



THE MINKA MONTHLY

Official Newsletter for the Minka Learning Lab for Living Well



BOLDER PEOPLE - A GWEP PODCAST

By Leah Flake, bOLDER People Podcast Producer

bOLDER People is a show that explores the dynamic lives of older adults in southwestern Indiana. Guests are asked to share their stories, experiences, opinions and advice which can help us navigate our own way through life. Dr. Katie Ehlman is the host of bOLDER People and Director of the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program. In each episode, she and her guest discuss a variety of topics including academics, influential figures, memories growing up and community involvement, just to name a few. Podcast content also includes a GWEP round up, where short snippets of information are shared around topics such as age-friendly initiatives, evidence-based programs, advance care planning, living-in-place and more!

Each episode features a new guest who has made an impact in their community, such as Dr. Nadine Coudret Dean Emerita of the College of Nursing and Health Professions (CNHP) and the Nursing Program at USI. In our first episode, she and Dr. Ehlman explore the development and growth of the USI Nursing Program, USI initiatives in the community, advice for students and faculty and much more! As Dr. Ehlman interviews Dr. Coudret, they discuss leadership, innovation and the growth of USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions. Academic conversations are punctuated with fun questions like, "What were you afraid to do but did it anyway?" "Listen to our pilot episode to hear about Dr. Coudret's experience rappelling down a cliff!"

The pilot episode of bOLDER People, Dr. Coudret & the Spirit of Innovation, was released in late August. Follow us at bOLDER People on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and anywhere else you stream your podcasts to listen to the pilot and our upcoming episodes! The second installment of bOLDER People will feature Sandy Lasher, SWIRCA board member and retired educator. Sandy is an active member of the community and participates in SWIRCA, CYPRESS, Civitan and more. We cannot wait to interview this bOLDER Person!

The bOLDER People podcast is a facet of the GWEP. Dr. Ehlman took the lead on this project because she is passionate about the GWEP's mission to improve health outcomes for older adults in southwestern Indiana. She hopes for bOLDER People to raise awareness for this cause and what better way to do this than through the voices of older adults in our community?

To learn more about bOLDER People, visit www.USI.edu/bOLDERPeople/podcast

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EDITOR CORNER: Podcast Edition

BOLDER PEOPLE: A MESSAGE FROM THE PRODUCER

By Leah Flake, bOLDER People Podcast Producer

Our Guest Editor this month is Leah Flake. Leah is a communications student who is also the podcast producer for bOLDER People.

Growing up, the number one way my mom justified saying no to me was, “You’ll thank me when you’re older.” As a highly stubborn child, this drove me nuts. My rationale, especially when I hit my teen years, was that I would never learn if I couldn’t go out into the world and make my own mistakes. It’s crazy to me that I would want this, but as a kid you’re often blind to consequences. Inevitably, I made my mistakes, but I know I’m a lot better off because of my parent’s guidance.

After entering adulthood, there’s pressure from society and ourselves to be self-sufficient and “have it all figured out.” In reality, we still have so much more to learn if we want to reach our goals. Whether it be a parent, family member, teacher or mentor, our elders want to guide us towards success. Too often we take for granted the valuable knowledge and stories they have to share with us because we want to believe we know it all. This was part of the inspiration behind the bOLDER People podcast.

At its core, the bOLDER People podcast promotes the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program’s (GWEP) mission, to healthy outcomes for older adults in southwestern Indiana. One way in which we raise awareness for GWEP’s cause is by sharing the stories of older adults. We believe there is power behind each and every person’s narrative and the exchange of this knowledge can educate others and dissolve existing stereotypes. bOLDER People pulls older adults from our community to be interviewed about, well, you name it. We bring in a guest and ask them to tell us their story, and from there, the episode can take any direction. We want to educate our listeners about living-in-place, innovative technology in geriatric care, age-friendly initiatives and all the other exciting things happening in the field. However, bOLDER People strives to preserve the narratives of our elders above all else.

Dr. Katie Ehlman, USI Professor of Gerontology, is the bOLDER People founder, host and GWEP Director. She put together a podcast team and even set up a podcast studio [pictured above]. Also, that is me in the studio photo above [right]! Dr. Ehlman brought me on the team at the beginning of the summer after learning I have experience with Adobe editing applications. Before working on this podcast, I mostly worked with photo and video editing, so sound editing was a foreign experience to me. So far, I have picked up the process pretty quickly, but I am always open to feedback. I can’t wait to release the pilot episode and hear everyone’s thoughts on it!

