Dance and Alzheimer’s Disease

Freemasons Foundation

RESEARCH IMPACT REPORT

September 2016
Thank You

The University of Auckland and Carlene Newall de Jesus give continued thanks to the trustees of the Freemasons Foundation for their ongoing support of the Centre for Brain Research and the research on dance activities for Alzheimer’s Disease. Please accept our gratitude for your continued generosity in allowing this innovative research to carry forward.

Financial Input

In April 2015, the Freemasons Foundation pledged $126,000 to be paid over four years to fulltime PhD candidate Carlene Newall de Jesus to support the study of dance for Alzheimer’s Disease.

Summary of Outcomes and Impact

Carlene has continued to work towards the intervention study phase of her research. As yet there are no quantifiable research outcomes to report, but as the research moves into the next phase of recruitment and data collection, this will change.

Research Activity

In August 2016, Carlene Newall de Jesus was signed off by the University of Auckland Board of Graduate Studies as succesfully completing all provisonal year goals and receiving confirmation of Doctor of Philosophy registration. In June 2016 ethical approval was granted by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee for the planned intervention study.

Carlene has been fine-tuning the details of the study design which will be carried out in the first half of 2017 and will begin recruitment for this in the coming months. The innovative design of the study will employ a range of qualitative and quantitative measures to provide a unique depth
of insight and rich data on cognition, wellbeing and details about the dance activities. Testing on measures including the originally developed observational scale has begun and trial sessions have been carried out with older participants to further develop content for the intervention.

Carlene has also been working on synthesising findings from previous research into a searchable table to compare a very large range of variables across the field and highlight the current gaps and restrictions. Alongside this, a comprehensive literature review is being written which highlights these findings.

**Some images from a recent practical session at Selwyn Village, led by Carlene.**

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**Research Outputs**

**Completed talks and activities describing work supported by the Freemasons Foundation:**

1) Presentation of ‘Insights to Teaching Dance for Older Adults’ to activities staff at Selwyn Retirement Village (July 29th, 2016)
2) Teaching of ‘Dance for Older Adults’ practical session to residents of Selwyn Retirement Village (August 23rd, 2016)

Invitations for future talks and activities describing work supported by the Freemasons Foundation:

1) Research presentation for international guest of The University Of Auckland (October 1st, 2016)

2) Research presentation at Tempo Talks as part of Tempo Dance Festival 2016 (October 12th, 2016)

3) Research presentation at Beijing Dance Academy, China (November, 2016)

4) Workshop presentation at Beijing Dance Academy, China (November, 2016)

Research Outcomes

Outcomes will be reported as the research moves into the next phase of recruitment and data collection.

(Future) Impact

The current research continues to progress towards a rich understanding of how dance may impact cognition and wellbeing for older adults with cognitive impairment and provide insights into the use of creative innovative therapies for this group.

It is exciting to keep a focus on firstly contributing quantitative findings of the benefits of dance on cognition and wellbeing, secondly capturing an insight into the dance experience of older adults with cognitive impairment and thirdly examining the specific dance activities for this group. The three strands of research will allow findings from this project to guide and shape how dance can be used to beneficially impact the lives of New Zealand’s ageing population.
FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Ellie Gray | Manager, Strategic Donor Relations
Alumni Relations and Development | The University of Auckland

T  DDI : +64 9 923 2687| M: +64 27 774 4100
E  e.gray@auckland.ac.nz

Private Bag 92019, Auckland | University House, 19A Princes Street, Auckland