

# INSTITUTE FOR ENGAGED AGING Newsletter

Walk Edition | Issue No. 3 | Winter 2024 | Vol. 5



## IEA News

Join us as we explore the highlights of the SC-ADRC Symposium hosted by the Institute for Engaged Aging.

## Get Involved

Celebrate the season with giving! Your holiday donation helps improve the lives of older adults across South Carolina.

## Research Spotlight

Researchers focus on digital biomarkers, using gait and cognition to improve early detection of cognitive impairment.



We soon will welcome winter, enjoy the holidays with families and friends, and celebrate the start of another year. As we look to the New Year, it is often a time to reflect and consider resolutions, whether it is to continue good habits or to try some new things.

A common New Year's resolution is to get more exercise. In that spirit, the theme of the newsletter is movement. We are excited to share some research and other happenings in the IEA that might inspire you to get or keep moving.

Please be well and happy this holiday season. We are grateful for your support that sustains our important work.

— **Lesley Ross, Ph.D.**  
Director of the Clemson  
Institute for Engaged Aging



## Learn more about the IEA

### Who we are

*The Institute for Engaged Aging (IEA) discovers, develops and disseminates best practices for engaged aging through research, education and community outreach.*

The IEA empowers older adults to remain active and connected within their families and communities. We focus on finding and sharing the best ways to support and enrich the lives of older adults through research, education and community outreach.

The IEA collaborates with Clemson faculty and local organizations to address the diverse needs of older adults. Our goal is to ensure everyone can enjoy a fulfilling and engaged life, regardless of their social, economic or health situation.

With the aging population expected to nearly double by 2030, the IEA is dedicated to serving as a valuable resource for older adults and their communities in the state of South Carolina.



Research - PACT Study



Community Outreach - Health Bingo



Education - "Avoiding Grandparent Scams" Talk

# Highlights from the SC-ADRC Symposium: Clemson University Institute for Engaged Aging hosted the event



Left to right: Administrative Core Director Lesley Ross, Ph.D.; Clinical Core Director Nick Milano, M.D.; Core Director Steven Carroll, M.D.; Neuroimaging Core Director Jane Joseph, Ph.D.; Cellular and Molecular Biomarker Core Director Dariusz Pytel, Ph.D.; Data Management and Statistical Core Director Paul Nietert, Ph.D.; Research Education Component Core Director John Absher, M.D.; Outreach, Recruitment and Engagement Core Director Alyssa Gamaldo, Ph.D.



Goldie Byrd, Ph.D., Professor in Social Science and Health Policy in the Wake Forest University School of Medicine.



Paper Presentation by Hye Won Chai, Ph.D.

The second annual South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (SC-ADRC) Symposium brought over 125 researchers to Greenville in early November 2024 to share research and opportunities to collaborate across the three participating universities: Clemson University, Medical University of South Carolina and University of South Carolina.

Clemson's IEA hosted the event, which also included guests from the Alzheimer's Association and Lucent Diagnostics and a keynote presentation from Goldie Byrd, professor of social science and health policy in the Wake Forest University School of Medicine.



Left to right: Elizabeth Hudak, Ph.D., and Angie Sardina, Ph.D., at the SC-ADRC Poster Session.

## IEA faculty selected for GSA AGES program Program provides mentorship and publication support

We congratulate Hye Won Chai, Ph.D., research assistant professor in the Clemson University Department of Psychology and Institute for Engaged Aging, on her selection to the Gerontological Society of America's Advancing Gerontology through Exceptional Scholarship (AGES) Program for the 2024-2025 period.

The AGES Program provides mentorship, support and co-authorship opportunities for early career faculty members. By the end of the year, each AGES Program participant will submit a research article for publication to a peer-reviewed journal.



"I am very excited to be a part of the AGES program to collaborate and network with other scholars who are also studying aging and health!"

- Hye Won Chai, Ph.D.  
Research Assistant Professor

# Give the gift of health

## Your holiday donations make a difference

As the holiday season approaches, we are reminded of the importance of giving back to our community. At this time of the year, your generosity can have an even greater impact, helping to support critical research, educational programs and community outreach that meet the needs of diverse older adult populations in the state.

Your contribution to the *Institute for Engaged Aging (IEA)* and the *South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (SC-ADRC)* will promote initiatives enabling older adults to stay engaged in their family and communities regardless of social, economic or health status.

**MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY!**

**Online donations** can be made at:  
[clemson.edu/centers-institutes/aging](https://clemson.edu/centers-institutes/aging)

**\*\*Please check that the designation field on the website lists:**  
"Institute for Engaged Aging."

**Mail checks to:**  
Clemson University Foundation  
P.O. Box 1889  
Clemson, S.C.  
29633-1889

Be sure to include "Institute for Engaged Aging" in the memo line to designate your gift!



