board member!  
The time commitment is one to two hours per month! Please contact Lisa Fournier at [lfournier@usi.edu](mailto:lfournier@usi.edu).***

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# EDITOR CORNER

## UPDATES

By Thomas Engels, Intern



We are super excited about launching new programs, simulations and events at the Minka this fall! Stay tuned! Join us on social media to get the latest news!

This special edition of the newsletter contains articles about some of the Minka Advisory Board Members. Get to know them more in the articles below. Enjoy!

*If interested in contributing to this newsletter, please contact Thomas Engels at [teengels@eagles.usi.edu](mailto:teengels@eagles.usi.edu)*

## SOCIAL MEDIA



To follow the Minka Facebook page, visit [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)



To follow the Minka Instagram page, visit [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com)

## PAST NEWSLETTERS

Click [here](#) to view the March newsletter all about the Minka

Click [here](#) to view the April newsletter all about dementia

Click [here](#) to view the May newsletter all about healthy living and eating

## MINKA VISION STATEMENT

Aging well is personal. Each of us expects to live where we want and how we want as we go through life. Our homes are not always set-up for aging well. In addition, our communities may be stifled by issues with access to healthcare, crime and violence, food insecurity, inclusion, age discrimination and more. The Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness wants to transform southwest Indiana by creating a Learning Lab for Living Well housed in the Minka house at USI. The Learning Lab for Living Well offers an interdisciplinary focus to involve students, faculty and campus stakeholders in research, healthcare leadership development and simulations that address challenges for living-in-place and open health profession career opportunities. In addition, the Learning Lab for Living Well provides everyone in the local community a place to learn about and to adapt home innovations for living-in-place. Home innovations are designed to integrate smart home technology, health coaching and learning workshops for a personalized, adaptable approach to aging well. The Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness at USI looks to offer a blueprint for other rural communities to address social determinants of health.

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# JOANNE ARTZ

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Joanne Artz has spent 43 years in academic reference and research librarianship for four different libraries in three states. She has a bachelor's degree in ancient history/classics, a master's in library science and a master's in history. In May 2018, Joanne retired from USI's David L. Rice Library as assistant director for user services emerita, associate librarian emerita. During her time at USI, she was also a library liaison to the faculty and students of USI's CNHP for 21 years. Joanne believes in giving back to the community through volunteering. She is a member of the Evansville AARP Volunteer Team, she occasionally does things for SWIRCA and works once a month at a food pantry. Currently, Joanne is also the secretary for the USI Retirees' Coordinating Council and secretary for the Friends of the Alexandrian Public Library in Mt. Vernon. In addition to volunteering, she pursues a passion for paleoanthropology through reading and Zoom presentations.

Joanne developed an interest in aging and how to make a good life in retirement and the Minka when working closely with Dr. Katie Ehlman's gerontology classes which covered library-based research. As a single person with no children, Joanne is quite interested in ways to live comfortably on her own as long as possible, which attracted her to living-in-place and staying as active and healthy as possible. Since Joanne is an original member of the Minka Advisory Board, she took part in some of the first brainstorming sessions and has watched the Minka come to life. When Dr. Bill Thomas came to USI, she was able to meet him and learn from his expertise in aging. She likes how the Minka explores technology, adaptability and community ideas for older adults to live on their own. In the future, Joanne hopes that USI will continue to use the Minka as a teaching tool for students from different disciplines on campus. Her favorite part about this project is having a huge range of ages from different generations all contributing ideas to make the community a better place.



"The Minka Advisory Board is a great group of people from a wide range of ages." —Joanne Artz

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# ZACHARY HERONEMUS

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Zachary Heronemus, MPA, was appointed executive director by the Board of Directors of Aurora, Inc. in January 2020. He leads the agency's strategic direction, serves as the chief development officer, and supports its team of professionals who work to prevent and end homelessness in Evansville and the surrounding community. These efforts include Aurora's valued rapid-rehousing, re-entry, permanent supportive housing, Housing First, diversion and homeless street outreach programs.

