

# Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 24 – Student Edition  
May 2024

## Comments from Linda

The end of the spring semester is looming closely, meaning the loss of some great students. I like to put out a student edition for the newsletter each semester and they have put together some excellent material for this edition. Be on the lookout for other materials they will also presenting as they wrap up projects.

Our clients' involvement with the students is always greatly appreciated and I am proud of the good job we are doing serving students. I know you are aware it is important that that continue. Thank you so much, -program clients, for the continued success of our inter-generational success.

This summer we will have some high school and other college students, from outside Sac State as well as continuing Sac State folks. We will solder on and do some fun stuff this summer before the regular platoon comes back in the fall. Never a dull moment in our space!

*Linda*



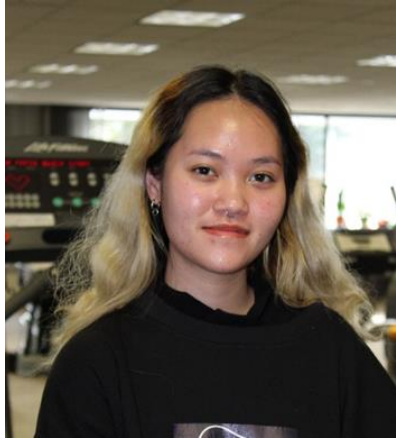
## Spring 2024 Student Intern Roster

Gerontology (Gero 131) Billal, Noah, Wendy

Community nutrition (NuFD117) Justin, Thao

Community Psychology (Psy143) Cassidy, Daniela, Jessica, Kylie, Stephanie

ID201 Hafsa, Isabella, Khanh, Kimberly, Kristina, Leanne, Leslie, Nexxi, Wendy



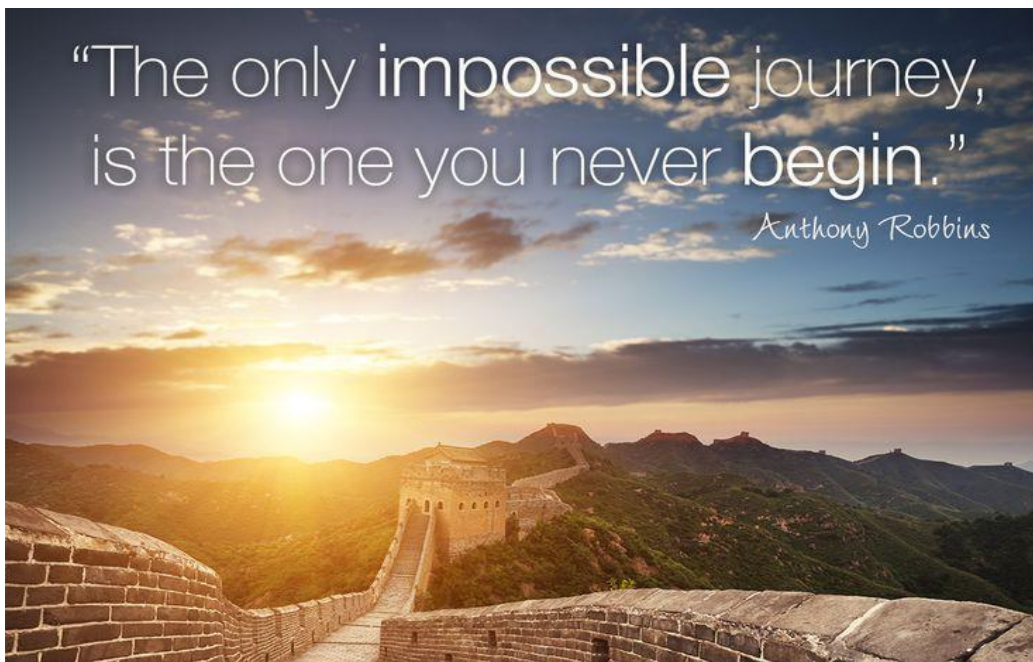
As I embark on my academic journey, I find myself drawn to the intersection of psychology, health, and community service. My name is Khanh Truong, and I am a dedicated student pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Psychology at California State University, Sacramento. With a GPA of 3.99 and a passion for business development, I am driven by a desire to make a meaningful impact in the lives of others through holistic approaches to wellness.

My journey has been shaped by a profound commitment to serving others, evident in my diverse experiences. From my role as a Statistics Teaching Assistant at the University of Cincinnati to my volunteer work as a Social Worker in Danang, Vietnam, I have honed my skills in education, mentorship, and community engagement. These experiences have deepened my understanding of the human condition and instilled in me a sense of purpose to empower individuals to thrive.

