

**The Gerontological Society of America  
60<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting and Program  
"The Era of Global Aging: Challenges & Opportunities  
November 16 – 20, 2007  
San Francisco, CA**

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Professional Development Grant Report

Restatement of problem researched, creative work, or professional enhancement opportunity:

The Gerontological Society of America's 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting and program is considered the ideal avenue to bring together approximately 2,000 – 3,000 researchers, educators, practitioners, and other professionals in the field of aging. These professionals come together to share research findings and educational information, to network, and to promote the field of gerontology utilizing a education and meeting format. This scientific meeting and program takes place once a year in a different location throughout the United States.

Brief review of the professional enhancement opportunity, creative work, or research procedure:

The Gerontological Society of America is the oldest and largest national multidisciplinary scientific organization devoted to the advancement of gerontological research. The Society's principal missions are to promote research and education in aging and to encourage the dissemination of research results to other scientists, decision makers, and practitioners.

GSA also advances its missions through two special units. The National Academy on an Aging Society (NAAS) is a policy institute that promotes innovative and responsible thinking on issues arising from the aging of our society. The Association of Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) is a network of higher education institutions dedicated to advancing study and scholarship in gerontology.

Summary of findings, outcomes, or experiences had:

I presented a presentation titled: The Effects of a Leisure Education Program on the Psychosocial Health of Caregivers of Aging Adults with Dementia. The purpose of this presentation was to disseminate the results of my dissertation. The presentation was made in a symposium format with three additional presentations being made regarding the effect of recreation on the elderly (presentations were made by Dr. Nancy Richeson, Dr. Meredith Janssen, Dr. Marieke Van Puymbroeck and Dr. Linda Buettner served as the moderator).

By conducting this presentation and also by attending this meeting/program I had the opportunity to network with a number of highly regarded researchers in the area of therapeutic recreation and treatment interventions for the elderly. I truly have a strong interest in the role of therapeutic recreation in working with individuals with dementia/Alzheimer's disease and also have a strong interest in caregivers of the elderly and their unmet needs, therefore this setting allowed me the opportunity to look further into research opportunities in these areas. My attendance at this conference also provided me the opportunity to meet and greet key researchers in these areas and to be aware of the most recent research in these specific areas. I not only gained exposure to research opportunities to further my career, but also represented Arkansas Tech University and our therapeutic recreation program. All in all, I felt like it was not only an excellent educational opportunity for me, but an excellent venue in which to represent Arkansas Tech University and our therapeutic recreation program.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

I am very appreciative to Arkansas Tech University and to the funding provided by the professional development grant for allowing me the opportunity to attend the Gerontological Society of America's (GSA) 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting and Program in San Francisco, California. I hope to stay actively involved with GSA and to make further presentations at their annual meetings.

# THE GERONTOLOGIST

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**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

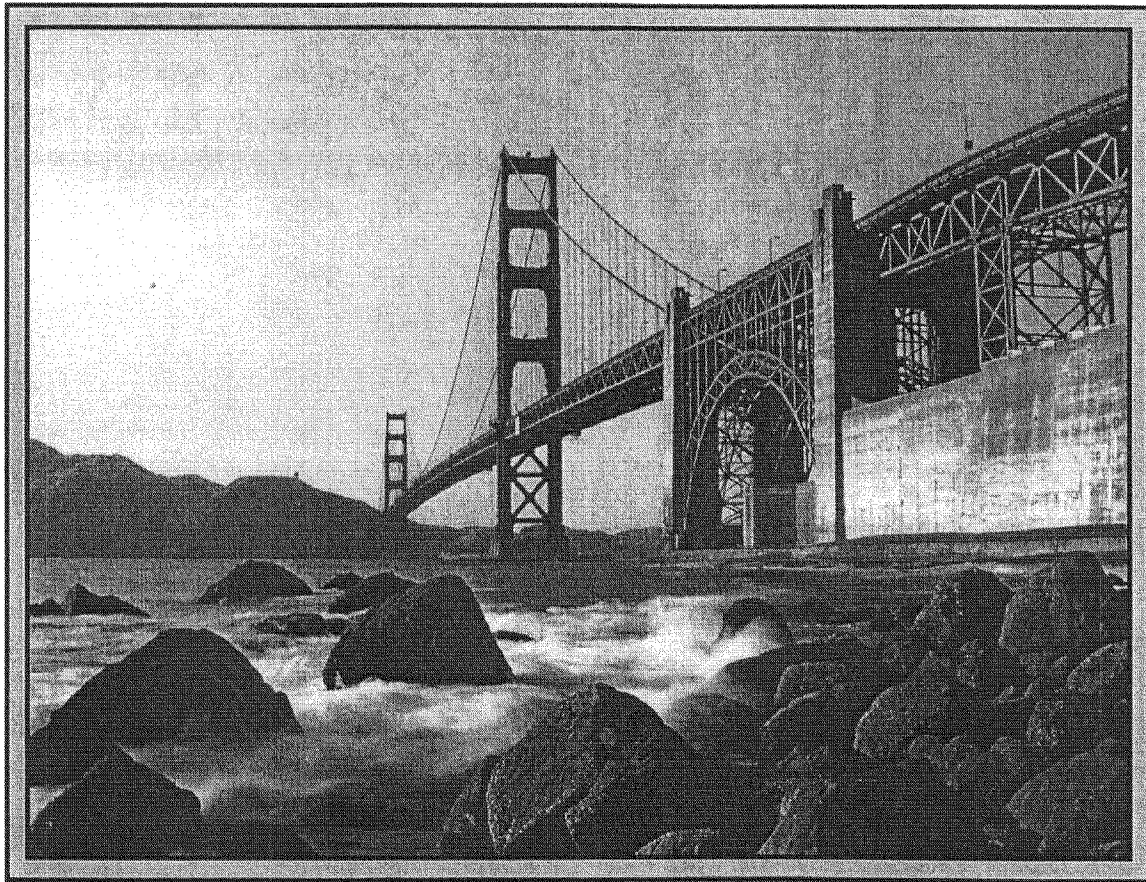
**60th Annual Scientific Meeting**

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## The Effects of a Leisure Education Program on the Psychosocial Health of Caregivers of Aging Adults with Dementia

The purpose of this research study was to examine the effects of a Leisure Education Program on the psychosocial health of caregivers of aging adults with dementia. The sample (N = 23) was randomly assigned to an experimental or control group. The pretest, posttest and posttest2 measures included the *Perceived Stress Scale*, *Caregiver Well-Being Scale*, *Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)*, and the *Leisure Time Satisfaction Measure (LTS)*. The five-week leisure education program consisted of weekly sessions focusing on leisure awareness, self-awareness in leisure, leisure participation and decision making skills, and knowledge and utilization of leisure resources. Paired sample t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures were used to examine the effectiveness of the intervention. There were significant changes noted in well-being scores, but no other significant changes were noted (possibly due to the short length of the intervention).