

CSULB Gerontology Program

Spring 2025 Newsletter

It's a Wrap!

The 2024-2025 academic year was busy! Our students worked hard in their classes and provided many hours of service to the community through service learning, internships, volunteering, and careers in the field of aging. We congratulate them all and give a special shout out to our graduates. Our faculty members continued to contribute their creativity, knowledge, and talent to the CSULB Gerontology Program, professional organizations, CSULB campus, and community at large. Read on to learn more about some very special achievements this year. We thank our alumni, campus partners, community partners, and family/friends who have supported us through another fantastic year.

Top photo - GERN Program Faculty

Bottom photo - GERN Program Alumni



Benefits of getting older

Alexandra Wilkinson's gerontology students compiled a list of the benefits of getting older. What would you add?

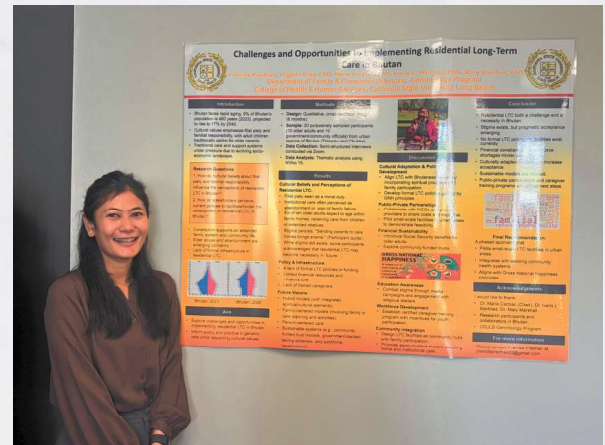


Benefit 1: Senior and Restaurant discounts! Denny's, Dunkin', IHOP, Groceries! And so much more!
Benefit 2: Getting older grants us the gift of wisdom.
Benefit 3: New Accessories: Unlocking new fashion, like walkers!
Benefit 4: Senior community and activities.
Benefit 5: Retiring!
Benefit 6: Grandparenting!
Benefit 7: Respect (most of the time).
Other Benefits: Boarding a Plane First, Medicare, New Hobbies.

Congratulations Graduates!

Premita Pradhan, MSG

Premita completed a thesis to better understand the challenges and opportunities for implementing long-term residential care in Bhutan.



Ellen Wong, MSG

Assisting Residents to Develop SMART Goals for Activities

by Ellen Wong



Ellen completed a directed project to assist activity directors in motivating residents to participate in activities through the development of SMART goals.

Congratulations Graduates: Gerontology Minor

Deirdre Cunningham (Speech-Language Pathology)

I have been accepted into the Fall 2025 Speech-Language Pathology Graduate program here at CSULB! Go, Beach! I have a special interest in research on neurogenic disorders that affect speech across the lifespan and look forward to helping older adults who have acquired speech disorders after a neurogenic event such as a stroke or seizure. This summer, I plan to travel and rest before I embark on my next journey to grad school.

Emily Hart (Kinesiology/Exercise Science)

After graduation I am taking a year off to work and get ready for grad school. The plan is to go on to an occupational therapy program in pursuit of becoming a travel OT and having a long career working with older adults!

Lucretia Hunter (Social Work)

I will be attending the CSULB MSW Advanced Standing Program in June 2025.

Vanessa Kanistanaux (Human Development)

I am interested in applying for the National Council on Aging or the Department of Aging to delve into policy advocacy. I want to use my gerontology skills to help promote awareness of our aging population and build relationships in this area to help communities receive better treatment and living conditions in long-term care, or wherever people live. This passion comes from being a SEIU Long-Term Care union member for many years, and I would like to elevate my platform from being an in-home care provider to an advocate who promotes change on a more in-depth level.

Karen Melendez (Nursing)

My plans after graduation include finding a job working in the critical care unit of a hospital with my bachelors degree of nursing. After some years with patient care experience, I hope to return for graduate school. My favorite memory at CSULB was when I first met all my nursing cohort peers. Everyone was so supportive from the start, and made my learning experience at CSULB all the more fulfilling!