Zac has spent his professional career in Evansville rooted in public service and has a passion for helping people. Through his experience working in development for United Way, in local government and most recently as development director for Tri-State Food Bank, Zac has a proven commitment to public service. Zac holds an undergraduate degree from USI in political science ('08) as well as a master of public administration ('11) degree from USI.

Zac lives on the east side of Evansville with his wife of almost 17 years, Megan. They have a 9-year-old son, Jackson, who just finished third grade at Harper Elementary and a 2-year-old daughter, Madelyn. He enjoys photography, golfing, traveling, camping and fishing with the family.

After learning more about the Minka house, Zac wanted to join the Minka Advisory Board because he thought that it would be a fantastic opportunity to be involved with USI. He also wanted to bring his different life experiences and perspective of others to help create new ideas to help the community. He is looking forward to exploring the innovative work that is happening at the Minka and how it can be used to help educate the community. Zac likes that the ideas of different innovations and research in technology, gerontology and living-in-place can help bring change to the community.



"Evansville is an innovative community with a high degree of ingenuity." —Zac Heronemus

# JILL RASIOR

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Jill Raisor is an associate professor of education specializing in early childhood education. She currently serves as the chair of teacher education. Jill has taught courses on guidance, play and integrated curriculum. Her research interests include relational aggression, social hierarchies, play and developmentally appropriate practice.

Jill enjoys collaborative work and research, so she decided to join the Minka Advisory Board. She thought that it would be an interesting opportunity to bring many different disciplines together on campus. When Dr. Thomas came to USI, he visited one of her education classes. She has personally attended several events on campus to learn more about aging. "Learning a new way of viewing aging and the idea of inter-generational living is interesting to me," she explained. The future of the Minka is very exciting for her because she thinks that USI can greatly benefit from having this building. "It adds a unique element to our campus, so I look forward to continuing learning opportunities through the Minka."

Having students involved with the Minka is very important. "Jill vocalized that college is an ideal time to expand your knowledge and engage in unique learning opportunities. I think students should be involved to learn how their knowledge and skills can contribute to the project. The hands-on approach and application to learning may have a lasting impact on their education and possibly career!"



"Learning a new way of viewing aging and the idea of inter-generational living is interesting to me." —Jill Rasio

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# JANET KILBANE

By Thomas Engels, Intern

After teaching in the Occupational Therapy Program at USI for 23 years, Dr. Janet Kilbane retired in 2017. She was the fieldwork coordinator for 20 years and then the program chair for three years. She has a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from Ohio State University, a master's degree in education from Cleveland State University and occupational therapy doctorate (OTD) from Thomas Jefferson University. In the community, Janet is a co-leader of AARP Evansville.

She is married (35 years) to her husband, Tom, who is a veterinarian. She has two daughters: Samantha is an ICU nurse at St Vincent, and Tessa is an attorney in Louisville. She has one grandson, Caleb, who is 10. This past year, she was a "third grade teacher" for Caleb during his online school. They both survived!! Lastly, Janet has a 14-year-old toy poodle, Rocco, who is her constant companion.

Since Janet is an occupational therapist, she joined the Minka Advisory Board because people being able to live in their own environment and as independent as possible is at the top of her list. Being part of this project has enhanced her ideas of aging. One part that she finds beneficial is exploring new technology to assist someone to stay in their home and be independent. "I think that students are an integral part of the Minka. The more people we have who can brainstorm ideas the better," Janet says. "The students are more tech savvy and can add that to the mix. I also think that students can learn a lot from us older folks. It makes for a good mix and as we know, it takes a village."



