



**Volunteers with cognitive impairments engage in greeting card making for improved well-being**



# Current Knowledge

Health  
Benefits

Supports  
&  
Barriers



Facilitation  
for  
Participation

Meaningful  
Activity

Dementia & Volunteer Activity



## **Purpose of Study**

**Exploring how individuals with mild to moderate cognitive impairment may benefit from participating in a volunteer activity based on art and creativity.**

# Method of Approach

## Population

Assisted  
living at  
Quaker  
retirement  
community

## Intervention

Creative  
activity of  
card making



## Exit Interviews

Four questions  
group discussion



## Passing the Torch

Effort continues

# Cards for Community

Offered for people in need



# Creating Success

Simplicity

Autonomy



Within Reach



Pre-Set  
Scene

Enablement

Visually Intuitive

# Survey Questions

1. Volunteering/helping in today's activity made me feel ...
2. What I enjoy most about volunteering/helping in today's activity is ...
3. When I help out, I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about myself.
4. I would like to continue/stop volunteering/helping

# Results: Discovered Themes

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- **Community Service**
- **Social Interaction**
- **Self-Efficacy & Confidence**



# Theme about Community

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- *The part I enjoyed most about this is sharing and giving. I like it.*
- *It is really nice to do something helpful instead of just sitting and playing Bingo.*

# Continued Community Theme

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- *I think it's such a wonderful thing to make these for other people. I haven't done anything like this in such a long time.*
- *I think that the people who get these cards will be so thankful.*

# Theme: Social Interaction

- *Just being able to work with you people [has been the most enjoyable part of today]. It gets lonely in my room.*
- *It is so nice of you people to come and spend time with us.*



# Theme: Self-Efficacy & Confidence

- *I didn't think that I had the ability [to make a card]. This surprised me.*
- *This is interesting to me.*
- *This is something to stir up my imagination.*
- *I gave a card to my friend. She's lonely because her husband has passed and she had no children. She looked like she appreciated it. I think she was happy to have it.*



# Outside Perspectives

## Reviews from other Community Members

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- *Thanks so much for that group! I appreciate using the cards they make!*
- *One of my friends, his wife passed away and I was happy to find the cards because I didn't have one.*
- *I've taken numerous cards and it's so nice and helpful.*



# What Did We Learn?

- With cognitive impairment helping others may add quality of life
- Success with supportive environment



- Community benefits from efforts
- Prime motivator: company of others

# Limitations of Study

Small sample size

Only female participants

Qualitative data alone

No access to medical records



# Age UK Survey 2014

- Age UK survey found 1 million people 65+ describe themselves as always/often feeling lonely.
- 41% say TV or pet is main form of company.
- Feel cut off from society.
- Stated volunteering may prevent loneliness.

*Gerontology News* September 2014 GSA

# Future Research

- Explore how various stages of diagnosed dementia may respond and benefit from this type of intervention.
- Understand full impact of volunteer activity in lives of participants.
- Efforts to quantify quality of life, and physical /cognitive effects in individuals participating in service.
- Affects on progression of dementia.



# What We Can Make Happen

**ART** **Connect** greetings!!!

Happy happy Birthday

Sorry for your loss

**SOCIAL** Get Better **Feel** **CREATE** **Purpose**

Be Well **Express** yourself

*Make Someone Happy*



Linda Hunt, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA  
Professor, OT Program  
Director, Gerontology Program  
[lhunt@pacificu.edu](mailto:lhunt@pacificu.edu)

Hannah Frankamp, MOT, OTR/L  
[fran7033@pacificu.edu](mailto:fran7033@pacificu.edu)

Allison Grosh, MOT, OTR/L  
[allisongrosh@gmail.com](mailto:allisongrosh@gmail.com)

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