Congratulations Graduates: Gerontology Minor

Judid Mora (Nursing)

After graduation I plan to study and take my NCLEX and look for a nursing job.

Madaline Torres (Psychology)

After graduation, I plan to go back to volunteer with Meals on Wheels and I also plan to look for jobs that are related to my field (Psychology and Gerontology). I would also like to travel a little bit more during the time I have off.

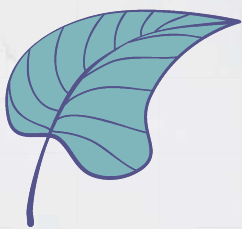
In terms of my favorite memory here, I would say getting closer to my professors has been such an impactful moment for my academic journey here at CSULB.

Daniella Vivas (Health Care Administration)

After completing my undergraduate degree, I plan to pursue a job in healthcare.

Grace Yacoubian (Nursing)

After graduating and passing the boards, I hope to land a job as an ICU or ER nurse by fall! Hopefully there will be time for travel and a climbing trip or two between now and then!



Also graduating with a Minor in Gerontology...

Sahiba Anand (Nursing)

Alina Ashraf (Sociology)

Dana Allyson Bautista (HSC Community Health)

Kiara Chavez (Human Development)

Mariela De Leon (Speech-Language Pathology)

Izamar Flores (Social Work)

Marissa Hernandez (Psychology)

Pallas Lim (Nursing)

Leann Namuco (Nursing)

Brenda Nolasco (Social Work)

Dean Phanpraphou (KIN Exercise Science)

Andrea Romero Ramirez (HSC Community Health)

Jenny Yim (Social Work)



Awards



Premita Pradhan - Graduate Dean's List

Vanessa Resendez - Graduate Student Honors

Carly Hyder - Graduate Fellowship

Cindy Nguyen - Marian Last Endowed Scholarship

Georgette Shobieri - Deukmejian Endowed Scholarship

Katrina Watson - CHHS Outstanding Graduate
(Undergraduate Student)



Photos: On left - Georgette with Deukmejian family members;
On right - Carly (supported by Georgette)

Outstanding Student Citations

Sahiba Anand | Trang Doan | Mary Eng

Izamar Flores | Karen Melendez

Learn Namuco | Rania Rawas

Katrina Watson | Grace Yacoubian

Creative Assignments

Gerontology students know how to think outside the box!

Check out these creative assignments
from Instructor Jesse Archer's classes

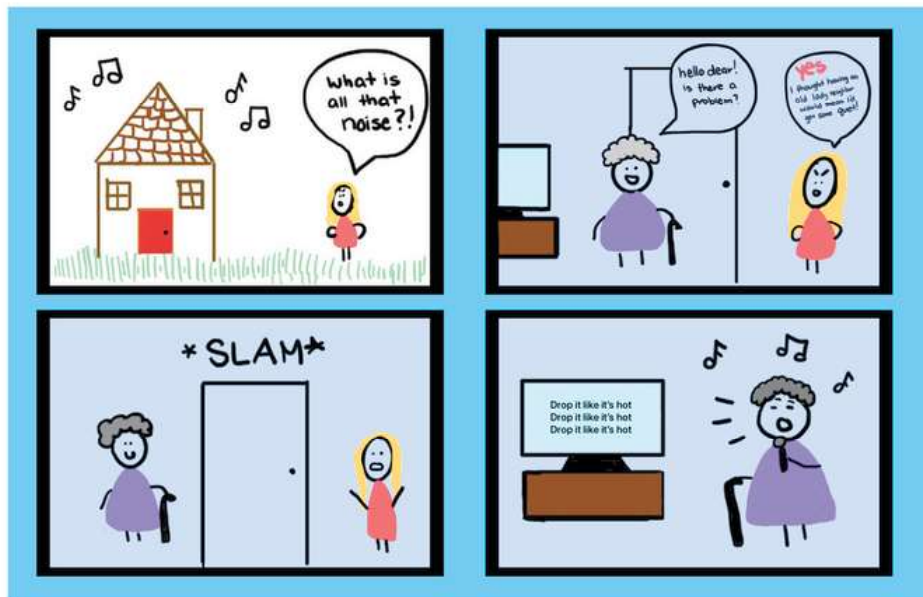


Soft Paws. Strong memories.