"I think that students are an integral part of the Minka. The more people we have who can brainstorm ideas the better." —Janet Kilbane

# ROBIN ARNOLD

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Robin Arnold is a Clinical Quality Improvement Analyst for Deaconess Clinic—a nonprofit healthcare system that has been serving 26 counties in three states (IN, IL and KY) for more than 125 years. Robin serves as the data analyst for the GWEP project and is in charge of gathering, analyzing and presenting all GWEP data for Deaconess and USI. The purpose of the program is to improve health outcomes for older adults by developing a healthcare workforce that maximizes patient and family engagement by integrating geriatrics and primary care models.

Robin is invigorated by working with the older population. She is drawn to the knowledge and wisdom the elderly brings. As one ages, existing surroundings can seem obsolete to some but remaining consistent within those surroundings is very important for living-in-place. Being part of the Minka Advisory Board is very exciting for Robin because she wants to be instrumental in leading change for older adults. The Minka house allows accessibility to smart technology centered on health and wellness and provides innovative ways to empower navigating our ever changing environment.

Since we all will be impacted by the aging process, Robin would love to see the Evansville community embrace this project. Seeing more student involvement would be amazing, “everyone will be affected by aging, whether it is your grandparents or parents getting older so it is important to have a grasp of what this means when you are younger,” Robin said. Being involved with the Minka will increase awareness around aging and provide a platform to cultivate cross generational collaboration.



"Everyone will be affected by aging, whether it is your grandparents or parents getting older, so it is important to have a grasp of what this means when you are younger."  
—Robin Arnold

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# QUENTIN MAYNARD

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Dr. Quentin Maynard joined the Social Work Department at USI as an assistant professor in 2019. His research interests focus broadly on older adults with physical illness and the psycho-social and spiritual concerns as they approach the end of life. In fact, his research specifically focuses on the older adult’s conception of a ‘good death’. Outside of USI, Quentin enjoys spending time with his family, working in his new garden (trying to keep those pesky plants from dying) and kayaking.

Like most people on campus, Quentin noticed the tiny home and was curious to know about it. After speaking with colleagues, he realized that it would be a fantastic way for him to get involved. This past spring, he was part of the first simulation at the Minka, and he thoroughly enjoyed working with other departments. He described the simulation as a stressful, but low stakes environment for students because they had the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them in a realistic environment. The simulations at the Minka give students the opportunity to practice what they learn in class, which is a big reason why Quentin would recommend students to participate.

Quentin would love to see students join the Minka Advisory Board. He explained that "The Minka Advisory Board is a fantastic way for students to be involved with different people, learn how to interact with professionals and explore ideas beyond the content that is learned in class."



"The Minka Advisory Board is a fantastic way for students to be involved with different people, learn how to interact with professionals and explore ideas beyond the content that is learned in class."  
—Quentin Maynard

# TIM MAHONEY

By Thomas Engels, Intern

After spending 33 years as a professor at USI, Tim Mahoney retired as an instructor emeritus of economics. Tim became a professor two years after USI became independent from Indiana State University, so he watched the University transform into what it is today. He really enjoys being out in the community and listening to people talk about how USI was growing early on in development. Although retired, Tim is still teaching a finance course part time and is active advising local organizations such as the Small Business Development Council and Habitat for Humanity. Tim meets with students on campus to discuss this course and questions related to their interest in investing. Students meet with Tim from time-to-time on the USI campus.

Tim believes building a sense of community is very important to see at the Minka. He hopes this project brings people together to create a home environment to extend life. Once the project is over, Tim thinks the Minka can be used as a headquarters for ideas and a place for people to grow together. Researching new technology which can help improve people's lives is an exciting area to explore with the Minka house. Tim is also very interested in encouraging human interactions and giving people individual attention.

Learning from the different advisory board meetings has helped enhance the way that Tim thinks about aging. He has been able to fine tune his ideas about mental, family and physical aging. Furthermore, exploring the idea of advance care planning is something that many people should consider. One of the most important lessons that Tim has learned is "anything can change in a matter of seconds, so it is important to be prepared."