### TAX TIPS.

Your financial contribution can be documented as a charitable tax deduction.

**DONATE**  
*today*



**SCAN QR Code**

Thank you for your generous donation!

Your support means everything to us and the community we serve.





Mobile Resource Health Fair @ Blue Ridge Community Center

## IEA & SC-ADRC Outreach

### Discover healthy aging resources

Institute for Engaged Aging (IEA) and the South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (SC-ADRC) staff and faculty are dedicated to enhancing social engagement, increasing health knowledge and strengthening connections between older adults and the service providers in their community.

Engaging older adults is central to the IEA mission. We aim to build a strong community and encourage active participation. Through the different events and activities hosted by the IEA and SC-ADRC, you can:

- Learn about preventive care and how to maintain your health and well-being.
- Discover valuable information about the IEA and our events.
- Explore current research opportunities that could benefit your health.
- Ask questions and gain insights into healthy aging and staying active.

We look forward to connecting with you, sharing resources and providing information to enhance your quality of life. Don't miss out on these engaging and informative upcoming events!



### Follow Us

#### Clemson Institute for Engaged Aging

Engage with us through Facebook. Keep posted about our upcoming events and news!

## Upcoming events

We look forward to see you at our events to learn more about the IEA, ongoing research studies, and ask questions about healthy aging.

### Sunday, January 12, 2025

#### Focus Group

- Bible Way Church of Atlas Road
- Time: To be determined. Please contact the IEA for more information
- 2440 Atlas Road, Columbia, S.C.

Stay tuned for more details and be on the lookout for upcoming events throughout the year! Visit IEA website to learn more.

## Holiday closing

### Schedule reminder

As the holiday season approaches, we want to remind everyone of the Institute for Engaged Aging upcoming adjusted schedule.

### Winter break

#### Closed:

From Monday, December 23, 2024 to Friday, December 27, 2024

#### Open:

Monday, December 30, 2024

### New year's day

#### Closed:

Wednesday, January 1, 2025

#### Open:

Thursday, January 2, 2025

### Martin Luther King Jr. day

#### Closed:

Monday, January 20, 2025

#### Open:

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

# Help yourself while helping others

## We are looking for dedicated volunteers just like you!

There are many ways to be involved with the IEA, including joining one of our research studies. Your involvement in research is essential for advancing treatments and prevention for Alzheimer's disease and promoting healthy aging.

Your involvement can help us improve the lives of older adults in South Carolina. Including our friends, family and community.

To learn more, e-mail us at: [IEA@clemson.edu](mailto:IEA@clemson.edu).

Or visit our website at [www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/aging/](http://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/aging/).

### PACT STUDY

**Study coordinators:** Kimberly Scoles and Constance Bennett

**Location:**  
Seneca and Greenville, S.C.

**Study website:**  
[pactstudy.org](http://pactstudy.org)

**Objective:** The goal of Preventing Alzheimer's with Cognitive Training (PACT) study is to reduce the risk of dementia through computerized brain training exercises.

### ACTIVE MIND STUDY

**Study coordinator:**  
Esle G. Aguilar

**Location:**  
Seneca, S.C.

**Study website:**  
[activemindstudy.com](http://activemindstudy.com)

**Objective:** This study will determine if computerized brain training exercises can improve everyday abilities and reduce the risk of dementia in persons at a higher risk.

## New year, better balance

### Join our fall prevention classes!

As we step into the new year, it is the perfect time to focus on your health and well-being. One of the most important steps you can take to stay safe and active is to reduce your risk of falls.

The IEA will offer FREE new classes beginning in January 2025, and we invite you to take part! Fall prevention classes feature the evidence-based, A Matter of Balance (MOB) program to reduce the risk of falls. The program will include group discussions, exercise training, mutual problem-solving, role-play activities and homework assignments.



Take the first step toward a healthier and safer 2025!

