

**NOMINATION FORM**  
**COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE LEARNING COMPETITION**

Institution: Clemson University

Title of Project: Caring for Others, Caring for Self<sup>SM</sup>

Project Director: Dr. Cheryl Dye

Contact Information for Project Director: tcheryl@clemson.edu

Establishment Date of Project: Spring semester, 2014

Unit That Administers Project: Department of Public Health Sciences

Total Number of Students Involved: 37 students since establishment

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NOMINATED PROJECT

1. For purposes of this competition, the Commission on Higher Education defines service learning as college student learning at any level and in any situation that is *linked* in a direct, hands-on fashion to the resolution of a problem or concern in a target community outside the institution *and is related* to a college course with some type of reflection activity. How does your project meet the parameters of this definition?

In South Carolina, the number of people with Alzheimer's Disease (AD), a leading cause of dementia, is 90,000. That number is projected to increase by 48 percent by 2050 as our state has one of the fastest-growing rates in the nation. AD has no prevention, no treatment, and no cure. One out of three seniors will die from dementia and, as the sixth leading cause of death, it is the only one in the top 10 that is increasing rather than decreasing. Most of the care that those with dementia require is provided by family caregivers, but the stress and burden of caregiving has been linked with declines in caregiver health and an increased risk in their own likelihood of developing dementia. Recommendations to reduce this health risk include helping caregivers learn how to manage their stress, reducing their burden through provision of respite from their caregiving role, and provision of activities that engage the care recipient in order to reduce their disordered behaviors making it easier for their family to care for them.

In response to this need, the project, Caring for Others, Caring for Self<sup>SM</sup> was developed by Dr. Cheryl Dye, a professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences (DPHS). Now in its fifth semester, the program has provided the foundation for a permanent respite program to be established in Seneca, SC. Dr. Dye has been meeting with local citizens and church leaders to institutionalize the program and her efforts have already resulted in raising \$7500.00.

Caring for Others, Caring for Self<sup>SM</sup> (COCS) is administered through the course, Creative Inquiry, which Dr. Dye has offered each semester since Spring semester 2014. Creative Inquiry students have refined, implemented, and evaluated program activities which have two goals - to reduce the stress and burden experienced by family caregivers of those with dementia and to increase cognitive and social engagement of their care recipient with early to mid-stage dementia. The program has been offered in St. Mark's Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church of Ascension in Seneca, Clemson Downs Retirement Community in Clemson, and after hours in the Greenville Health System Memory Health clinic in Greenville. As part of their reflection activities at the end of each semester, students discuss as a group their experiences in implementing the program, identify which strategies worked well, develop recommendations improving strategies where needed, submit individual anonymous written reflections about the project, and develop a poster that is presented at the yearly Creative Inquiry forum.

2. Specifically, which segments of the college/university community does your project involve?

The project is open to undergraduate Creative Inquiry students of any major, but primarily attracts health science students. A doctoral student in psychology, a post-doctoral fellow with the CU/GHS Institute for the Advancement of Healthcare (IAHC) collaborative, and an intern, sponsored through the CU University Professional Internship and Cooperative education program (UPIC), have also assisted in implementing and evaluating the project. Another faculty member in DPHS, Dr. Lingling Zhang, has built upon the project by collaborating with Dr. Dye to conduct semi-structured interviews with 20 caregiver program participants about their caregiving needs in order to assure that the program continues to meet these needs.

3. How many students (specify degree levels to the extent possible) does the project affect?

Since its inception in Spring 2014, 37 students have participated in the project. Students have included sophomores, juniors and seniors.

4. Describe the target community or communities your project serves.

COCS targets family caregivers of those in early to mid-stage dementia and their care recipient residing in Oconee, Pickens and Greenville counties in upstate South Carolina. As of February 2016, the program has served 67 caregivers and 66 care recipients. Several students participating in the program over the past four semesters have also volunteered their free time to provide activities to care recipients while their caregivers attend monthly Alzheimer's Association support groups at Oconee Memorial Hospital in Seneca.

5. Describe your project's effectiveness in helping to solve the problems or concerns in the target community.

The impact of COCS has been measured in several ways. Through observation, we find that the family caregivers and their care recipients have benefited from social support and socialization with their peers. In many cases, the caregivers have continued to meet after the conclusion of the program as they found the peer support to be important to their quality of life. Caregivers have observed that their care recipients were more engaged in activities and experienced more enjoyment from them when in their peer group and that this enhanced engagement extended beyond the conclusion of COCS activities. We found that most caregivers were able to learn several stress management techniques including basic Tai Chi movements, deep breathing, visualization, viewing nature images, and using aroma therapy. In the project, students measure the impact of the stress management techniques on autonomic nervous system activity of the caregivers, specifically their Heart Rate Variability, through use of a biofeedback device. At the baseline and end of the seven-week program, caregivers respond to items on the Zarit Burden Scale to indicate how much stress they feel from their caregiving role, the Caregiver Self-efficacy Assessment, and a Quality of Life survey. With the care recipients, we used a Well-Being Observation Checklist developed by the Cincinnati Alzheimer's Association to determine which creative arts activities and board games were most likely to engage them.