This month’s newsletter contains articles surrounding the idea and vision for the bOLDER People podcast that I and Katie have created. Enjoy!

If interested in contributing to this newsletter, please contact Thomas Engels at teengels@eagles.usi.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS

USI Community Virtual Meeting:

12 p.m. CT Tuesday, October 5 - USI Community Informational Meeting
11:30 p.m. CT Wednesday, October 13 - USI Community Informational Meeting
To learn more, email Lisa Fournier at lfournier@usi.edu.

Minka Advisory Board Virtual Meeting:

10 a.m. CT Wednesday, October 13 - Zoom
To learn more, email Lisa Fournier at lfournier@usi.edu.

USI Student Support Group at the Minka:

4 p.m. CT Thursday, October 14 - USI Student Support Group Meeting
To learn more, email Maddie Moore at mcmoore1@eagles.usi.edu.

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GERO 101

LISTEN TO YOUR ELDERS!

By Joanne Artz, Assistant Director Emerita and Head of User Services, David L. Rice Library

Advice passed down among generations is usually understood to mean older family members, but “elders” are also defined as leaders or senior figures in a group. In 2007, entrepreneur Richard Branson and musician Peter Gabriel had an idea—since many communities seek guidance or dispute resolution from their elders, what if in our increasingly interdependent world, former global leaders used their collective experience and influence to establish a non-profit to tackle pressing world problems?

Modeled on the role of elders in African village societies, The Elders' founding member was Former South African President Nelson Mandela. Other peacemakers and builders, social revolutionaries and pioneering women, now independent of national government or other vested interests, work strategically in areas where they have unique abilities to make a difference. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, is chair; nine additional members include former heads of state of Norway, Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Liberia. Six Elders emeriti include Jimmy Carter and Desmond Tutu. With political ambition and conflicting interests removed, these Elders' diplomacy can bring more effective solutions.

The Elders focus on six key program areas. They promote ethical leadership and multilateral cooperation with an emphasis on nuclear disarmament. Sustainable solutions to country and regional conflict will only be achieved when root causes of conflict are tackled, impunity is challenged and human rights become primary. Believing healthcare shouldn't generate financial hardship, Elders' global and country-level interventions help leaders take steps to implement Universal Health Care reforms. Climate change threatens catastrophe for generations to come, thus they work to ensure transition to a low carbon economy and worldwide sustainability. Universal justice access must be explicit in core human rights instruments, with states ensuring equitable availability without discrimination. World-wide waves of refugees remind us that unprecedented numbers of people on the move through displacement, voluntary migration and flight from conflict deserve compassionate, cooperative policies, not containment and borders closed in fear.

You can listen to The Elders' advice through their social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Something former Elder Kofi Annan said resonates for GWEP and the Minka Learning Lab for Living Well: “You're never too young to lead and never too old to learn.”



"This advice passed down among generations is usually understood to mean older family members, but “elders” are also defined as leaders or senior figures in a group." —Joanne Artz, Assistant Director and Head of User Services Emerita, David L. Rice Library

TECH & U

TERTILL THE WEEDING ROBOT

By Maggie McNeely, Intern

Gardening is shown to lower stress levels, reduce high blood pressure, increase mobility and strength and is a great source of exercise for older adults. However, appropriate posture can be hard to maintain while participating in various gardening activities, specifically pulling weeds. Tertill the Weeding Robot is the perfect robot for any person who wishes to enjoy all the benefits of growing a garden or maintaining a beautiful landscape, but doesn't want to, or can't do, the backbreaking work of pulling weeds. Tertill is hassle-free because it runs on solar power received from solar panels on its top. To use a Tertill robot, simply place the machine in your garden that is no more than 200 square feet. The Tertill will run in short intervals after basking in the sun for a sufficient amount of time. On average, the robot will garden for 1-2 hours collectively each day.

The design makes it suitable for soil or mulch gardens. Tertill works by tilling up the ground so that weeds are not able to plant themselves. If a couple of weeds do manage to sprout, the trimmer underneath Tertill will snip them off. Tertill can distinguish between weeds and plants by using sensors on the sides and below it. If a plant triggers the sensors on the sides of Tertill, it will turn around and continue tilling in another direction. However, any growth detected by the sensors underneath will alert Tertill to a weed that needs to be clipped. Additionally, an app has been developed that allows you to see the status of your Tertill, update the machine or contact customer support. Stop by the Minka house and see the Tertill in action!