**No cost, FREE classes!**

 **When?**

January 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30  
(Every Tuesday and Thursday)

 **At what time?**

From 1:30 to 3:30 PM

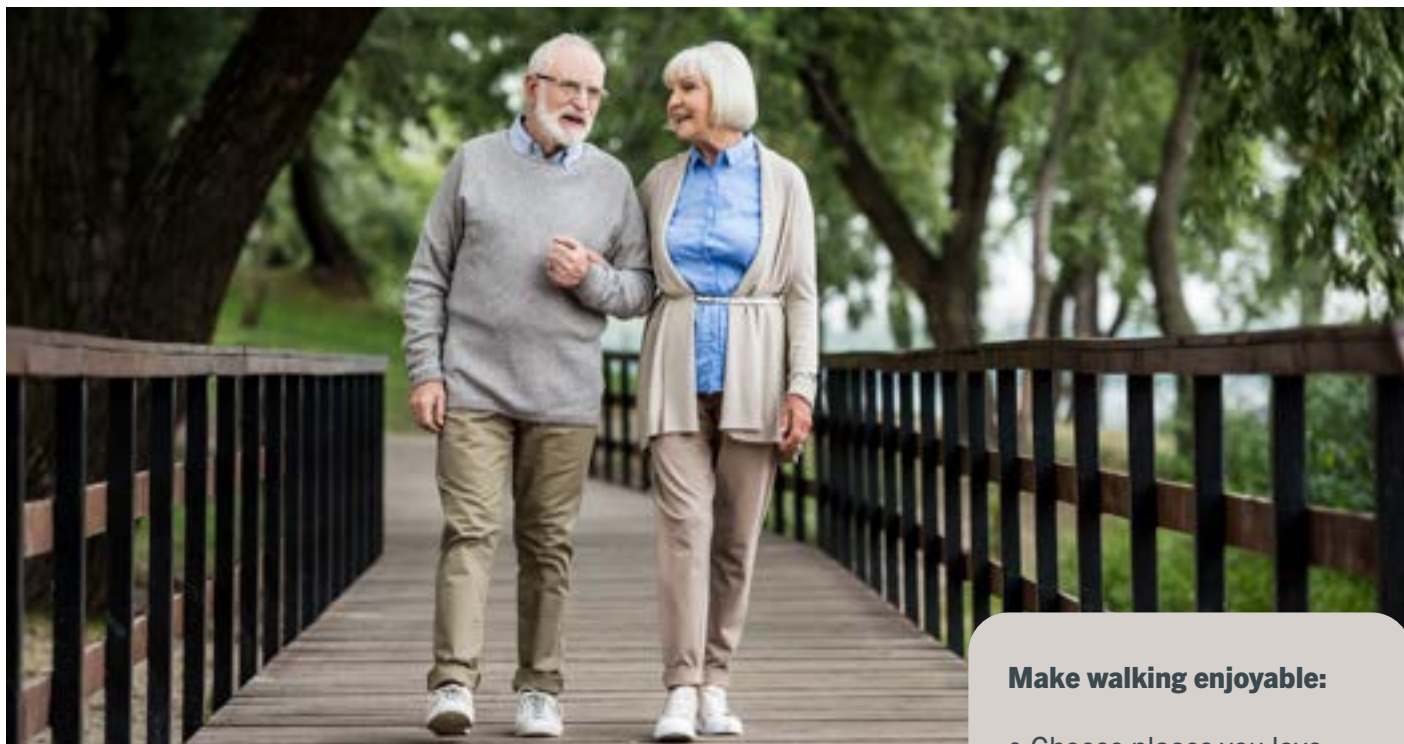
 **Where?**

Clemson Balance Lab  
IEA (5th floor)  
Oconee Memorial Hospital

Sign up today! Please e-mail us at [IEA@clemson.edu](mailto:IEA@clemson.edu) to secure your spot.

# Want to add more movement to your day?

## Walking is a simple and effective way to get moving



**Why is physical activity important?** Exercise and physical activity are good for just about everyone, including older adults. No matter your health and physical abilities, you can gain a lot by staying active.

Walking is the most popular form of physical activity — and for good reason. It requires no special equipment, can be done anywhere — and, best of all, it's free.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), incorporating regular walking into your routine offers numerous health benefits. It can help lower your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. It strengthens bones and muscles, supports healthy weight management and can even improve your mood.

Make walking enjoyable by choosing places you love, like a local park or

even a shopping center. You can invite a friend to chat along the way or listen to your favorite music (just be sure to keep the volume low enough to stay aware of your surroundings).

When planning your walks, be mindful of safety. Walk with a companion when possible, and always carry a phone and identification. Let someone know your route and expected time. If walking in the dark, wear reflective clothing or a vest to increase visibility.

With these simple tips, you can easily make walking a fun, enjoyable and highly beneficial part of your daily routine!

### Make walking enjoyable:

- Choose places you love (e.g., local park, shopping center).
- Invite a friend to walk and chat.
- Listen to your favorite music, but keep the volume low to stay aware of surroundings.

### Prioritize safety when planning walks:

- Walk with a companion when possible.
- Always carry a phone and ID.
- Let someone know your route and expected time.
- Wear reflective clothing or a vest if walking in the dark to increase visibility.

