

PRESS RELEASE



Genevieve N. Johnson
Senior Day Care Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Great News! We are extremely pleased to share with you fantastic news and information regarding the Genevieve N. Johnson Senior Day Care Center being the recipient of three special grants during the year 2022 as follows:

The Washington Homes (TWH) provided a \$51,000 grant in June 2022 to the GNJ Center. This grant is designed to address the lack of Respite Care Support Services for our caregivers and participants. The GNJ Center understands that being a caregiver is so hard because they are watching a loved one change, often for the worse. This could be mental due to a form of Dementia or due to a physical disability. A caregiver might find it hard to see the person they care for the way they were before they became sick, or they might feel like they have lost the person they were before they became a caregiver. It is difficult because they are still on call as a caregiver 24/7, especially if they are doing it alone. This problem impacts at least 95% of our clientele and nearly 92% of the targeted population. Doctors often think of caregivers as hidden patients. If the bad feelings are lasting a long time and impacting your life, then this could mean that you as a caregiver are stressed and could lead to possible burnout known as Compassion Fatigue. This can be dangerous because it can lead to medical errors and/or disrupted relationships with the person you are caring for, as well as other family and friends. Compassion fatigue can be a cloud over your empathy, meaning you might not notice things are going wrong, with others or yourself.

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The GNJ Center’s solution was to create a comfortable learning environment that will allow us to train, educate and provide resources to the caregivers and participants. Services that we provide include: a weekly caregiver support group, registered nurse contractor (to provide health education talks and weight/blood pressure screenings), social worker contractor (to provide emotional support to participants), community outreach events (to raise awareness on dementia and caregiving), senior friendly durable furniture for participants and the provision of food/snacks. We intend to serve fifty (50) caregivers and seventy-five (75) participants with this grant. This particular grant is uniquely designed to serve as a dedicated multi-functional “safe space” for caregivers in order to learn more about available resources, participate in peer support sessions, and enjoy get-togethers. The participants experience self-directed learning sessions to support and enhance their caregiving journey. In particular, the “Caregivers’ Lounge” is perfect for small group sharing sessions and is able to accommodate up to twenty (20) persons in a workshop-style setting. The goal of the TWH grant is to create a trusted environment that is available whenever needed as caregivers need their own “safe space” where they can be heard, supported and engaged – and that is exactly what the GNJ Center seeks to offer through this particular TWH grant.

The DC Commission on Arts and Humanities provided two grants in October 2022: One grant in the amount of \$24,000 to conduct a TimeSlips Storytelling Program and the other grant in the amount of \$17,400 to conduct a Music Memory Café Program for a total amount of \$41,400.

Music Memory Café: The GNJ Center will design a specialized Musical Memory Café comprised of retired musicians with Alzheimer’s and other Dementia-related diseases providing them with the opportunity to talk about music and create a DC Rhythm City Band performing with others throughout the District of Columbia. The Musical Memory Cafe will be established as a safe environment that will allow musicians to continue their love for music through socialization and performance.

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The Musical Memory Café’s overall goal is to support the well-being of participants throughout the District of Columbia using a creative approach to opening up imaginative memories through a structured series of creative engagements. Led by a musician who is a certified facilitator, participants will be able to create musical expressions that reflect their interest. With the guidance of the teaching musician, and special guest musicians as appropriate, the Musical Memory Café will develop a product to be shared with the broader community. Each of the participant’s family members, care partners and others within the community will be invited to a celebratory event featuring the participants in a way that is culturally appropriate and memory friendly, honoring their inspiration and their work with an artistic value and connection to their communities.

TimeSlips Storytelling: The GNJ Center will design a specialized TimeSlips Storytelling engagement approach using a creative approach to open up imaginative storytelling through a structured series of creative story sessions. Led by a teaching artist who is a certified facilitator, participants will be able to co-create a collaborative work of artistic expression that reflects their interests, tastes, hopes and desires. With support from the facilitator, group stories will be crafted into a “text” for sharing – works of original poetic stories, images, and visual artworks. The final form will be determined by the participants themselves. Using the format of a “Memory Café” each participant’s family member, care partners and others within the community, will be invited to a celebratory event featuring the participants-artist in a way that is culturally appropriate and memory friendly, honoring their inspiration and the work with artistic value and connection to their communities. The TimeSlips Storytelling pilot-project will offer a short series of engagement sessions, through the Create and Thrive! Program, that offers a taste of this work, and is shared as an example and inspiration. These creative sessions will be designed to reflect joy and well-being as evidenced by their active participation and memory recall.

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The interactive workshops will provide each participant with an opportunity to enjoy self-expression while sharing heart felt stories and other creative modalities to provide a sense of self and reminiscent play. The TimeSlips Storytelling pilot-project model is designed to shift away from the expectation of memory – where participants with Dementia can feel shame and loss – toward imagination, where participants, staff, family and artistic collaborators can participate as equals from a position of strength.

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