



SHARP NEWSLETTER

For the Love of Community

Hello, I'm Dr. Raina Croff, Principal Investigator of the SHARP walking study. Welcome - I'm so glad you're here!

In this Newsletter, we lead with our strengths. We celebrate the big and small things we as a people have done for centuries that help keep us well. Health researchers call these “**protective behaviors.**” We call it community. I'm talking about **staying social**, like a community meeting, a family dinner, or a Thursday night card game. I'm talking about **staying connected**, like checking in on our aging neighbors or stepping out to that weekly faith meeting or service commitment. And yes, I am talking about **staying active**, like getting your daily neighborhood walk. Whatever you do to stay physically and mentally healthy, keep on keepin' on. Small steps add up. Speaking of steps, why not up your daily step count by joining the **SHARP Caregiver Study**? If you regularly check in on a friend or family member with memory loss, this may be for you - more on page 3.

Community has been essential to our survival in this country. We find refuge and resilience together. When we're in community, we socialize and connect—behaviors scientifically proven to protect our brains. Plus, being in community helps us feel part of a collective WE. The Ubuntu of South Africa have a saying for this:

“

I am because we are

”

**When it comes to brain
health, we are better
together**

We really are better together, and science proves it:

- Among 3,734 Black adults (65 years+), greater social resources (social networks and social engagement) was associated with reduced cognitive decline in old age.¹
- Among 2,249 Black adults (51 years+), more religious attendance was associated with better memory performance.²
- Older Black adults in community choirs reported fewer doctor visits, fewer falls, less medication use, and better physical health over 2 years vs. those not in choirs.³

Our brains have some 60 trillion neuronal connections. Thank goodness we don't need that many friends. But we do need conversation and companionship every week. In our Remember Together section, why not call up a friend and chat about some old Portland photos?

Also in this issue, SHARP participant Mr. Richard Hunter shares memories of his mother's connection to the community, and Ms. Donita Andrews shares a healthy recipe. Give and get some community love and connection by attending events in our Events and Resources. Finally, don't forget to check out the latest on SHARP – in Portland, Seattle, and Oakland!

1. Barnes LL, Mendes de Leon CF, Wilson RS, Bienias JL, Evans DA. Social resources and cognitive decline in a population of older African Americans and whites. *Neurology*. 2004;63(12):2322–6.

2. Kraal AZ, Sharifian N, Zaheed AB, Sol K, Zahodne LB. Dimensions of Religious Involvement Represent Positive Pathways in Cognitive Aging. *Res Aging*. 2019 Oct;41(9):868–890. doi: 10.1177/0164027519862745. Epub 2019 Jul 14. PMID: 31303123; PMCID: PMC7564892.

3. Petrovsky DV, Sefcik JS, Cacchione PZ. A Qualitative Exploration of Choral Singing in Community-dwelling Older Adults. *West J Nurs Res*. 2020 May;42(5):340–347. doi: 10.1177/0193945919861380. Epub 2019 Jun 29. PMID: 31256749; PMCID: PMC6935434.

In Community,

Raina Croff, PhD

SHARP Study Principal Investigator and AADAPt Co-Investigator
Associate Professor of Neurology
Layton Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Center, OHSU



SHARP is Back! This Time for Caregivers

Family caregivers are the backbone of elder care in our community. They give so much and take on so much, which can affect their wellbeing. Sometimes a caregiver's health can decline faster than the person they are caring for. It's important for caregivers to give care to themselves, too, including being physically active and socially connected. SHARP (Sharing History through Active Reminiscence and Photo-imagery) is back, this time focusing on caregiver health. Read on for more about SHARP-CG.

What is SHARP-CG?

SHARP-Caregiver (SHARP-CG) focuses on Black family caregivers of people with memory problems (mild cognitive impairment or early-stage dementia). The study aims to improve health through walking, socializing, and reminiscing. Surveys and study devices measure the effects of these good-for-you activities on mood, sleep, blood pressure, and more. People are walking in SHARP-CG right now. Black caregivers aged 40+, with or without memory loss themselves, can participate.