National Institutes of Health. (2016, March). The benefits of walking. <https://testdomain.nih.gov/2016/03/benefits-walking>

# Human Movement Study

## Gait and digital biomarkers for early cognitive impairment detection



The Human Movement Biomechanics Lab directed by Reed Gurchiek, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Bioengineering and faculty affiliate in the Institute for Engaged Aging at Clemson University, has several studies underway to explore movement, gait and its ability to detect cognitive impairment.

Previous studies have shown the effect of cognitive impairment on gait has multiple factors. Current research builds on these findings using practical tools that can be widely implemented. Gurchiek's research aims to improve early detection by augmenting other biomarkers, like blood and neuro-imaging, with a digital biomarker platform, which captures sleep, gait and cognition in the free-living environment.

Gait is defined as the walking pattern in humans.

Gurchiek's research studies use assessments of cognitive, neuromuscular, cardiovascular and motor function across both in-clinic and

community environments. The studies are recruiting participants with a range of cognitive and neuromuscular function to develop digital biomarkers of cognitive impairment. These biomarkers include gait symmetry and variable gait pattern from step to step.

The use of remote monitoring with in-clinic tests of strength, cardiovascular fitness and body composition presents an innovative approach. Remote monitoring is important because cognitive performance changes throughout the day. Monitoring gait continuously, outside the laboratory, presents an opportunity to capture the effect of fluctuations in cognition on gait. The long-term goal is to develop

digital technologies for mobile health monitoring and facilitate their use in the routine care of older adults and aging science. This research is based on a new multidisciplinary collaborative effort across multiple departments and researchers with a broad range of expertise.





Left to right: Clemson University undergraduate student Jack Chamblee; Director of Human Movement Biomechanics Lab and Assistant Professor of the Department of Bioengineering Reed Gurchiek, Ph.D.; Clemson University graduate student Haley Hentnik



Gurchiek's work has been funded by a variety of institutions including the National Institutes of Health, Prisma Health, Clemson University, the Carolina Center on Alzheimer's Disease and Minority Research and the South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. A multi-disciplinary approach is necessary to deliver on his vision, enabling healthy aging, early detection of cognitive impairment and promoting mobility throughout the lifespan.

To learn more about this critical research, please visit Gurchiek's lab website at <https://cecas.clemson.edu/humbl/Home.html>



## Looking for a place to walk near Seneca?

### Discover the Oconee Memorial Hospital Community walking trail!

In 2014, Oconee Memorial Hospital (OMH) proudly opened its community walking trail, a valuable resource for employees, patients and visitors alike. The trail, located on the front lawn of the hospital, was the result of a dedicated employee-led initiative, made possible by more than \$26,000 in employee donations to the OMH Foundation.

This collaborative effort also saw the support of community partners who helped provide resources for creating a safe, well-lit space where all can walk, relieve stress and enjoy the benefits of physical activity.

Stretching a quarter of a mile, the paved walking trail stands as a testament to OMH's commitment to health and wellness. Open to the public, the trail offers a peaceful environment for all to take a break, enjoy some fresh air and focus on their well-being.

We invite you to come and try this trail!





## Trail Mix Recipe



14 servings



10 mins

Trail mix is a great snack anytime. It is quick and easy to make as well as customized to your taste. Trail mix travels well, makes a fun gift and lasts about a month when stored in an air tight container.

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups of unsalted raw nuts (almonds, walnuts, peanuts, pecans, pistachios, macadamia nuts)
- 2 cups of dried fruit (apricots, dates, cranberries, cherries, mango, pear, pineapple, raisins)
- 2 cups of your favorite crunchy snack (mini pretzels, whole grain cereal like mini shredded wheat, apple chips, popcorn)
- ½ cup of optional special add-ins (toasted coconut, chocolate chips, pumpkin seeds, pre-packaged or homemade granola)

### DIRECTIONS

1. Mix all ingredients together in one bowl until well blended.
2. Using a ¼ cup to measure, portion into individual containers or add entire batch into one air tight containers. Enjoy!

