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Spreading encouragement to seniors in a pandemic

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Spreading Encouragement to Seniors In a Pandemic

by Bonnie L. Rogulj PT, DPT and Lashia Hicks PT, DPT

Editor's Note. A selection of calendar images accompanies this article. Some images are copyrighted elsewhere and not publishable in this domain. Special thanks to the students for the creative images shown. Please email Bonnie Roguli, broguli@usa.edu, for a complete copy of the calendar.

"Normal" daily life has become modified and a "new normal" has ensued in the COVID-19 global pandemic. In the midst of the "new normal," many older adults have experienced limited accessibility, social distancing, and enforced regulations. Community-dwelling seniors are restricted from participation such as leisure shopping, restaurant dining, traveling, and time spent with loved ones. The older adult population has reported increased loneliness and isolation, resulting in an increased risk for anxiety and depression.

Flex Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students enrolled in the Geriatric Physical Therapy course at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) recognized the potential negative impact on health and wellness from COVID-19 restrictions. In the midst of this global pandemic, an opportunity was provided in the form of a virtual calendar to spread encouragement for community and institutionalized seniors. The calendar was created in Power Point presentation format and consisted of a total of 30 presentation slides, able to be repeated throughout the calendar year. Each calendar slide included a positive message for older adults.

The virtual calendar allowed the students to be creative. Each of the 30 slides was filled with colorful images, positive quotes, or beautiful poetry. The completed calendar was shared virtually with older adults in the community including (but not limited to) the Council on Aging located in St. Johns, Florida.

In conclusion, students reported feeling grateful for the unique opportunity to promote health and wellness for seniors. A multitude of opportunities exist to overcome the challenges faced by seniors as a result of COVID-19. Current and future health care leaders must continue to prioritize health and wellness during (and beyond) the global pandemic.

Dr. Bonnie L. Rogulj completed her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at Old Dominion University and completed a geriatric residency at Brooks Institute of Higher Learning. She is a board-certified geriatric clinical specialist (GCS), Stepping On Instructor, and Mental Health First Aid Instructor. She is a licensed Physical Therapist and Assistant Professor at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences in the Flex Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

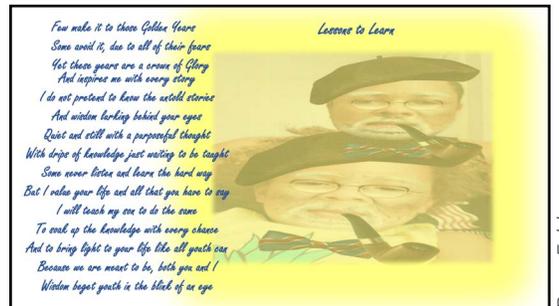
Dr. Lashia Hicks earned her Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) degree from Florida State College and practiced for 3 years prior to beginning the Flex Doctor of Physical Therapy program at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS). In 2016, she earned the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree. Dr. Hicks completed a geriatric residency at Brooks Institute of Higher Learning and is a board-certified geriatric clinical specialist (GCS). Presently, Dr. Hicks is the lead orthopedic PT from Brooks University Crossing SNF.



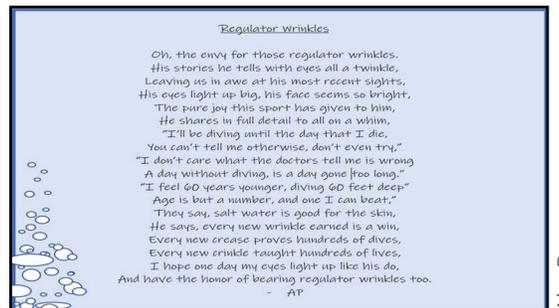
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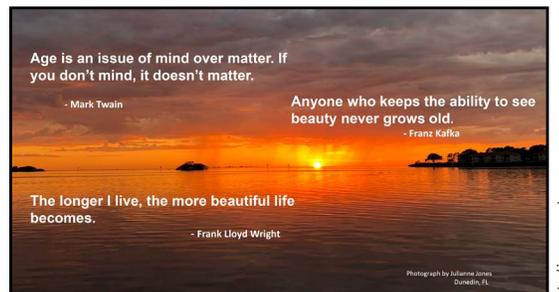
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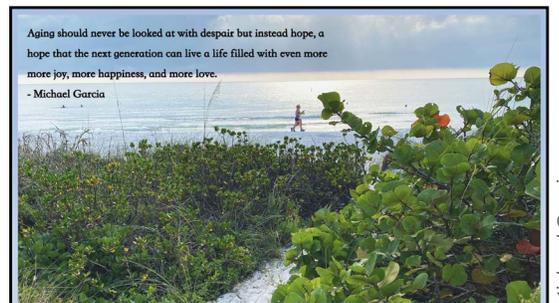
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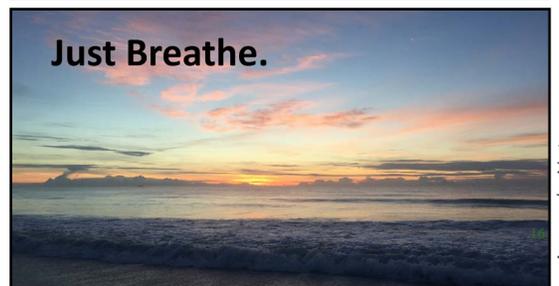
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Julianne Jones



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