

Dotsa Bitove  
Wellness Academy



# The Bitove Academy Research Newsletter

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This Newsletter is brought to you by the Bitove Academy Academic  
Advisory Board Research Subcommittee

## Alzheimer Society of Canada Research Grant

We are thrilled to announce that we (Drs. Christine Jonas-Simpson RN; PhD, Gail Mitchell PhD, Sherry Dupuis PhD and Pia Kontos, PhD) are the successful recipients of an Alzheimer Society Research Program (ARSP) Research Grant (\$118,901.40) from the Alzheimer Society of Canada (ASC) for our project entitled: "Musical Engagement and Relational Dementia Care: Evaluating Knowledge Translation through Research-Based Documentary".



This project aims to provide a better understanding of how persons living with an Alzheimer's or related dementia (ADRD) experience our innovative music curriculum at the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy, as documented in short and full-length research-based documentaries. The documentaries will provide visual examples of relational caring concepts translated into practice, with enormous potential to strengthen understanding and actions that are consistent with this philosophy, leading to the betterment of care and quality of life for persons living with ADRD and their family members. Despite numerous studies on the effectiveness of music on outcomes such as reducing anxiety, agitation, or pain, there is little research on the *actual experience of musical engagement* for persons living with ADRD. Researchers have also not explored musical engagement with a focus on relationships, musical embodiment and intergenerational learning.

This research will involve an intergenerational music project with high school students from North Toronto Collegiate Institute. We will be introducing this project in October with an interactive concert performed by the students. In addition, participants will create a musical composition on the meaning of music in our lives with our resident Grammy Award winning musician, Simon Law.

We are excited to get started! Currently we are waiting for ethics approval from the University Health Network.

**Fun Fact:** Did you know the theme of the month at the DBWA is a research theme emerging from our qualitative research?

## **Relational Caring Study**

We are currently working on our study about experiences of relational caring with our Dotsa Bitove Academy Community. We have interviewed 27 people in total including persons who live with memory loss and who attend the DBWA, family members as well as Personal Support Workers, staff, artists and volunteers affiliated with the DBWA. Participants were interviewed by researchers to discuss their experiences of relational caring. Focus-groups were also held offering the opportunity to discuss experiences of relational caring at the DBWA. We have now completed data collection and have pulled together different iterations of a research-based documentary to share our findings. Several important ideas have emerged that reflect the value of relational caring and how this philosophy is experienced. For example there are themes that reflect a feeling of family, love and belonging at the DBWA. The idea of being “free to be me” was also discussed among research participants. We look forward to sharing more very soon. We would like to film one more day for background shots to finalize the research documentary. We are looking to launch the films and are getting advice as to the best time to do this from film and television experts. We are also continuing our analysis of the data for more themes that have the potential to inform relational caring theory and practices. This research was funded through the Lorraine Johnston Foundation.

## **Intergenerational Study**

Nadine Cross RN, MHSc is the Principal Investigator for this study that aimed to understand the experiences of intergenerational learning between elders who live with memory loss and high school students. This study is titled, *Intergenerational Learning: A Pilot Study using the Arts to Create a Space of Possibility*. The purpose of intergenerational learning is to provide opportunities for elders who live with memory loss and high school or university students to develop deeper understandings of shared experiences, values, and meaningful relationships. A workshop involving the arts to create an expression of the elder’s life story was attended by participants. Participants were then asked to speak about their experiences in a focus-group. Researchers created a video to show their findings from this study. We are working on some final refinements before we share this video with our Bitove Community. This study was funded by the Mary Ferguson Pare Award.



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**University of Waterloo Urban Planning Graduate Student Master's Thesis:**

"Examining how physical and social environments influence livability for individuals with memory-related disorders: A case study of the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy"; by Stephanie Avon-Lacey.

This study investigated the relationship between the built environment and quality of life for those living with Alzheimer's disease and other memory-related disorders. The student researcher examined the physical and social environments of the DBWA, and explored how these elements influence the experience of members attending an academy.

This study is part of an emerging body of research and professional practice that aims to create better design environments for aging populations and for persons with memory-related disorders. Stephanie is defending her thesis later in September and will share her findings in order to contribute to our program evaluation.

**Northern College of Acupuncture in Association with Middlesex University Master's Thesis:** "The experience of shiatsu for formal and informal care-partners of persons with Alzheimer's disease and dementia"; by Leisa Bellmore.

This study will involve participants who are either formal (PSW) or informal (family) care-partners of persons with Alzheimer's or related dementia (ADRD) who attend the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy (Bitove Academy). A qualitative methodology involving a descriptive, exploratory study will examine the experience of shiatsu for care-partners of persons with dementia. Shiatsu is a gentle, non-invasive Japanese type of massage. Participants who choose to volunteer to be in this study will attend a workshop in which they will learn self-shiatsu for stress management and short, simple shiatsu techniques that they can use with a person living with dementia. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted at two and six weeks after the workshop. Interviews will be conducted to explore their experience of the shiatsu and how, if at all, the shiatsu impacts their relationships. Once we have ethics approval to move ahead with this study we will send out an invitation to participate in this study.

**PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The framework for program evaluation has been developed with external consultants and experts from Collaborate Academic Practice (CAP) at UHN. Data collection has been conducted with the assistance of York University Graduate students and Research Associates, Nadine Cross and Lesley Donovan. Currently we are in the process of data analysis. We will be developing a survey to compliment the data we have already gathered. A report will be sent out in the next newsletter.

**RESEARCH BASED DRAMA**

**Hold the date:** A Performance of **Cracked: new light on dementia**, a research-based drama cocreated with members of the Bitove Academic Advisory Committee, will be held at MaRS auditorium on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 at 7pm. This performance is being hosted by the York-UHN Academy and sponsored in part by Mosaic Home Care Services. We are excited that a reception and Bitove Academy Art Exhibit will accompany this performance at 6pm. Please see a trailer explaining the creation of the drama here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-hS2CnGmjs>