What has SHARP discovered so far?

Because of your participation, we have advanced the science of brain health for our community. SHARP has engaged 36 participants in Portland, many of whom participated in more than one SHARP pilot. Here are results from the 18 participants who completed the second 6-month pilot:

- 67% of walkers maintained or improved their cognitive assessment scores
- 78% of walkers had decreased blood pressure
- 94% of walkers reported better mood right after a group walk
- 100% of walkers reported better mood since group walks began
- 92% of walkers were extremely likely to recommend SHARP to friends & family

What SHARP participants said about walking:

“

The richness of me getting to know my sisters in a healthy environment instead of sitting in a house on the couch...So this program, I think it's an addition to the importance of staying healthy, staying involved and staying connected with the history.

”

“*This is helping me focus more on what I need to do for me.*”

What do Caregivers do in SHARP-CG?

For up to 16 weeks, caregivers walk 3 times per week with the person they care for aged 55 or over and a support person who is 18 years or older. Historic neighborhood images prompt memories and conversation while walking. Caregivers wear an activity watch that measures daily steps, heart rate and sleep. An under-the-mattress sleep sensor measures heart rate and sleep cycles. Weekly, caregivers complete a brief online health survey. After walking, a 16-week observation period is optional. Participants are compensated \$15 per weekly survey. Don't have a support person? Don't worry. We have older Black folks wanting to walk with you!

Who can enroll?

Up to 30 Black caregivers (aged 40+, can have memory loss) with their care recipient (aged 55+ with mild memory loss/cognitive impairment or early-stage dementia) will be enrolled. They must have lived or currently live in N/NE Portland for 10+ years. If you or someone you know is interested, please call Charles Fennell: 541-399-2846



Meet PreSERVE - A Place for Black Memory and Brain Health

Interested in learning about brain health? Want to be a community advocate for Portland's older Black community? Then meet PreSERVE Coalition for Black Memory and Brain Health!

PreSERVE formed in 2011 to fill a critical gap in our city—a Black centered approach to brain health to engage people in healthy, stimulating activities.

We are community members, retirees, healthcare workers, service organizations, and health researchers who are passionate about preserving the brain health and wellbeing of midlife and older Black Portlanders. We continually learn from our community about health priorities and concerns through community discussions. We collaborate with local groups on activities that enrich, enliven, and educate, like our signature Talk n' Taste events, and that celebrate the richness and vitality of Black culture.

PreSERVE meets the second Wednesday of each month, 9:15-10:45. Come join us!

If this is your calling, feel free to reach out to PreSERVE at preservehealthcoalition@gmail.com to learn how to be an active member.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.preserve-coalition.org/>



Community Recipe

Food is at the center of many of our celebrations. We enjoy the act of communion and revel in the sweet memories of the family-famous, and soul nourishing, dishes prepared by our loved ones. Good home cooking feels so familiar, warm, and precious. Even preparing a meal for family and friends can feel like a sacred act. Food impacts our social health in a unique way, but food has implications for our physical health, too. Like most things in life, what you put in determines what you get out. The Mediterranean-DASH Diet, or **MIND Diet**, protects brain health by

reducing oxidative stress and inflammation. Here, we introduce a recipe with components of the MIND Diet, created by Ms. Donita Andrews. Donita moved to Oregon from Bridgeport, CT at age 19 to attend Pacific University before moving to Portland and embarking on her journey to healthier eating. Donita shares her whole food plant-based lifestyle through group discussions, cooking demos and with family and friends that just enjoy dropping by for samples and new recipes. Donita has an Associate's Degree in Dietetic Technology, is a Retired Teacher, and a Master Gardener. She is certified through Rouxbe Online Culinary School's Forks Over Knives Ultimate Plant-Based Cooking Course. She enjoys giving support to others on living a healthier and more simplistic dietary lifestyle.