**Quotes from caregivers:**

As a caregiver for my wife, who has dementia, I am always appreciative of all the help and support that I can get. While attending the program, Caring for Others, Caring for Self, both my wife and I enjoyed the company and interaction with others in the same condition that we are in. I was able to learn some stress management techniques, and share stories and comfort with/from others, while my wife enjoyed playing board games and creating art projects. My wife especially enjoyed the interaction with the Clemson University college students, and looked forward to each and every session. We both would like to thank Dr. Dye, her students, and Clemson University for making such a wonderful, and stimulating program available. Bob Ricker

Dear Dr. Dye, Five years ago, I could not have envisioned that I would be a caregiver for my husband. I was 65 years old and he was 67 and just retired from a very successful career. We have been together for over 50 years and have 2 wonderful children and 4 even more wonderful grandchildren. Now five years later my husband is unable to communicate verbally, does not respond to simple instructions and is unable to fix anything around the house. He was my handyman and could fix anything. He was my support and we did everything together. I am delighted and thankful to be participating in the Clemson Program: Caring for Others, Caring for Self. This program has given me courage, compassion and support in this new life we have. The topics introduced are always helpful and stress relieving. Just knowing that there are people who care and want to make a difference for those of us who are caregivers. I look forward to the meetings and hope that there will be continued support and funding to keep this very important program going. Very truly yours, Ruth Benson

My name is Harry Hornburg, my wife came down with memory issues about 5 years ago. At first it wasn't that big of a problem to deal with, just memory issues. As time went on especially these last 2 years, the demands to take care of her has grown greatly with increasing stress on to deal with the increasing problems and understanding those problems so as to deal with them. Your program has helped me cope with the stressful situations that I continually came across dealing with my wife's changing moods and problems, as well as helping me understand what she is going thru. The classes that she attends she seems to enjoy, as I have no trouble taking her to "memory class" as I call it. The singing and games she enjoys as well as the art that they do. For me it gives me a opportunity to talk to other caregivers and learn from them how they dealt with the same issues that I face, it is so helpful. The interaction with you, your staff and students is gratefully appreciated by me as well as the affection that you have shown us all in helping us deal with Dementia. We will always be in your debt. Thank you

6. Describe the degree to which your project enhances student learning while providing specific examples of the service learning activities the college students engage in. Also explain how the service learning activities reinforce or apply what the college students learn in the classroom.

Through participating in this project, students become certified in human subject protection and research protocols, gain experience in data collection, gain confidence in working with older adults including those with dementia, teach caregivers how to manage their stress, and engage those with dementia in creative arts, music, board games and other activities. Students also learn how to summarize the evaluation data they collect, and develop a poster for presenting those results in a university-wide research forum. Not only does the project reinforce what students learn in the didactic portion of their Creative Inquiry course, it also builds on and reinforces content covered in the course, Health Promotion of the Aged HLTH 4300.

***Anonymous student course evaluations; each comment is from a different student in different semesters:***

- I liked how the students were very involved in coming up with protocols and every other aspect of the research. It was also helpful when Dr. Dye tied what we were doing to things we were learning in class.
- Dr. Dye is very enthusiastic about the health of the elderly (and specifically dementia patients and their caregivers) and it was inspiring to be able to see that from a professor- it changed my views on the geriatric population.
- Dr. Dye has an unmatched ability to not only educate students but those in the community as well. Through CI, she provided me with many opportunities to grow as a student and future healthcare professional.
- I thought that Dr. Dye was someone who knew what she was talking about and was extremely passionate about the people we were working with. She made the course information relevant and connected it with many of the things we have learned throughout our major. I also liked that she gave us more freedom to figure out what worked best in the program and we were able to take on a leading role and use all of the knowledge we have learned in college and apply it to the CI program.
- This course taught me a lot about not only research, but also about dementia patients and caregivers. Dr. Dye does a great job of exposing students to the needs of these people and gives us great resources for learning about how we can help deal with these needs. I love the real world experience that this CI offers.
- I really enjoyed how enthusiastic Dr. Dye is about this topic. She truly helped us understand the purpose of doing this work. Having this passion in the background made this course a wonderful experience for me.
- I love how Dr. Dye is so passionate about the topic. You can tell that she wants to make a difference in others' lives and it make the CI so much more enjoyable because of that. I also loved being able to interact with others in the community and knowing that I am helping others.
- Her explanation of why we do each and every activity was very beneficial. Also, just learning about the research process as a whole was excellent for my education.
- The opportunity to work hands-on with patients and caregivers was a wonderful experience. I can relate to people who share similar situations as me. This course was a team-cooperative work which I truly enjoyed.
- I would recommend this instructor to a friend because the lessons and skills you learn in the class will be carried with you for the rest of your life. You get the chance to brighten someone else day and learn how to work with people who have dementia.

7. Is there academic credit associated with the project (not necessary for submission)? If so, please explain the particulars.

Yes, Creative Inquiry can be taken for 1 to 3 credit hours each semester and students may enroll for multiple semesters throughout their educational experience. On average, students choose to continue their participation in COCS for two semesters.

8. If funding is required, how is the project funded and what is the approximate annual budget for the project?

Funds come from the Creative Inquiry program at CU. The approximate annual budget is \$2000 per year.

9. Add any other comments you may have about your project.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77ag9cRg5Ps>,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF\\_yRa5wUS4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF_yRa5wUS4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxnrgO7LBxg>

<http://newsstand.clemson.edu/tv/channel/lectures/clemson-collaborations/>

PDF of Seneca Journal article

Please return this form via e-mail by **February 26, 2016**, to:

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