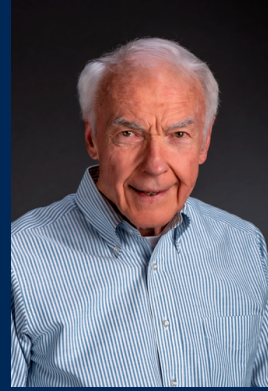
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# ADAM TENNANT

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Adam Tennant is an Assistant Professor of Engineering who teaches undergraduate and graduate classes at USI. When the Minka was constructed in the Fall of 2018, some of Adam's classes were heavily involved with the construction site. His soil mechanics students took samples to test, and his construction estimating students documented the labor, equipment and productivity for several of the construction activities. The students were able to interview the crew that built the Minka and adjust their textbook knowledge to the real world experience. In his annual project management master's course, students use the Minka as an example to create a detailed project management plan including schedules, budgets and risk management features.

This Spring, some students from his Civil Engineering Design and Planning class partnered with GWEP to start a senior design project. Adam said "these students are able to get real world experience by applying what they have learned in the classroom and applying it to an interdisciplinary perspective project." During the process of designing the site plans for a garden and patio/walking path, students were exposed to different ideas of gerontology to help personalize the space for the older population. Adam thinks that having his students exposed to learning about aging can be very beneficial for their future as they will need to design in their careers for a customer with specific requirements. Following the end of the grant project, when asked, Adam sees the Minka being used as a meeting place for different disciplines on campus to collaborate. The Minka can also be used as a showcase to help the local aging community and as a lab space for USI students to explore new ideas.



"Anything can change in a matter of seconds, so it is important to be prepared."  
—Tim Mahoney



"These students are able to get real world experience by applying what they have learned in the classroom and applying it to an interdisciplinary perspective project."  
—Adam Tennant

# REBECCA NEEL

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Rebecca Neel is the assistant director for resource management & user experience at the Rice Library. She has been at USI for about three-and-a-half years and is currently a doctoral student in the Teacher Education Department here at USI. Her first job at USI was the Rice Library's Online Learning Librarian at the tail end of 2017. Neel enjoys eating ice cream, drinking beer and running long distances. Later this summer she is going to Colorado to pace her brother-in-law for part of the Leadville 100 and is super excited for some mountain miles.

As someone with a history of caregiving, Neel knew that being part of the Minka Advisory Board would be a great opportunity. She is very interested in the idea of intergenerational living and learning more about how technology can help people with aging. For the future, she sees the Minka as a space that can be used for meetings, intergenerational conversations and for academic purposes. After learning more about aging, Neel feels more optimistic knowing that researchers are making the aging process better.

The Minka provides an opportunity for students to be a productive member of society while showing support for members in the community. Neel shared "students can be exposed to a lot of knowledge about aging." Which can be beneficial for their future.



"Students can be exposed to a lot of knowledge about aging."  
—Rebecca Neel

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# LAUREL STANDIFORD REYES

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Dr. Laurel Standiford Reyes, Assistant Professor of Psychology, has been at USI since August 2017. She has many personal interests, especially spending time with her family. She also enjoys hiking, gardening and camping, reading, recording family history, quilting and baking.

As a developmental psychologist, Laurel's research is focused on first and last person relationships, so she knew that joining the Minka Advisory Board would be a perfect fit. Laurel's dad also has Parkinson's, so the Minka project is very personal and meaningful to her. Laurel finds the simulations at the Minka offers a unique opportunity for students. Every discipline should know about aging. Everyone is aging, so it is important for people to understand the process. People also need to be more mindful of how they speak to older people, treating them the same as everyone else. Exploring more about community relations and trying to stop isolating elders is also an important topic to Laurel.

She believes that it is important for students to be involved so they can learn about the aging process and cultivate positive attitudes. Utilizing the technology the Minka has can assist in filling gaps and questions many people have about aging.



"Every discipline should know about aging."  
—Laurel Standiford Reyes