Central to my academic and professional aspirations is the interdisciplinary program I am currently enrolled in. The ID201 course, "Comprehensive Exercise/Education Program for Older Clients," has been a transformative experience, offering a unique blend of theoretical knowledge and hands-on learning opportunities. Through this program, I have had the privilege of working with older adults in our community, learning personalized fitness regimens, promoting plant-based nutrition, and facilitating mindset activities for stress management.

What sets this program apart is its interdisciplinary approach, drawing insights from fields such as exercise science, gerontology, health science, and psychology. This holistic perspective has equipped me with a diverse skill set, including qualitative and quantitative data analysis, research methodology, and effective communication strategies. Moreover, the emphasis on high-impact educational practices, such as collaborative projects and community-based internships, has fostered my professional growth.

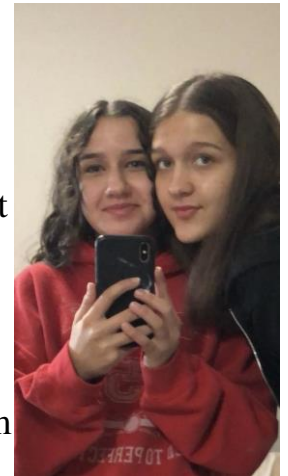
As I look to the future, my career goals are clear: to leverage my expertise in psychology and business development to drive positive change in the realm of healthcare and wellness. Whether it be as a business analyst, research assistant, or marketing professional, I am committed to advancing human potential and fostering holistic well-being.



My journey thus far has been marked by a steadfast commitment to excellence and a passion for interdisciplinary learning. Through the ID201 program and beyond, I am confident that I will continue to grow, innovate, and make a lasting impact in the world.



Hello everyone! My name is Kristina Garifullina and I am 19 years old. This is my second year at Sacramento State, and I am currently a Health Science major. I hope to be applying to Sac State's Nursing Program this Fall, and for my application I need health related volunteer hours. A friend told me about this program before the semester started and told me I can get my hours here at the Cardiovascular Wellness Program. This program is not only helping me get my hours for my application but has helped me with so much more. I have met some amazing people, those that are participants of the program, other volunteer students, and of course Professors Linda and Mary. Through this program I have met other students that are already part of the Nursing Program who have helped me so much in preparation to apply. The participants of this program are also amazing and I have learned so much from them. I had opportunities to cook and bake here as well, and I learned how to take blood pressures.



Overall this has been an amazing experience and I have learned so much; I would recommend it for everyone!

This is me and my cousin Zhanna. She had the pleasure of joining me a few times at the program and really enjoyed it.



I'm Nexxi Gonzalez, I'm currently a 3rd year Psychology major at Sacramento State. Psychology is something that has always interested me and it has been a great experience. I graduated from high school as an International Baccalaureate and education has always been important.

**Career Plan.** My career plan started out with wanting to be a Clinical Psychologist and earning a PsyD after grad school. However, I started to take biology classes for general education requirements and that changed my plans. It led me to want to pursue a career in medicine. Although I haven't

left psychology behind, I am now aiming to be a psychiatrist and attend medical school. Since this has been a bit of a change, I plan on enrolling into a post-baccalaureate in pre-medical sciences to finish my prerequisites for medical school after I graduate with a bachelor's in psychology. It will be challenging but I am looking forward to achieving my goals. My dream medical school is Harvard or UC Davis.

**Program Assistance.** This program has been tremendously helpful in my road to becoming a doctor. Being able to learn from professionals in the medical field during presentations has been eye opening. Learning about cardiovascular health has also instilled a passion for medicine. I believe that this program has also helped me interact with older adults, as someone who is gen-z, I mainly interact with peers in my age group and I have gained a better understanding on how to bridge the gap between generations.

## Hypertension from Isabel Ignacio

### Why is it important to manage hypertension?

It is important because of all the other illnesses mentioned prior. While it may not seem like a big deal it is important to take care of your health. It allows us to live much longer, healthier, and happier.

### Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure

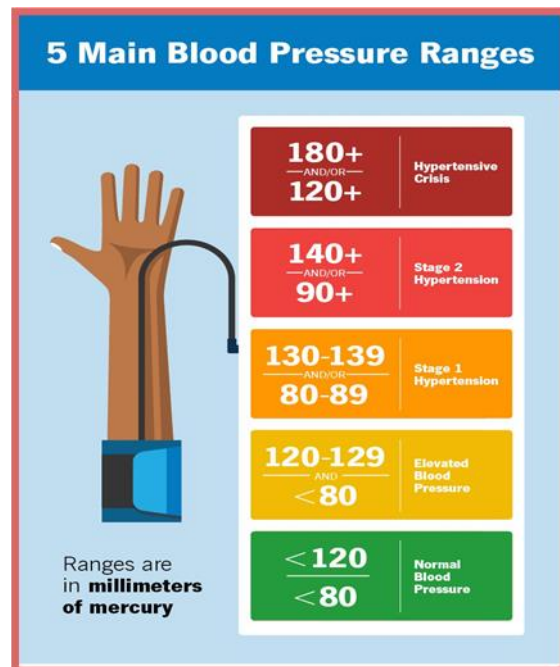
- This is when the blood pressure, the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels, is consistently too high (AHA)\*
- Hypertension can cause other health conditions due to the force and friction of high blood pressure damaging the tissues inside the arteries.
- Other conditions hypertension can cause include: **cholesterol, atherosclerosis, arrhythmia, heart attack and stroke.**

### Lessen effects of hypertension via diet

1. Grains: 6-8 servings
2. Vegetables: 4-5 servings
3. Fruits: 4-5 servings
4. Low/fat free dairy products: 2-3 servings
5. Lean meats, poultry + fish: six 1oz. serving
6. Nuts/seeds/dry beans + peas: 4-5 servings a week
7. Fats and oils: 2-3 servings a day
8. Sweets and added sugars: 5 servings or fewer a week

### Tips

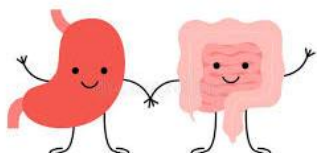
Try to follow the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet. Lean towards foods that are rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber and protein; as well as being low in saturated fat and salt



## A Happy Gut is a Healthy Gut from Leanne Dawson

Eating enough fiber is essential to having a happy gut. It acts like a scrub brush to our intestines providing good bacteria that our gut thrives on to keep everything moving. It also helps us feel fuller longer which may help up eat less and may lead to weight loss. Fiber has also been shown to help lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels and prevent blood sugar spikes. There are so many health benefits associated with getting enough fiber in your diet.

Consuming enough fiber (30-40 grams daily) is associated with reducing the risk of several serious diseases like heart disease, type 2 diabetes and colorectal cancer. So where do we find fiber? Meat and dairy products contain zero grams of fiber. It's in fruits and vegetables, whole grains and legumes. Most fruits and vegetables contain 1-3 grams of fiber except raspberries and blackberries which have nearly 10 grams per half cup. Whole grains and legumes contain the most fiber, up to 10 grams per half cup. The important thing is to read the labels and make sure you drink plenty of water so that you keep things moving and your gut happy and healthy.





# Mindfulness in Nature

from Leslie Garcia



Practicing mindfulness in nature can be a healing and peaceful experience. Those who practice mindfulness in nature have lower levels of stress, better blood pressure, and fewer issues with chronic conditions. The definition of mindfulness is being present in the moment and one's own state of mind. This also includes being mindful of ones' surroundings, emotions, and body state. One way to practice mindfulness in nature is called Shinrin-Yoku (SY)/Forest Bathing. Forest bathing is a Japanese medical practice that uses the five senses and immerses one's self into nature (LI, 2018). The first step to beginning this exercise is finding a spot in nature where you don't have much distraction. Begin the practice by listening to your surroundings (birds chirping/ trees moving). Give yourself a few minutes to move into the next step of using your sight to look at your surroundings (look at a tree, flower, or clouds). It has been found that just looking at a tree for less than five minutes can reduce one's anxiety. A further step is using



your sense of smell to breathe in the natural aromas. Then, try using your sense of taste; take in deep breaths to taste the fresh air. Finally, the last sense you should use is touch. This sense can be used by touching nature's creations, for example, feel a tree trunk or lying on some grass. The idea of Shinrin-Yoku comes from the belief that mankind and nature are connected intimately. It's a way to take a break from our stressful routines and admire nature. An article by Qing Li mentions how forest bathing has physical benefits including

strengthening the immune system by increase human natural killer cells, reducing blood pressure, reducing stress hormones, improving sleep. There are also psychological benefits of decreasing feelings of anxiety, depression, anger, fatigue (Li, 2022). If possible forest bathing is something should try as not only a good way to connect with nature but also to gain both physical and psychological benefits.