Amanda Yee

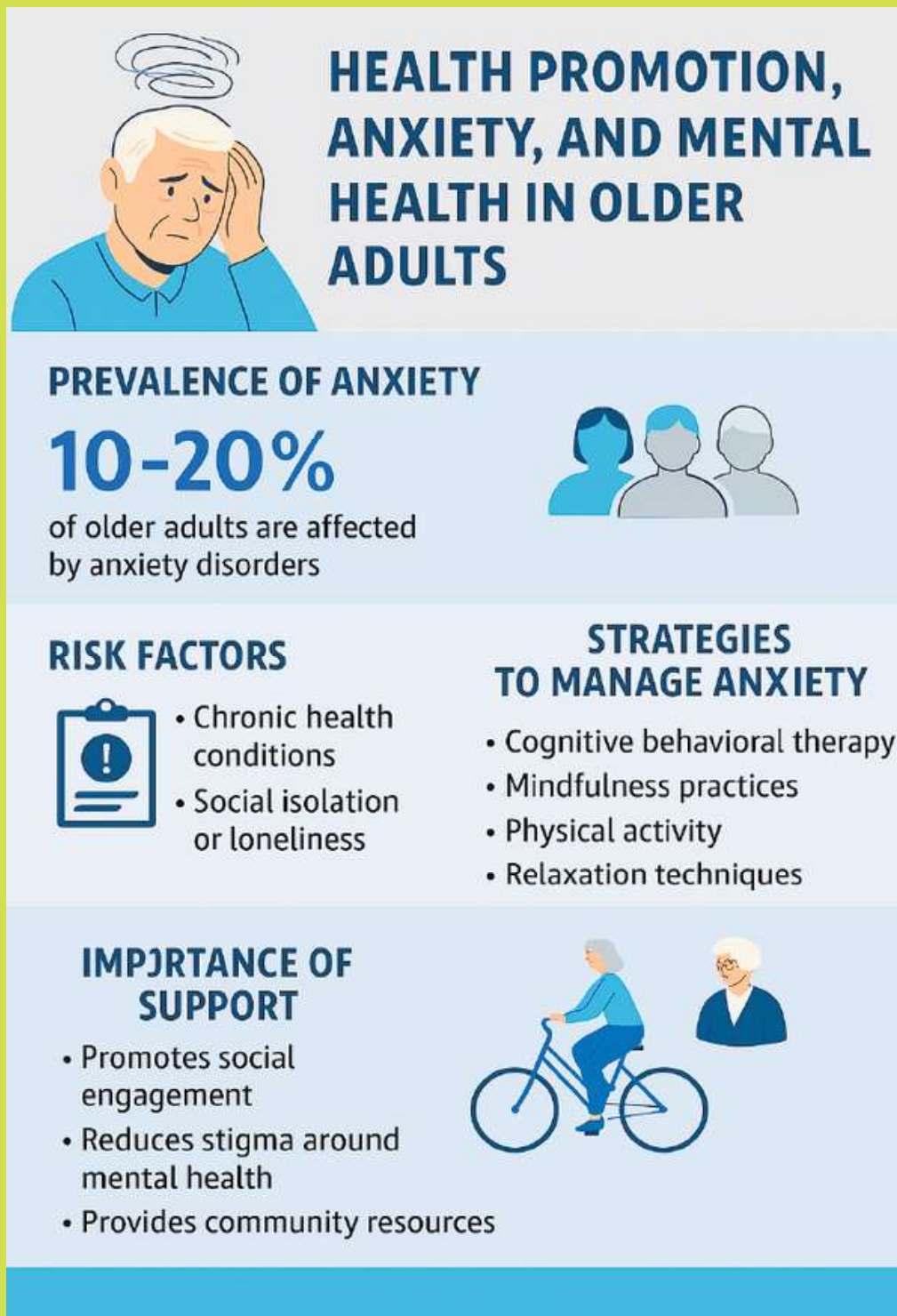
Karaoke Grandma



by Elin Amaro

Creative Assignments

The following infographics were developed by students in Dr. Carpiac's GERN 401 course



