THE MINKA MONTHLY

Official Newsletter for the Minka Learning Lab for Living Well

AND THE FIFTH SCREAGLE AWARD GOES TO...

By Maggie McNeely, Intern

Mary Scheller is the fifth employee to win USI's Screagle Pride Award, and it is well-deserved! Mary has worked at USI since 2011, providing administrative services for the Center of Healthy Aging and Wellness, as well as other duties for the entire college. Mary began working for the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program in 2019. When asked what her favorite part about getting to work with this organization was, she replied, "I love the energy that the members of the GWEP team bring every day and the fact that our projects are helping improve the lives of older adults and people in our community living with dementia." Those of you who know or may have met Mary know that she is incredibly humble, and prefers to be behind the scene. However, on January 18, she was the center of attention as President Rochon, her fellow team members, her husband and four children (via Zoom) surprised Mary with the Screagle Pride award. When asked how she felt at that moment she said, "I am still in shock about winning this award."

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University of Southern Indiana
Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness

EDITOR CORNER
WELL STANDARDS

By Maggie McNeely, Intern

The Minka Learning Lab for Living Well provides a built environment that works to measure up to the WELL Building Standard. There are seven concepts to the WELL Standard which includes air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mind. All seven standards coincide with the others to keep the health and comfort of the individual at peak performance.

The Minka continues to test smart home technologies in context of the WELL Standard. In terms of air, the Minka makes sure to optimize indoor air quality through our smart air purifier, which automatically adjusts its setting to the detected air quality of the house. Water is a current project for the Minka, as we have a smart faucet, but still need to achieve prime water quality through some type of filtration system. We are also in the process of installing a rain catchment system for watering the garden boxes. The Minka encourages nourishment through its previous articles on healthy eating, as well as cooking demonstrations performed in the Minka kitchen that focus on healthy eating and meal preparation. Lighting is controlled by "Josh," part of the artificial intelligence integrated system at the Minka (see article below). In regards to fitness, we have recently added flower beds at waist level to encourage beloved hobbies and outdoor activities, such as gardening. Comfort is maintained through our smart thermostat. Josh adjusts the heating and air through voice prompts when saying, “Hey Josh, it’s cold in here.” Acoustic comfort can be achieved in the Minka by asking Josh to play relaxing music. Finally, supporting mental and emotional help is of upmost importance. So, we have a smartboard in the living area of the Minka that can project family pictures to remind the occupant of happy memories and of all the people in their life who love them.

The WELL Building Standard is a great tool to use when keeping in mind how we can use design as a solution. Through design, our homes meet us where we are with activities of daily living and the need for an overall healthy lifestyle. As an older adult, the WELL Standard can be used to determine how well the home is environmentally suited for living-in-place. For more information on the WELL Building Standard visit: WELL Building Standard® | WELL Standard (wellcertified.com)

If interested in contributing to this newsletter, please contact Maggie McNeely at mrmcneely@eagles.usi.edu.

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Continuation from page 1: “Even though it is a bit overwhelming for me, I do feel very, very honored to receive this award and grateful to be a part of the USI family.” The USI family is just as grateful, if not more, to have Mary as part of our family!

This Minka Monthly is focused on living well. What does living well mean to Mary? Mary practices living well in her everyday life. She does an exemplary job at staying active and involved. She walks to work most days and plays pickleball with fellow USI employees over her lunch hour. She and her husband, Bob, ride a tandem bicycle during warmer months, and are now pursuing their winter wellness activity of walking the Burdette Trail. She is able to use design as a solution in her home through the necessary renovation of a downstairs bedroom and bathroom that is also wheelchair accessible for a loved one who once required it.

Congratulations Mary on the Screagle Pride Award! Thank you for being such an amazing member of the Screagle family!

"Even though it is a bit overwhelming for me, I do feel very, very honored to receive this award and grateful to be a part of the USI family." - Mary Scheller