Vegan Alfredo

Total Time: 50 mins

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 4 whole Heads garlic
- 1 head of broccoli, chopped into florets
- 1 cup cremini mushrooms
- 1/4 cup low sodium vegetable broth
- 1 (16 -ounce) package of your choice of fettuccine (whole-grain, brown rice or veggie fettuccine)
- 1/4 cup unsweetened soy milk
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Fresh parsley, to serve
- Red pepper flakes, to serve
- Freshly ground black pepper, to serve

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400

Slice 1/2 inch off the top of the whole heads of garlic, exposing the surface of the individual cloves. Wrap the whole heads in foil and place in the middle rack of the oven, bake 35-40 minutes or until softened.

Combine the broccoli and mushrooms with the vegetable broth in a large skillet and saute' over medium heat until softened, about 6 minutes.

Cook fettuccine according to the package directions. Before draining, save 1/2 cup of the pasta water.

Remove the garlic heads from the oven and unwrap. Let cool enough to be handled before squeezing the heads into a bowl, eliminating the skins once finished. Add the soy milk, apple cider vinegar and salt to the garlic and whisk until creamy sauce is formed.

Add garlic sauce to the broccoli mixture plus the saved

pasta water and stir until evenly mixed. Slowly add the fettuccine and stir until coated.

Add the fresh parsley, red pepper flakes black pepper to taste and optional no-salt seasoning before serving.

ENJOY!



Black Joy!

We have much to celebrate in Spring. The days are longer, events are plentiful, and we can finally reconvene in person – there's just something about face-to-face that video chat can never replicate. It is a time of renewal, and a time for joy. To preserve the essence of Black love and joy in this newsletter we have asked you to share some of the things that bring you that Spring feeling. Here is what you have said:

A Mother's Love

Mr. Richard Hunter reminds us of the warmth of a mother's love by recounting stories of his upbringing:

I grew up in a big family. I have 7 brothers and 5 sisters (13 total). When I was born, I lived in a one-bedroom apartment house on N. Vancouver Ave. between NE Schyler and Broadway, just before they built the Minnesota Freeway (which is now I-5). All 7 brothers slept in one bedroom

and 3 of my sisters slept in the living room, my parents used the breakfast nook for their room. When I was 4, we were displaced from our home because of the freeway and moved to N. Haight St. Eventually our family was displaced again, and we moved right across the street and watched them tear down homes and eventually build Unthank Park.



I had a great childhood and have so many memories. The memory I missed the most about growing up was the memory of my remarkable Parents. God broke the mold when he made my mother. I was fortunate to have been raised in a community where most of the women were like my mom with 6-10 children or more. My mother worked so hard every day making sure all her

children were clothed and fed. I always saw her laugh and talk, whether it was with family, church folk, friends, or neighbors. She talked on the phone a lot, but she never missed a beat with cooking or house chores. I remember my parents bought a 25 ft long cord for the phone so she can stretch it all the way into the kitchen. Mothers are spoiled today because you can carry your cell phone anywhere in the house with you, put it on speaker or wear a Bluetooth. Even with all of today's technology, good, hard working and productive mothers like my mom are hard to find.

My father worked 2-3 jobs, pastored a church, was a carpenter and a mason. He made sure he took care of his family, providing for all our needs. My mother took good care of the home and managed the finances. She cooked and cleaned all her life. She always had dinner ready around the same time every day, consistently, for many years. She was one of the best cooks in Portland and many folks in the community always came by wondering what my mother cooked for dinner. She became the cake and pie baker in the community. She was involved with

the Rose City Minister's Wives and Widows and still had time to be involved with her children's issues. She was the one who took us to doctor and dentist appointments, stayed up all night when we were sick, went to school to meet with teachers, came to graduations and other events. My parents owned a few businesses and a couple were named after my mom: A restaurant named "Bernice's Country Kitchen" an ice cream parlor, and Bernice and Minnie's Secondhand Store. My father has his own remarkable story, but my special memory is about my mom. What I miss most about my mother was her great cooking and the way she made each of us feel like we were special. My mother was well known in the community and in the Church world. I was proud to be known as Mother Hunter's or Mrs. Hunter's son. People respected me because of who my parents were. My father died in 1979 at age 63. My mother died in 1994 at age 74. She outlived my father by 15 years. During those 15 years, I had a special relationship with my mother. She would always beat me calling her. She would call and say, "I haven't heard from you today, so I decided to give you a call." I have

not told half of my mother's story, but I will always cherish her memory and I still have plenty of stories to share about her.