by Griselda Perez

A DEEPER LOOK INTO HEART DISEASE IN AGING ADULTS

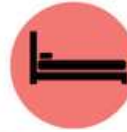
KEY FACTORS TO IMPROVE ON



low sugar intake in
foods



exercise for at least 60
minutes a day
(ex. walking, jogging,
cycling, etc.)



sleeping at least 7
hours or more



A person's lifestyle can greatly determine their overall health. Being inactive for too long or not getting the recommended exercise daily can impact that. So doing something as simple as taking a walk can greatly improve one's lifestyle.



Heart disease ranges from anything having to do with the heart, which if it happens can negatively affect the heart's ability to function.

BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY HEART



more energy



less trips to the
doctor



reduced heart risks
and related strokes



having a healthy diet



Checking in and keeping up with the factors that determine a person's heart health can expand a person's lifespan and save you trips to the doctor!

KEEP UP WITH YOUR HEART!

by Vi Tran

faculty ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dr. Elena Ionescu

Congratulations to Dr. Ionescu, who completed a PhD in Social Work at University of Houston. Her dissertation focused on dementia-friendly community and business engagement.



Dr. Maria Carpiac, Dr. Mary Marshall, & Alexandra Wilkinson, MSG

In collaboration with CSU Sacramento and CSU Fullerton, Maria, Mary and Alex will conduct training for Licensed Program Analysts with the California Department of Social Services in Summer 2025.

Dr. Maria Carpiac & Jesse Archer, MSG

Gerontology Alum, Kathy Flachmeier, published her thesis!

Who Am I Without My Partner; I've Lost Half My Whole."

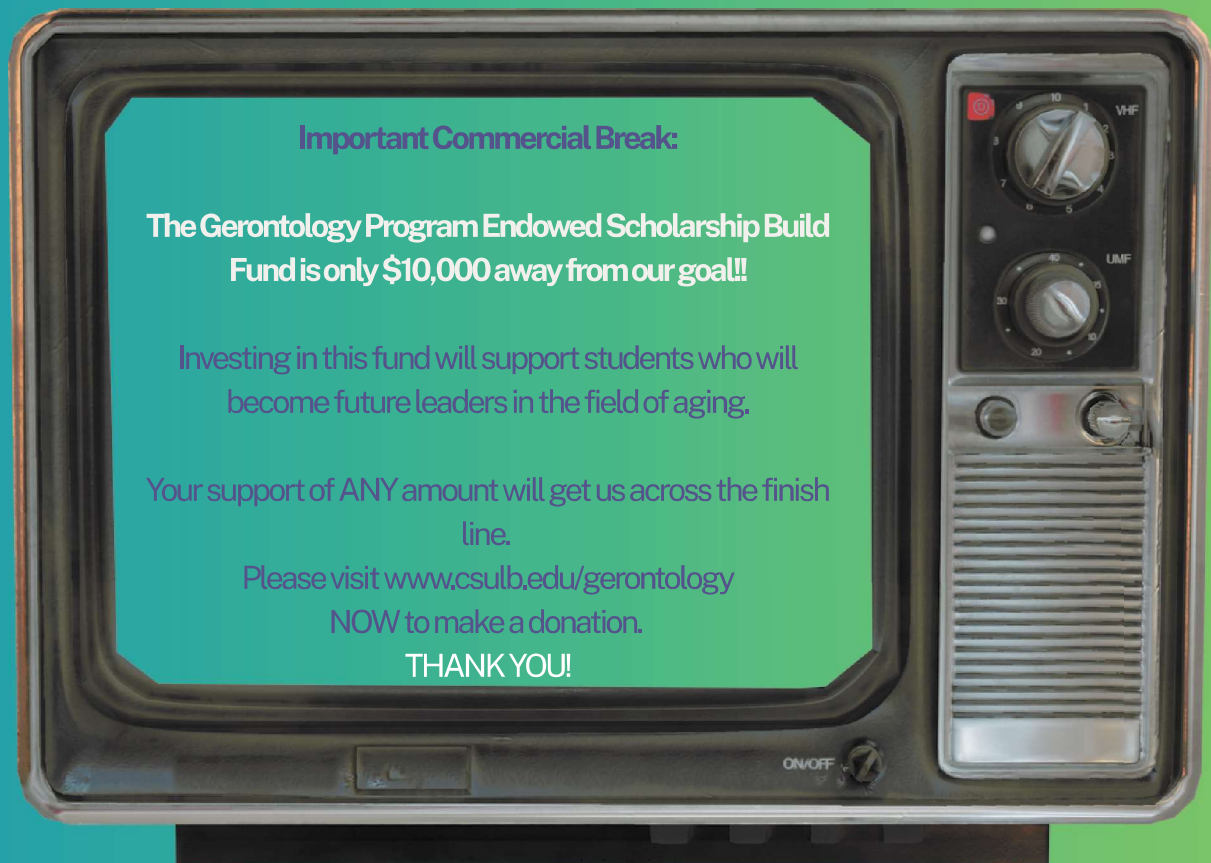
Do You Believe In Love After Loss? Gender and Repartnering in Older Widowhood will appear in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences. Her committee, Dr. Maria Carpiac (chair), Jesse Archer, and Dr. Marine Aghekyan will be co-authors on the publication.