## References

Hansen, MM et al. Shinrin-Yoku (foret bathing) and Nature Theorapy: A State-of-the-Art Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2017: 14(8):851. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14080851>

Li, Q, (2018, May 1). The benefits of 'forest bathing'. Time <https://time.com/5259602/apanese-forest-bathing/>

Li, Q (2022). Effects of forest environment (Shinrin-yoku-Forest bathing) on health promotion and disease prevention – the Establishment of "Forest Medicine". *Environmental health and preventive medicine*, 27, 43. <https://doi.org/10.1265/ehpm.22-00160>

# Prioritizing Mental Wellness as We Age: Understanding the Challenges

from Wendy Shelton



Aging comes with a lot of changes, from shifts in physical health to evolving social dynamics. This month let us focus on the one challenge that is usually ignored but has an enormous impact on our mental well-being. Feelings of grief, loneliness, anxiety, and cognitive decline can affect our mental health, sometimes going unnoticed or untreated.

Family, friends, and Community play a vital role in promoting mental wellness among older adults. Maintaining a good support system and access to mental health services, can eliminate any feelings of isolation

Having open conversations can break the main challenge of silence and the stigma surrounding mental health issues, that in most cases prevents older adults from seeking the support needed during their healing and growth.

A few things you can do to maintain a healthy mental well being

- Stay socially connected: Maintain friendships that provide emotional support and reduce feelings of loneliness
- Physical activity: Walking, yoga, swimming can help boost mood and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Maintaining a healthy diet that fuels your body and mind with nutritious foods.
- Creating a sleep schedule and relaxation time. By raising awareness and providing information about available resources and support services, everyone is empowered to take control of their mental well-being. As we reflect on these challenges and opportunities, let us recommit ourselves to prioritizing mental wellness for ourselves and our older loved ones. Together, let us foster a culture of support and understanding, ensuring that everyone can thrive at every stage of life.







Hello, my name is Cassidy Tanis, I am a Psychology major graduating this semester. Ultimately I would like to become a therapist, but I am open to different opportunities that may arise as I move forward through life. I will be taking a gap year after graduation and then attending a masters program at Sacramento State. As this is my final semester before graduation, the capstone course I chose was PSYC 143, which partners with volunteer sites to get hands on experience working with our local communities. The site I have been working with is the Cardiovascular Wellness Program on campus.

Linda, the center's leader, has been amazing to work with and cares greatly for everyone at the center, inspiring others daily with her dedication. She holds workout circuits Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays. These are in person and can be joined from home via Zoom using the link on their website. I attend the Tuesday and Friday circuits from 1:15-2:15 in which we stretch, work on core, balance and strength training. These sessions also regularly involve intermittent cardio. The atmosphere is very welcoming and easygoing. One client, Reiko, who has been attending the workout circuits since May of 2023, stated that "The rehab program is great, everyone that comes here just enjoys it." When asked what was gained from the workout circuits, another member, Michael, replied "I feel better, about 50% of the old age aches and pains go away." Adding on that, "It is the least stressful, most laidback place I've ever been. You don't feel like you're trying to catch up with someone". Sharing a similar sentiment, Dodie stated "I love the people here, they are so dedicated. I have learned a lot from the discussions and lectures that we get. The students are always fun to have here. I give it 5 stars." The circuits are easily modified so individuals of all levels of ability can do them, being free to do as much or as little as they feel able. If you are thinking of joining the Cardiovascular Wellness Program, consider this an encouragement to stop on by and say hello to some of the amazing individuals that regularly attend. This stress free environment is sure to be a community you will love getting involved with in any way that fits best for you. We hope to see you there!





Hello, my name is Jessica, and I am a psychology major graduating from Sacramento State University this May. I want to apply for a master's program and one day I hope to earn a PhD because I want to become a Clinical Psychologist in the future. I want to help people who are struggling with their mental health by listening to them and helping them to cope with their symptoms or stressful situations in their life. I love cooking, baking, and going on walks. A recent hobby of mine is planting flowers which started because I recently planted a beautiful peony in my yard.

I took a Practicum in Community Psychology class this semester with the opportunity to work at the Cardiovascular Wellness Program. I have been coming every week since January and have really enjoyed my time because everyone is so friendly and nice. I have learned how important it is to take care of our bodies with exercise and to know what food we are putting into our bodies to keep us healthy. I have been inspired to exercise more and incorporate more healthy alternative foods in my diet. I have learned so much about how to prevent heart disease from the educational presentations and plant-based diets with healthy alternative food from the cooking demonstrations. Something I was surprised by when I started coming to the Cardiovascular Wellness Program is just how strong the community is at this program. Everyone who goes to the program is so nice to each other. Some of the people who go to the program have been friends for years and it really feels like family.