CIVIL ENGINEERING DESIGN STUDENTS PARTNER WITH THE MINKA TO IMPROVE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

By Dr. Adam Tennant, Assistant Professor of Engineering

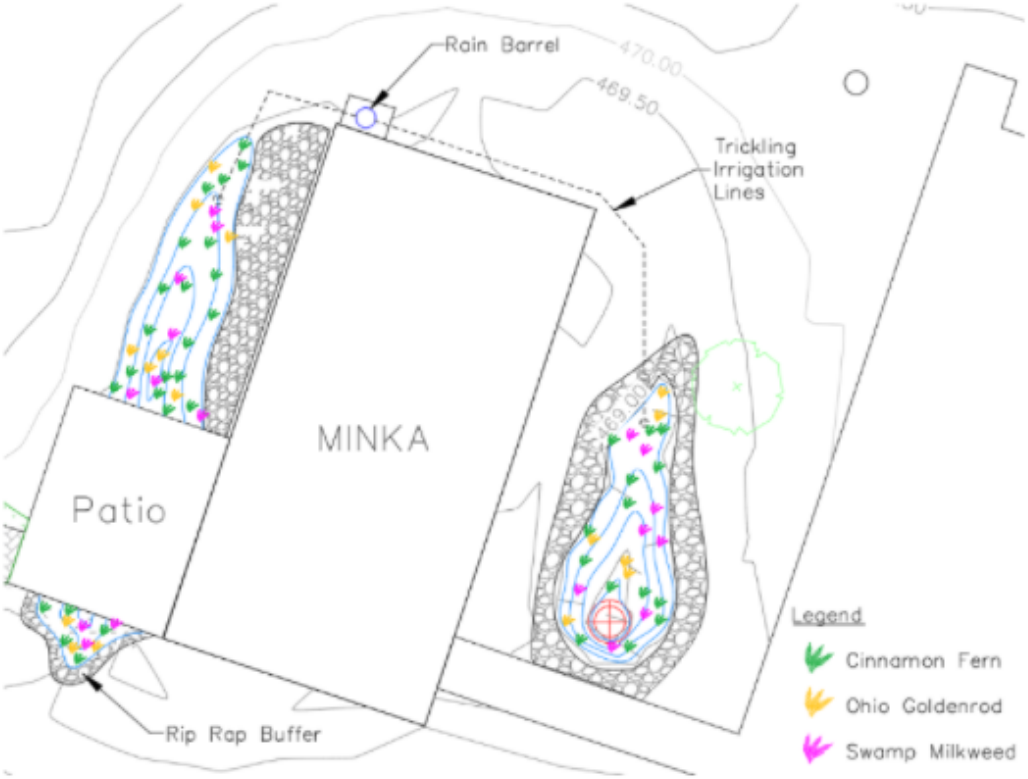
No one can argue with the plethora of data that supports the aging in place concept. The current pandemic has yet again provided us with evidence that the warehousing of the elderly is illogical. The Minka learning lab focuses on the exploration of holistic care relating to aging in place. Many factors pertain to this care but one foundational piece is the built environment. Great attention has gone into the Minka design thanks to Dr. Bill Thomas' Group and the USI design team members - from the structural foundation to the light switches all to support the living-in-place goal. Due to budget and time constraints, the original project ended at the walls, largely leaving the exterior built environment a blank slate.

In the Fall of 2021 three civil engineering students Brayden Bultman, Daniel Moss, and Trevor Meier reimagined the exterior area around the Minka building in their senior design project under their advisor Dr. Adam Tennant. They kept to the overall goal of the living-in-place concept and designed a safe and healthy way for the user to have exposure to the outdoors to engage their bodies and minds. Additionally, they applied the skills they obtained in the general and civil engineering curriculum by completing a full site design that included, but was not limited to, a full set of plans, surveys, specifications, design calculations, and a construction estimate.

The students developed a rain garden plan utilizing the existing topography around the Minka as seen in the figure below. They worked with USI Biology Professor Dr. Edith Hardcastle in selecting appropriate native plants to handle both the wet environment and be friendly (low maintenance, free of thorns, and non-poisonous) to those living-in-place.

"The current pandemic has yet again provided us with evidence that the warehousing of the elderly is illogical." - Dr. Adam Tennant, Assistant Professor of Engineering

The senior design group also was involved in developing an enclosed walkway that has already been constructed adjacent to the Minka. Similarly, the plan is for this walkway to have native plants surrounding it to provide a safe outdoor space for those aging in place. From an instructional point of view, the Minka learning lab provides a rich opportunity to explore curriculum-based knowledge applied to the living-in-place concept and the real world.



"From an instructional point of view the Minka learning lab provides a rich opportunity to explore curriculum based knowledge applied to the aging in place concept and the real world." - Dr. Adam Tennant, Assistant Professor of Engineering

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Support Group for Student Caregivers

By Taylor Goffinet, Intern

Do you or someone you know have a loved one who has dementia? Are you or a family member a caregiver for your loved one with dementia? If so, we want you to know there are options here on campus to help you or anyone you know that has a loved one with dementia. Every month on the second Thursday, there is a Dementia Care Partner support group meeting held via Zoom. These meetings are free for all to attend, and we would love for more people to join and share their stories and get their feelings out.

These meetings are held by GWEP student intern Taylor Goffinet. She is trained through the Alzheimer's Association and has experience with a loved one having dementia. In the month of January, we only had one person attend the meeting, but we received great feedback and hope to have even more people join us for the February meeting. As stated earlier in this article, these meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month from 4 to 5 p.m. central. However, in the month of March, this meeting will be held on the third Thursday of the month as the normal meeting time conflicts with USI's spring break.

