

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of Southern Indiana

Editor's Note: This release and downloadable photo can also be found on our [website](#).

USI to host dementia care training program through state grant

The University of Southern Indiana's Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness is in the first phase of implementing a \$75,000 grant from the Indiana State Department of Health to fund dementia care training for nursing home staff members in southwest Indiana. As part of a two-day training, leading international dementia care expert Teepa Snow will lead a training session at USI on Friday, August 19 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for area nursing home employees.

Snow will share her Positive Approach™ to Care (PAC) training model, which will jump-start a year-long program designed to improve the quality of life among elders with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Twelve nursing homes from Jasper, Oakland City, Princeton, Newburgh and Evansville are participating in the PAC training.

Housed in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, the USI Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness has been under the direction of Dr. Katie Ehlman, associate professor of Gerontology, since its inception in 2008. She said this PAC training will teach area caregivers how to "live in relationship with a changing brain."

"Teepa's training goes beyond the facts about dementia and focuses on skill building, coaching and training," she said. "Her relational approach and hands-on skill techniques offer the interpersonal skills needed to improve quality of life for everyone involved."

Snow, an occupational therapist from North Carolina, has been a presenter during the annual Mid-America Institute on Aging and Wellness at USI.

"This pilot effort will be one of the first of its kind across the nation and will serve as a model for other university-to-community translations," said Snow. "Using this grant provided by the state of Indiana, we will collaborate with teams from local facilities to transfer the awareness, knowledge and skill needed to transform the culture of dementia care. This program, along with all the other efforts in progress, has the potential to make Evansville and the surrounding areas one of America's first dementia competent areas for support and care of those who live with the condition, their families and those who serve them."

Snow's unique model is a "train-the-trainer" program. In the 12-month period following the PAC training at USI, a PAC-certified "coach" and "trainer" from each participating nursing home will conduct a series of in-services for other staff members on a variety of topics related to dementia, including right and left brain, normal and not normal aging, positive approach, changing habits, challenging behaviors and caring for the caregiver.

The instruction at USI will be followed by three hours of telephone support and training review from Snow's staff in North Carolina. USI will also offer ongoing support and resources to help trainers and coaches work with staff in their respective nursing homes.

"Funding for this program trains 24 expert dementia trainers and coaches, two from the 12 participating nursing homes" said Ehlman. "Through this train-the-trainer model, several hundred nursing home staff members will go through the training series, potentially impacting more than 1,000 nursing home residents in southwest Indiana."

For more information about the PAC training or other programs related to the needs of elders, contact her at 812-228-5123 or email mehlman@usi.edu.

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Founded in 1965, the University of Southern Indiana enrolls more than 10,000 dual credit, undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students in more than 80 majors. A public higher education institution, located on a beautiful 1,400-acre campus in Evansville, Indiana, USI offers programs through the College of Liberal Arts, Romain College of Business, College of Nursing and Health Professions and the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. USI is a Carnegie Foundation Community Engaged University and offers continuing education and special programs to more than 15,000 participants annually through Outreach and Engagement. USI is online at www.usi.edu.

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