# It's Time to Challenge Your Brain!

## Word Search Puzzle

J	L	S	T	R	E	N	G	T	H	E	I
R	A	R	G	U	S	O	O	D	N	X	G
M	U	S	C	L	E	S	E	M	R	A	Y
G	E	R	E	V	B	L	O	N	W	U	M
E	X	E	R	C	I	S	E	J	H	E	T
N	U	T	R	I	T	I	O	N	L	A	W
O	P	H	E	A	L	T	H	Y	E	C	O
I	G	W	A	T	E	R	G	W	H	A	R
T	S	I	R	K	E	N	S	Y	E	L	K
A	E	B	P	G	C	A	R	D	I	O	O
R	L	O	B	A	L	A	N	C	E	R	U
D	A	O	Z	E	N	V	W	U	S	I	T
Y	W	A	L	K	I	N	G	T	H	E	E
H	E	C	Q	U	E	S	T	P	E	S	H

### WORD LIST:

HYDRATION

SWEAT

STRENGTH

NUTRITION

GYM

WALKING

MUSCLES

WORKOUT

BALANCE

CARDIO

CALORIES

HEALTHY

EXERCISE

WATER

# WOULD YOU RATHER

We put together a few “would you rather” questions to get you thinking about your favorite ways to stay active. Whether you are a casual walker or a dedicated runner, there is no right or wrong answer, just a chance to reflect on how you like to move. Are you ready? Let’s see which options you would choose!

1. Would you rather go for a walk or a run?
2. Would you rather take a walk in the mountains or by the beach?
3. Would you rather take a 30 minute walk with your pet or with a loved one?
4. Would you rather walk outdoors in nature or on a treadmill at the gym?
5. Would you rather walk in the rain with an umbrella or in the heat of summer?



## Caroline Shreve

Research Specialist

1. Walk / 2. Beach / 3. Loved one / 4. Outdoors
5. Rain



## Brianne Stanback

Research Project Manager

1. Walk / 2. Mountains / 3. Loved one / 4. Nature
5. Heat of the summer



## Haley Hentnik

Clemson University Graduate Student

1. Go on a walk / 2. Walk on the beach / 3. With a loved one (my mom specifically) / 4. Outdoors in nature / 5. In the rain with an umbrella

## Join the PALS Network!

Partners and Advocates for Lifespan Science (PALS) Network connects individuals of all ages interested in participating in research at Clemson University!

To sign up, please call (864) 916-6220, e-mail [IEA@clemson.edu](mailto:IEA@clemson.edu) or complete the survey on our website.

*Please consider joining!*



SCAN QR Code

## Best places to walk in S.C.

South Carolina is full of scenic spots perfect for walking and exploration. Whether you are looking to enjoy the beauty of nature or get some exercise, there is always a great trail waiting for you.

Here are some walks to explore:



- **Swamp Rabbit Trail**  
Greenville & Travelers Rest, S.C.
- **Doodle Trail**  
Easley & Pickens, S.C.
- **South Tibwin Hiking Trail**  
McClellanville, S.C.
- **Sesquicentennial State Park**  
Columbia, S.C.
- **Francis Beidler Forest**  
Harleyville, S.C.



- **Hunting Island State Park**  
Hunting Island, Beaufort, S.C.
- **Palmetto Trail**  
Throughout South Carolina

# IEA Faculty & Staff

## Welcome, Angela and Brianne!

We are happy to introduce the newest members of the IEA team! Please join us in welcoming Angie Sardina, Ph.D., and Brianne Stanback, Ph.D. We are excited to have you on board and looking forward to the incredible contributions you will bring to our team and community.



Angela Sardina, Ph.D., joined the Department of Psychology as a research associate professor at Clemson University in Summer 2024. She is primarily affiliated with the IEA with research interests in preventative approaches to promote cognitive health and function in older adults with and without Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Sardina currently serves as the associate director of the South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease and Research Center (SC-ADRC) and works closely with the outreach, recruitment and engagement core of the SC-ADRC.



Earlier this year, Brianne Stanback, Ph.D., came home to Clemson. A Clemson alumnus, Stanback is a research project manager in the Institute for Engaged Aging. Her primary role is leader of recruitment and retention for the Active Mind trial, though she also contributes to the South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease and Research Center (SC-ADRC) and other projects in the IEA.

Sardina and Stanback both completed their doctorate degrees in the School of Aging Studies at the University of South Florida and are thrilled to be working together again in the IEA.

## Contact us for any additional information!

**Have questions, feedback or just want to say hello?** Our team is here and ready to assist you. Your input helps us grow and serve you better. Please reach out using the contact details below. We look forward to connecting with you!



(864) 916-6220



IEA@clemson.edu



**Oconee Memorial Hospital**  
298 Memorial Drive, Seneca, SC 2967

## Why I participate?

We all have a reason!



June, 2024



November, 2024

We are thrilled to share that more people are joining our studies! Your enthusiasm and participation are truly making a difference, and we are excited to see how the IEA continues to grow.

We are interested in hearing why you participate or would like to be involved in IEA research project.

E-mail us at IEA@clemson.edu to share your "why."