faculty ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dr. Mary Marshall

Duarte, E., & **Marshall, M.** (2025). Kinship Chronicles: Exploring Siblings, Cousins, Aunts, and Uncles Through Time. In An Introduction to the History of Human Development and Family Science (pp. 137-149). Routledge.

Marshall, M., & Duarte, E. (2025) The Changing Role of Grandparents: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. In An Introduction to the History of Human Development and Family Science (pp. 150-162). Routledge.



collaborations & partnerships



OLLI, the Gerontology Club, and the Gerontology Program partnered to provide a lively welcome to students admitted to CSULB for Day at the Beach in April 2025.



Golden Girls Producer Marsha Posner Williams and Golden Girls Photographer Wayne Williams visit Dr. Carpiac's GERN 475/575: Women & Aging - Lessons from the Golden Girls.



Candice Chick from Beach XP visits Casey Goeller's GERN 600: Program Administration & Leadership Program

collaborations & partnerships

Generations Connect: Students and Older Adults Learning Together

This semester, students in Alex Wilkinson's GERN 400 Service-Learning class participated in an exciting opportunity! The program, Generations Connect, was a pilot, 20-hour, intergenerational mentor program that fostered mutual learning, connection, and respect between university students and older adults. It was an unbelievable experience for the students and the mentors who participated.

Four students from various majors (Business, Fashion, Film, and Psychology) were paired with two mentors from the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at CSULB. For those unfamiliar, OLLI is a dynamic community of older adults engaged in ongoing personal enrichment and education hosted on this campus. It is a place and a philosophy of lifelong learning where older individuals take classes on various topics. This semester, OLLI member Mary Kay and I developed and implemented a mentor program with my students. Throughout the semester, student-mentor pairs met weekly (12 times over the semester) to share life experiences, reflect on personal growth, and discuss perspectives across generations. The Generations Connect program bridged academic learning with real human connection. Through the program, students moved beyond textbook definitions of aging to develop relationships with older adults who shared their time, stories, and insight.

The program provided more than just a learning experience, as students consistently described the experience as one of the most meaningful parts of their education. They gained a deeper, more nuanced understanding of older adulthood and developed communication skills, empathy, and cultural awareness essential to working with people across the lifespan. Mentors from OLLI also valued the opportunity to connect with younger adults, often expressing how excited and appreciated they felt. Mentors enjoyed contributing to student learning and being part of an intergenerational exchange that highlighted shared humanity and lifelong growth. The program was a learning and teaching experience for mentees and mentors!