Tertill the Weeding Robot



"Gardening is shown to lower stress levels, reduce high blood pressure, increase mobility and strength, and is a great source of exercise for older adults." —Maggie McNeely, Intern

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT...?

Storytelling – A Missing Piece?

By Ilfa Zhulamanova, Assistant Professor of Education

Storytelling is a natural means of communication between generations and is deeply rooted in culture. Oral storytelling historically used as a surviving tool, allowed generations of people to share cultural knowledge. For example, Manas, a traditional Kyrgyz epic poem from the 18th century, describes a series of events that coincide with the history of the region in the 9th century and passed generation-to-generation using oral storytelling. If one cannot write what is in one's mind, one must remember it. Therefore, in oral cultures, survival of social groups and the perpetuation of their identities over generations has relied on the human memory. As Egan suggests, "if one could code the knowledge to be passed on and embed it in a story form, then it could be made more faithfully memorable than by any other means."

What is special about storytelling is that it requires a more demanding level of active imagination from listeners. When the brain is active, concentration and attention are at work which contributes to information retention and comprehension, recall and affect. On the teller's part, studies have shown that engagement in storytelling activities, appears to stimulate patients with dementia. For example, those who generally have difficulties in telling stories or communicating with other people, do make associations with situations they had previously experienced in their lives. This offers storytellers an avenue for self-expression that frees them from the demands of memory and rational language, which they can no longer master. Therefore, in the fast-paced, high-tech and pandemic influenced world we live today, where mental health, memory and concentration are at stake, storytelling could serve as a creative alternative practice for those with dementia to effectively share their story and serve our students, University members and community-at-large.

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"What is special about storytelling is that it requires a more demanding level of active imagination from listeners." —Ilfa Zhulamanova, Assistant Professor of Education

LET'S TALK ABOUT DEMENTIA LET'S GET DEMENTIA FRIENDLY, USI COMMUNITY!

By Dr. Lisa Fournier, DSL, MPM,
Project Coordinator, Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program

The GWEP has a new initiative to help those in the USI Community navigate the path of dementia. Whether care partner, diagnosed with the disability, family, friend, neighbor, student, faculty member, business, church, first responder or healthcare professional, dementia impacts each of us. In fact, Alzheimer's Disease, one of the many types of dementia, is the sixth leading cause of death, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Whether now or later, it is highly likely you will be around somebody with dementia within your lifetime. How will you know what to do?

Unfortunately, our schools and communities typically do not offer dementia education. Most people learn on-the-fly when they encounter dementia in their life. This causes tens of thousands of spouses, adult children, family, neighbors and friends to take the brunt of figuring out what to do. Sadly, these caregivers are generally unpaid as they take on the role of navigating what they don't understand. It doesn't have to be this way.

We are starting a dementia friendly community here at USI and the surrounding area. A dementia friendly community provides an informed, safe and respectful environment for those experiencing dementia, including care partners. This is accomplished by becoming aware, engaging and most importantly, learning about dementia and unraveling the preconceived notions about the disability. It's not too early to get involved.

We are offering online Informational Sessions on October 5, and October 13 to learn what it means to be a dementia friendly community. There is no obligation! More information can be found at <https://www.usi.edu/minika/workshops>



"A dementia friendly community provides an informed, safe and respectful environment for those experiencing dementia, including care partners." —Lisa Fournier, DSL, MPM, Project Coordinator, Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

DEBUNKING RETIREMENT

By Thomas Engels, Intern

When most people think about retiring, they immediately jump to the financial issues, but retirement is about more than money. After speaking with Tim Mahoney, a retired Instructor Emeritus of Economics and a member of the Minka Learning Lab Advisory Board, I learned that retirement can affect people emotionally, socially and physically.

Retiring from a company a person spent many years with can lead to life becoming overwhelming. Many people use jobs and careers as their identity, but once they retire, they suddenly could have an identity crisis. Tim suggested that people find new hobbies to help combat this issue. Taking part in new things can help fill time and be helpful in creating a new social life. Volunteering can also benefit a person socially and the community at the same time.

