

## **Summary of Clark Street Community School Pilot Project**

June, 2015

The goal of this pilot project was to present high school students with the material in the dementia curriculum developed by the WI Department of Health Services (DHS), supplement the curriculum with Music and Memory and community engagement activities, and learn from the students and teachers how to best present this information in a school setting.

The DHS, and its partner the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute (WAI), met in April of 2015 with the school principal and several teachers to discuss the possibility of piloting the dementia curriculum as an option for their end of year three week intensive seminar. The concept was well received by the principal and teachers alike. Both teachers and students vote on the topics that will be included, and the dementia curriculum was voted in as one of the offerings. Twenty four students signed up for the seminar.

### **Seminar Highlights**

- Students watched the movie 'Alive Inside', a documentary on the effect of music on people with dementia living in nursing homes.
- Dr. Dale Taylor spoke to the class on 'Music and the Brain'.
- Presentation of the curriculum by Clark Street teacher Rick Evans occurred over three class periods.
- Visit to Oakwood Village nursing home to interview residents who participate in the Music and Memory program about their thoughts and feelings on music. Participated in a music therapy session with Oakwood residents.
- Trips to the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center included the opportunity to hold a real brain and watch a brain autopsy, interview Dr. Mark Sager who is founder of the WAI, learn about the Wisconsin Registry for Alzheimer's Prevention study, experience a typical visit for a WRAP research participant, and have graduate students share the research they are doing around dementia.
- Middleton is a dementia friendly community and Mark Optiz from the City of Middleton spoke to the class about why being dementia friendly is important and what Middleton has done to become friendly.
- Created personal playlists, such as those used in the Music and Memory program, and presented them to the class.

### **Outcomes**

The results of the pilot test were very positive. Both students and teachers had a good experience with the seminar, and this topic will be expanded to a 15 week seminar at the Clark Street school in the fall. Several students that attend this seminar signed up for the fall and the seminar is at full capacity.

Pre and post tests were developed to measure student learning and a survey was created to gauge student interest.

*Pre and Post Test Results on Dementia Knowledge* (total completed pre and post-tests= 11)

- Of the completed pre and post-tests, the number of correct answers increased by 30% in the post-test.
- The most notable improvements came with the questions regarding whether dementia was a normal part of aging and whether Alzheimer's disease was a fatal illness. The improvement in the scoring of these questions, indicate the curriculum has reduced misunderstanding about dementia, and therefore reduces some of the stigma of the condition.
- Of the 15 completed pre-tests, 10 responses stated the student knew someone with dementia.

*Survey Feedback* (total completed surveys=9)

- Halfway through the pilot (prior to the research visits), a survey was completed by nine students, rating the activities that took place thus far as their favorite:
  - Watching the Film *Alive Inside* (3)
  - Dr. Dale Taylor visit (3)
  - Creating Personal Playlists (2)
  - Curriculum Activity "What is dementia?" (1)
- After all seminar activities had been completed, handling the brain and brain autopsy were the most popular.

The survey also captured responses to the question "Would you recommend this seminar to others?"

- "Yes because I learned a lot and love it."
- "Yes, it's very interesting and you learn a lot."
- "Definitely! This is an extremely great seminar to take if you want to learn more about the disease."
- "Yes, because it is really interesting and exciting to learn about."
- "Yea, it's really interesting."
- "Yes, it's cool to know how to take care of someone in your family with dementia/Alzheimer's."
- "Yes, even if you are not interested in healthcare or a career helping old people this seminar is still pretty interesting and so far we've learned a lot of useful information."
- "No I would not. This seminar is very boring overall. I very much dislike this seminar."
- "I guess."

*Community Partner Feedback*

- Dr. Sager approached DHS to say he enjoyed his time with the students and would like to participate again.
- The researchers and graduate students all enjoyed their time with the high school students and are willing to repeat these hands on opportunities for future classes. Discussion of

having a “Research Day” at the UW when all schools using the curriculum would have the opportunity to visit has begun.

- WAI also felt the experience was valuable and will participate again and help promote it to other schools. The WAI oversees 45 memory diagnostic clinics that would be willing to provide educational support and experience for schools unable to send kids to Madison. These clinics exist across the state.
- Visiting the ‘Memory Café’ at Captain Bill’s restaurant could not be scheduled this time, but this group is looking forward to being included in the fall. Memory cafés exist in many parts of the state.
- The statewide Alzheimer’s Association and the Alzheimer’s and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin are eager to become community partners in the fall.
- A grant was submitted for expansion of the Music and Memory program to the remaining nursing homes in the state and has included funding to connect 50 nursing homes with local high schools in helping to implement the program. The students can help the nursing homes with the technology end of using iTunes and Ipods, that is the part nursing homes struggle to do.
- The project was presented on June 23 to Secretary Kitty Rhodes of DHS and was very well received and has the full support of the Department.
- Dementia friendly communities initiatives across the state, along with county-based dementia care specialists are excited for the curriculum and will be reaching out to their local schools to advocate for use of the curriculum once it has been approved and made available by DPI.

## **Conclusion**

In response to the successful pilot project, the Department of Health Services and the Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Institute fully support this curriculum and submit it to the Department of Public Instruction requesting that it be made available statewide. The final curriculum will be flexible, and will be appropriate for both middle and high school, with only one slide being high school appropriate only. The curriculum can be covered in one or two class periods, or if a school has time and resources to include some or all the community engagement opportunities they will be available to them through this curriculum.