Spring Cleaning – Clearing a Path to a Calm, Clear Mind

Ms. Joyce McGee shared about the joy that Spring cleaning can bring. As she reminds us all, having a clear space is key to maintaining a clear mind. We know how stress and mood can impact our mental, physical, and cognitive health. Maintaining our mood, and our space can go a long way! Organizations like Pick

Up Please will accept your donations on behalf of Vietnam War veterans, right from your porch. Ms. McGee shared that not only has she cleared 15 bags and boxes from the area she's working to declutter, she's also been able to write the donations off on her taxes!

SHARP Spotlight!

We've Hit 100!

SHARP team members have reviewed 132 SHARP walking narratives collected since 2017. We've also created summaries of 77 walking narratives. These summaries will serve as an index for community members, historians, teachers, students – whoever uses the digital oral history archive, to see the breadth of experiences shared in your stories. The accuracy of recordings and your integrity are our priority. We want everyone to be proud of what they have contributed before anything is posted to the SHARP oral history

archive. Nothing's been posted yet, but we're developing our SHARP community website where the archive will be housed. A participant once told me, "With all these recordings, you're sitting on a goldmine." She's absolutely right. Your stories and experiences, the lives lived and your witness to the strong Black community forged out of necessity, love, and resilience is golden, every ounce of it. When it's ready, the archive will truly be a stunning collection and a real treasure. Thank you for trusting us with this process and with your memories. We are honored.

From adding new technology, to working with caregivers, to walking in Washington and beyond – SHARP is expanding!

SHARP goes to Seattle

SHARP Seattle, funded by Seattle Neighborhoods Matching Funds, brought together many wonderful partners including the Central Area Senior Center, University of Washington (UW) Brain Wellness Center, King County Aging and Disability Services, UW School of Nursing, the Alzheimer's Association, Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Black Heritage Society of Washington State, and SHARP Portland's own Juell Towns who recently earned her Master's degree in Global Health from UW. The SHARP Seattle team created 12 SHARP routes unique to Seattle's gentrifying Central District. Thirty-two walkers completed 1 month of walking and shared community memories. Seattle had such success with SHARP that they are gearing up to create more routes and do another round of walking this summer.



SHARP Team in Portland – (left to right) Charles Fennell, Patrice Fuller, Annie Wachana, Launa Newby, Juell Towns, Raina Croff. Team members not pictured: Sophia Aron, Taryn Gordon

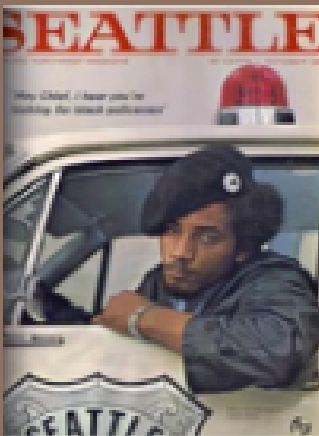
SHARP is Out & About in Oakland!

In October 2022, Dr. Croff presented SHARP narratives at the Oral History Association's National Annual Meeting. There, she heard Angela LeBlanc-Ernest present her collaborative work with, "Comrade Sisters" Women of the Black Panther Party, for which she wrote the discussion and resource guidebook. Angela was presenting along with her student researcher from University of California, Irvine, Micherlange Hemsley. The work of SHARP was so aligned with what they were doing - creating meaningful community conversations based on powerful historical images - that Dr. Croff felt she had to invite them to help create SHARP Oakland. Now, working with the wonderful photo collections from the African American Museum and Library in Oakland, Angela, Micherlange, and Dr. Croff created 10 routes to test in West and North Oakland neighborhoods. Stay tuned for more SHARP news from the bright side of the bay!