"These meetings are free for all to attend, and we would love for more people to join and share their stories and get their feelings out. " - Taylor Goffinet, Intern

We would love for you to share the word and join us yourself for these monthly care partner support meetings. This is a safe place for all, and we will gladly welcome anyone to share their experiences and even advice! If you are interested or have any questions please feel free to reach out to tegoffinet@eagles.usi.edu. For more information about the group and how to attend click here.

GERO 101

THE POSSIBILITIES WITH A BUILT ENVIRONMENT

By Karla Diekemper, MBA, LNHA Instructor in Gerontology

Each day, many of us carry out our very normal tasks of the day with little thought. As we age, our mobility, vision and hearing, response time and our memory can place a toll on our daily tasks, making them more challenging to perform safely. Many of these daily tasks are necessary for us to perform to be able to continue to live at home independently. The loss of the ability to perform these tasks can make it necessary to have assistance at home, possibly a family member or an informal caregiver. It can also put us at a higher risk to need to move into a more formal residence, such as an assisted living apartment or a skilled nursing facility.

Living-in-place is a national movement that provides resources, education and other assistance to enable older adults to remain in their homes as they age. The design or layout of the home plays a large role in safe navigation. For instance, the removal of throw rugs and extra furniture reduces obstacles. After all, it is reported that around 67 percent of all elderly falls occur from individuals tripping, not from a height (medalerthelp.org). Rearranging of furniture to create a more open-plan living situation eases navigation from one room to another.

A primary focus of technology for the older population is monitoring. Monitor their actions, their food consumption, their medication, etc. Of course, this is hopefully only being done in the best interest of the individual, it is important to keep in mind that we need to simultaneously respect the privacy of these individuals. One example of this in smart home technology is in terms of bathroom safety.

The room in every house that everyone is most vulnerable in is the bathroom, not just in terms of privacy but in terms of vulnerability to falls. The most common room to fall in your house, second only to stairs, is the bathroom (medical guardian). This is why it is revolutionary to have smart home technology that can detect falls without wearing pendants or having invasive cameras. Instead, the technology uses sensors to keep track of individuals, but will only display their body outlines using dots, or what they call Point Cloud Technology.

"Living-in-place is a national movement that provides resources, education, and other assistance to enable older adults to remain in their homes as they age" - Karla Diekemper, MBA, LNHA Instructor in Gerontology

A good example of these special sensors is Vayyar home sensors. (Vayyar Home | Fall Management Solution) This maintains safety as well as privacy.

As discussed prior, it is important to monitor that your loved ones are taking all of their medicines at the right time at the right dosage. This type of medication management can be aided with medicine dispensers that pair with apps to let the care partner know whether or not the medicine was taken and at what time. Dispensers also include locks that automatically unlock at the correct time of day and may flash lights, have an alarm go off or chime to let the person know it is time to take their medicine.

Artificial intelligence continues to develop with advancements in smart home devices, enabling older adults to live in place for as long as possible. Explore some of the latest advancements by scheduling a virtual tour of the Minka Home located on the University of Southern Indiana campus. https://www.dwell.com/article/9-smart-home-devices-for-aging-in-place-5528881a

"Artificial intelligence continues to develop with advancements in smart home devices, enabling older adults to live in place for as long as possible." - Karla Diekemper, MBA, LNHA Instructor in Gerontology

TECH & U

JOSH AI

By Maggie McNeely, Intern

At the Minka, we have three levels of artificial intelligence; Alexa, Josh and the prototype Joi. Most are familiar with Amazon Alexa and all the questions she can answer and small tasks she can do, such as play music or answer what time it is. The second tier of AI is Josh, an integrated smart home controller. Josh serves many functions and can support what it might be like to live-in-place with a virtual assistant for everyday needs. Josh controls the lighting, the fan, the shades, cameras, music, doorbell, a thermostat using voice, visual or sensor technologies.

One of the things that makes Josh the next level of AI is that he understands more natural language. If you want Alexa to perform a task, say her name and instruction (“Alexa, tell me the weather.”). Whereas, with Josh, one can speak more plainly and naturally. This is helpful for older adults with dementia who may forget the nitpickingly precise commands. An example is when operating the thermostat simply by saying, “Hey Josh, it’s cold in here.” To which he will reply, “Okay, changing the thermostat to 74 degrees.” Another feature that Josh possesses is being able to understand and complete multiple tasks at once. This means that when you are ready to leave your home you can give him a list of actions such as, “Hey Josh, turn off all the lights, stop playing music and turn off the fan.” He will then do all of those actions in the order that you spoke them. Now you might be wondering, if Josh is the second tier of artificial intelligence in the Minka and he contains all those features, what is it that the third tier can do?