The exercise equipment is available to work out by yourself any time the program is open, but there are also so many different activities at the program that there is something for everyone. There are Tai Chi classes, group stretches, group resistance, circuits, chair exercises, balance exercises, educational presentations, and cooking demonstrations. I have been really interested in the Tai Chi classes which are led by David. One day I joined the beginner Tai Chi class and I really enjoyed it. David taught me the first important step of Tai Chi which is finding your chi which is your center of gravity. This can be found placing your left thumb on your belly button and putting your right hand on top and breathing in and out. I breathed in by moving my shoulders and David said that you get a better breathe by only using your stomach muscles. Taking deep breathes by moving our whole upper body is something we learned when we were young so the rest of the class, I focused on taking deep breathes just using my stomach muscles. I have continued doing this and I have gotten better at breathing in and out with just the muscles in my stomach. The next step David taught me is the box shape which is keeping your feet shoulder width apart and parallel while making sure your knees are not locked to allow you to move as one. Tai Chi focuses a lot on shifting weight with each move, shifting weight from the left side to the right side which I found very relaxing. Even though I am a beginner, and I am still learning to make sure I am breathing using my stomach muscles, my feet are parallel, and I am making the right movements with my arms. I find that the more I do it the better I get at it and the more relaxed I feel while doing Tai Chi.

Before doing Tai Chi I found that my mind was racing with all the things I need to do but when I am doing Tai Chi I am only thinking about the movement of my body and taking deep breaths in and out. I love participating in the Tai Chi classes and I cannot wait to join another class with David. If you are looking for a relaxing way to move your body and put your mind at ease you should try David's Tai Chi classes and maybe I will see you there.

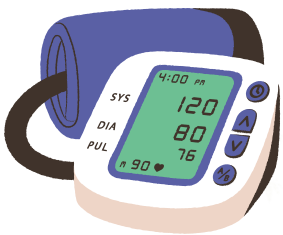


# KIMBERLY LOPEZ



## CAREER GOALS

My career goal is to become a physician assistant. I would like to specialize in psychiatry or pediatrics. Currently, I am completing a medical assistant program. After graduating from both Sac State and my medical assistant program, I plan on working as a medical assistant for about a year and a half to gain clinical experience. Then, I plan to apply to Physician Assistant School to continue my medical education.



## ABOUT ME

I'm a 4th year graduating senior majoring in health science and minoring in psychology and child and adolescent development. I'm also a first-generation Mexican-American student.



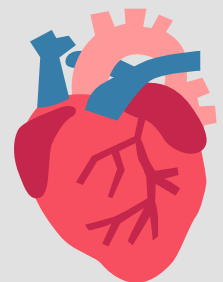
## CARDIOVASCULAR WELLNESS PROGRAM

I decided to become an Intern for the Cardiovascular Program because it aligned with my health and personal beliefs. While I was hesitant to join at first, it was a great decision. I had the opportunity to interact more with a different age group than I usually do which helped my social skills. At the beginning of the semester, I would be shy to talk to the older adults but towards the end I would not be as much. I also got to further practice my blood pressure skills outside of my medical assistant program. To add on, I can also say being an intern and attending weekly presentations allowed me to learn so much about nutrition and health.



## HEART HEALTHY RECIPIES

One of my favorite parts of the program was learning about heart-healthy recipes. Especially as someone who didn't know much about substitutes to traditional ingredients, presentations were very helpful and will surely help me help my future patients make better food choices.



# SPRING 2024 INTERN *Hafsa Omer*

04 APRIL, 2024



**M**y name is Hafsa Omer, I'm a psychology major in my second-year at CSU Sacramento.

Throughout my time as a student, I was never sure of what I wanted to make a career of. I still don't. But I have a better idea of the direction I want to go in now after taking on different extracurriculars as well as taking different courses that I wouldn't originally do. Being in the Cardiovascular wellness center helped me learn new things about myself, like I can interact with others if I just put myself out there, and that people are always willing to go out of their way to help you with struggles you may have if you just ask.

## Wellness and fitness tips:

### When building muscle:

If you're looking to build muscle, it's beneficial to do cardio after lifting weights.

### When losing fat:

If you're looking to burn fat, it's beneficial to do cardio BEFORE lifting weights.

### Methods of coping to stress:

- Being optimistic
- Having stable social support.
- Doing tasks one at a time.
- Taking breaks from activities for a short amount of time.

**B**eing in this program helped me narrow down my options.

As I am interested in fitness and wellness, being in this wellness center helped me understand that I am interested in furthering knowledge and methods learnt from being here. Being a psychology major as well, I'm beginning to come up with ideas of maybe opening up a center similar to this where individuals are able to receive counseling and fitness lessons.