Staying in physical and mental shape can be tough for some people. Most people only walk around at work where they stay mentally active by completing tasks and talking to others. Joining a gym can be beneficial to sharpen both the body and mind. People can also increase social activity by going to work out classes with others. My mom has always said, "If you don't move it, you lose it!" So, going on walks with friends can even be beneficial. Talking with other people at a gym, community event or through volunteering is another fantastic way to keep having conversations with others to stimulate the brain.

As a last piece of advice, Tim suggested that people should not make any major changes during the first year of retirement. Finding a new purpose each day and being balanced is an important aspect to figure out during the first year!



"Finding a new purpose each day and being balanced is an important aspect to figure out during the first year!" —Thomas Engels, Intern

LIVING WELL

UNSUBSCRIBE TO YOUR LIMITING BELIEFS

By Lindi Newhard, USI '21 Graduate

The hard truth is you're only as great as your mindset. What limiting beliefs are holding you back from achieving your greatest self? Is it "I don't have time," "I can't," "I'm not good enough" or "I'll be judged?" Whatever it is, destroy it. You can implement change.

The first step in doing so is identifying what beliefs, attitudes or actions you have that hold you back. Determining this can alter your beliefs accordingly and lead to success and opportunity. Not only do your beliefs alter your outcome, but your actions as well.

Gossiping with coworkers or listening to sad songs can alter your inner voice as well. You tend to absorb your surroundings. The phrase "no bad vibes" wasn't just a cheesy saying. You attract like-minded people, so if you're constantly spreading positivity, you'll get that in return. Whereas, being a pessimist, you'll attract other people who are negative as well.

You're more likely to achieve greatness when allowing yourself to be the best version of yourself. Placing blame will keep you stuck in a vicious cycle and erode your mindset. Remember, growth is uncomfortable. It's not easy to raise above and continuously keep a positive, overflowing mindset. However, you can achieve a lot with positivity!



"Placing blame will keep you stuck in a vicious cycle and erode your mindset." —Lindi Newhard, '21

Congratulations to Lisa and the rest of the GWEP team for winning a U.S. National Academy of Medicine award! This award will be used for "Joi" an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Virtual Assistant to improve emotional well-being and independence for people living with dementia (PLWD), especially those living-in-place. View the rest of the project description here:

<https://healthylongevitychallenge.org/winners/joy-for-people-living-with-dementia-using-a-virtual-assistant/>

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SPOTLIGHT

Ilfa Zhulamanova

By Thomas Engels, Intern

Dr. Ilfa Zhulamanova, Assistant Professor of Education has a bachelor's degree in pedagogy and psychology from her home country, Kazakhstan. Before coming to the United States, Dr. Zhulamanova worked with children with disabilities and founded a Waldorf kindergarten for children age 3 to 7. In the United States, she attended Kent State University in Ohio and obtained two master's degrees, preK-12 educational administration and early childhood education, as well as PhD in curriculum and instruction. As a graduate student, Dr. Zhulamanova taught undergraduate courses in the early childhood education program, served as an editorial assistant for the Journal of Family Diversity in Education and engaged in research with children at the Kent State University Child Development Center. She currently teaches undergraduate courses related to child development, home-school-community relations, diversity and equity in education, play, music and movement and language and literacy.

In spring 2021, Dr. Zhulamanova decided to join the Minka Advisory Board to connect with faculty, students and the community. She sees the Minka as a space that can bridge the community and university together and for students to apply skills that they have learned in the classroom. Since Dr. Zhulamanova has a background in early childhood education, one of her areas of research is in storytelling. In the future, she hopes that the Minka Learning Lab can be a space for people to share stories and learn from each other. When asked about aging, Dr. Zhulamanova thinks that people can benefit from learning about the natural aging process. The Minka Learning Lab is an important space for students to collaborate and engage in conversations with other people. Dr. Zhulamanova mentioned that people from different disciplines and backgrounds can create a center for generating ideas and creativity at the Minka Learning Lab.

This fall, we are excited to work with Dr. Zhulamanova to create a storytelling workshop in the Minka Learning Lab for Living Well. More details to come!



Dr. Ilfa Zhulamanova

SOCIAL MEDIA



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PAST NEWSLETTERS

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

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

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

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

Click [here](#) to view the Summer newsletter all about the Minka Advisory Board

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 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.