"This can be of use especially for caregivers who are not always able to be at the house of the person they are providing care for." - Maggie McNeely, Intern

This would be Joi, a prototype to show how AI and reminiscence therapy intervention can be used to help an older adult shift a feeling. It can be prompted not only by words ("Hey Joi"), but also by movement, such as the lack of or swaying. In the future, as technology improves, AI will be able to sense behaviors and help in a way personalized for the older adult living-in-place.

LIVING WELL

REGRETS, I HAVE A FEW

By Barbara George, Minka Advisory Board member

The title, like the words of the song, seems to speak to me as I ponder the built environment of home to help with the issues of living-in-place as I am engaging with entering my eighth decade.

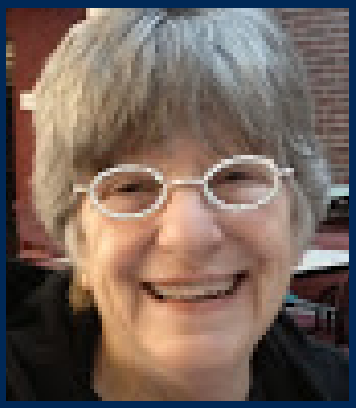
Visiting the Minka Learning Lab for Living Well and being introduced to all the “design learning process” tools and systems, which are being tried and incorporated to assist people as they confront and negotiate the issues of the aging of body and mind, has given me great hope and confidence that many people who have vast experience in the field will provide solutions to the needs of all of us as years and limitations accrue.

Age adaptation of furnishings and tools of living have been considered, by the designers and implemented on. The use of AI for support is genius, and uses the potentials of technology , especially as an interface with family and health care providers. Progressive alterations, in the future, of the available living environment as perhaps memory/cognitive and physical abilities shift and decline (build basic and add on for current changing conditions) is once again considering the changing landscape of the users in the designing and building of the home environment.

One of the key considerations which seems to be of great importance to the well-being of residents of “green small house” concept for elders is community. While all their physical needs and safety aspects are met, the progressive constricting of engagement with others seems to be a major element as functionality in their lived experience wanes. We can see that for sure in the giving up of the car keys, for so many, limiting independence is a major shift in the direction of a sense of freedom, and it seems to continue to constrict.

My ideal last residence seems to be that of a small affordable community of Minka style houses; single story homes surrounding or attached to a main unit which has availability of community dining, meeting rooms for activities, library (perhaps on a university/college campus) with intergenerational residents (perhaps staff/interns).

"In the future, as technology improves, AI will be able to sense behaviors and help in a way personalized for the older adult living-in-place." - Maggie McNeely, Intern



"Care partnering is considering each other equally in health, wellness and care." - Barabara George, Minka Advisory Board member

Also, with available storage, for those treasures so difficult to let go of, nearby. Similar to current CCRCs, and cohousing communities, but with more affordable buy-in.

My regret: I am sorry I did not make decisions earlier - how have I become so close to 80?

LET'S TALK ABOUT DEMENTIA

LET'S TALK ABOUT DEMENTIA 2022!

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

The GWEP is pleased to announce registration for Let's Talk about Dementia 2022 or LTAD22 is now open! This annual webinar is hosted in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, Greater Indiana chapter and the Greater Kentucky/Southern Indiana chapter as well as the Dementia Friendly Communities of Rockport, Petersburg, Tell City, and USI Community. According to Dementia Friendly America, a dementia friendly community is "a village, town, city, or county that is informed, safe and respectful of individuals with the disease, their families and caregivers and provides supportive options that foster quality of life. Joining means our community is engaging in a process to become more dementia friendly by educating individuals, businesses, and organizations in the area." Learn more about these dementia friendly communities and how you can be a part here.

The LTAD22 has a number of learning sessions on the agenda:

- Dementia Friendly Community Overview
- Alzheimer's Disease 10 Warning Signs by Alzheimer's Association
- How to become a Dementia Friend in Your Community by Area Agencies on Aging, SWIRCA & More & Generations
- Getting Your Ducks in a Row by Hawkins Elder Law
- Healthy Living and Nutrition by USI Faculty
- Financial Planning by Lincoln Financial Advisors
- Hospice and Palliative Care by AseraCare, an Amedisys Company

If you, a family member, neighbor, or anyone else you know has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease or another dementia, please join our free webinar on February 23. The information that is presented in these sessions is essential for planning and preparing for quality of life. Living with dementia happens all around us. Decide to live well.

"If you, a family member, neighbor, or anyone else you know has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease or another dementia, please join our free webinar on February 23." - Lisa Fournier, DSL, MPM, Project Coordinator, Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program

USI GERIATRICS WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

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PAST NEWSLETTERS

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SOCIAL MEDIA

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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.