As part of the gerontology curriculum, Generations Connect demonstrated the power of relationship-based learning and the importance of including older adults as partners in education and community engagement. Although the program is new, it was wildly successful. The program will enthusiastically continue and be a part of my future Gern 400 service-learning classes. A generous thank you to my mentors Mary Kay and Carolyn and mentees Adam, Jayson, Julie, and Yulibeth. You have made this program a success!

Advocacy in Action: CSULB Gerontology Alumni Advocate for LB Age-Friendly Action Plan



Frances Ginder, MSG and Sofia Poulsen-Hodjat, MSG spoke up at a recent Long Beach City Council meeting to advocate for the adoption of the LB Age-Friendly Action Plan. The following is the testimony shared by Frances:

My name is Frances Ginder and I became involved with the Age-Friendly Plan when early conversations began in 2018. At that time, I was a recent Gerontology graduate from CSULB and a recreational leader at the Long Beach Senior Center. I've since become a practicing gerontology who helps older adults remain in their communities of their choice, and many of the older adults that I assist through Independence at Home MSSP Program live in Long Beach.

My clients rely on city resources to meet their needs, and I am thrilled that Long Beach is prioritizing older adults.

I look forward to learning about citywide enhancement and improvements that will benefit older adults, and I can't wait to share them with the older adults I serve.

GERN 482/582: Hands-On Health Assessment for Older Adults

This semester, students in Dr. Marshall's GERN 482/582 Health Assessment explored aging and wellness through engaging field trips and expert guest lectures. The course emphasized practical experience, compassionate care, and deeper understanding of the challenges older adults face.

💡 Understanding Medicare with SCAN's Allison Foster

Allison Foster, Director of Value-Based Care at SCAN, joined the class to demystify Medicare. Students spent time online during class pretending to be an older adult seeking information about Medicare to truly experience it first-hand. Students appreciated the clarity she brought to a complex system:

"I didn't know almost anything about insurance and especially Medicare. It seems so confusing for older adults... but now I can help the older adults in my life."

🏃 Functional Fitness at the LifeFit Center

Students met at the LifeFit Center on campus, which boasts a 6,000 foot fitness floor with cardio and strength equipment, group fitness classes, personal training, and wellness workshops for older adults! Students got a tour and explored how health professionals assess and support physical functioning in older adults. Activities included trying out balance tests — like standing on a foam block, which was harder than it looked!



🧠 Mental Health & Polypharmacy with Dr. Tae Kim

Dr. Tae Kim, one of very few geriatric psychiatrists in the area, offered invaluable insights into mental health and medication management in aging populations. It's always an engaging presentation, students barely let him finish his slides because they were asking so many questions!

"Dr. Kim's presentation was not only informative but also deeply engaging... He expertly bridged clinical knowledge with real-world experience. He offered us a rare and invaluable glimpse into the complexities of mental health in older adults."

Dr. Kim also recommends a thoughtful read: *The Virtues of Aging* by Jimmy Carter.

🏠 Field Trip to Senior Helpers, Long Beach

The class also took a field trip to Senior Helpers, which offers home care services to older adults in Long Beach to allow them live independently with personalized care. At Senior Helpers, students learned about dementia care through the Senior GEMS program, which uses gemstones to represent stages of cognitive decline in a compassionate, strengths-based way.

"One of the most impactful takeaways was learning about the Senior GEMS reference guide. Its use of gemstones to represent the different stages of dementia is both innovative and uplifting. By associating each stage with a gem, which is commonly seen as beautiful, the guide encourages a more compassionate and strengths-based perspective."

They also explored a simulated apartment setting, practicing intake assessments, spotting safety concerns, and even observing how to use a hooyer lift:

"I am glad they also showed us what a typical room setting may be for a client that receives care partnering services. Yesterday was a real-life experience of getting an idea of what it takes to understand the older adult population and how to care for them."



WE WISH YOU A

happy summer

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