SHARP Seattle Participants and Sponsors celebrate walking success at the Central Area Senior Center

A Sampling of SHARP Seattle Memory Markers



Black Advocacy
in Madrona

Place: 34th Ave &
E Spring St

Marker #1: Black Panther Party,
Aaron Dixon, 1968

Prompt: 1. What did the Black Panther Party mean to you growing up? Do you see their impact today?

2. How have themes of Black resilience and advocacy come up in your life?



SHARP Oakland Team Member and Documentarian, Angela LeBlanc-Ernest

Remember Together

Call up a friend, sit with a grandchild, or just take some time for yourself to reminisce and reflect upon memories these images and questions bring up for you.



Image description: Hurtis Hadley constructing a tiered cake

Who is the baker in your family?

What were your favorite sweet treats growing up?

Who made them or where did you get them?

Did you have a favorite Portland bakery?



SHARP Oakland Team Member,

Micherlange Hemsley, B.A. in African-American Studies, UC Irvine, started her MA in Information last Fall!



Image Description: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church picnic

Spring is for picnics! Do you have a family reunion or a company or group picnic you enjoy?

Do you have a go-to picnic dish you bring?

What dish is a must-have for a good picnic?



The First Black Rose Festival Queen, Robin Marks 1980

Do you remember this Queen?

Do you have a favorite Rose Festival event?

What's your favorite thing about Springtime?

How will you get out and about this spring to enjoy yourself and the community?

Community Coffee Hours

To make information about Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias, clinical research, and local resources more accessible, we are hosting Community Coffee Hours at the Community for Positive Aging (1820 NE 40th Ave, Portland, OR 97212). Join us! Ask questions you have about healthy aging! Contact our outreach coordinator Channele Parris with more information: parris@ohsu.edu

Appreciation Brunch



In June 2023, we had the privilege of celebrating all of you at our **Annual Appreciation Brunch**! If you weren't able to attend, you were sorely missed. We enjoyed a delicious meal, photos with friends taken by Mr. Antonio Harris, and the lovely voice of Ms. LaRhonda Steele. The Layton Center Staff shared encouraging words and many thanks for the value of your volunteer efforts. Updates were provided on the AADAPt and SHARP Studies and current research participants were recognized for their contributions. We hope to see you again this summer – stay tuned for more information!



Community Events!




You're invited

**REACHing Us
Celebrating Black Culture
Health, and Resilience**

PORTLAND ART MUSEUM - FEBRUARY 6TH

Join the Multnomah County Racial & Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) Program and the ACHIEVE Coalition at the Portland Art Museum for an African-themed community gathering in honor of Black History Month. The event will take place in the Sunken Ballroom where we will review and highlight our past work and celebrate our continued partnership. You will also have the opportunity to experience the Africa Fashion exhibit.

Please RSVP with the QR code. Attendees are encouraged (but not required) to wear Black-designed or African attire.



February 6, 3:00 - 7:00 PM
Portland Art Museum
1219 SW Park Ave.
97205

REACH
GALA RSVP FORM

THE 39TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. TRIBUTE

POSTPONED

Due to inclement weather this event
has been postponed.

Postponed to Feb. 17th at 12:00 pm



**Join our
FREE EVENT**

When Health & Wellness Meets Economic Development

Join Multnomah County REACH, community organizations and local businesses for a networking event. Come learn, be empowered, for you and the community to grow in health and wealth together.

This Event Will Be Catered

**February 17th, 2024
12-3pm**

**1241 Lloyd Center
Portland, OR 97232
(Former Ulta Beauty Space)**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Dr. Khaleed Alston, ND**

Understand the connection between individual health and overall economic development.

There will be vendors at this event that will be providing information and selling their products. This is a free event open to all of the community.

Contact Michael Walker at
michael.walker@multco.us
or call or text (971)429-1560

Multnomah County Health Department
Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
REACH
Made possible with funding from the CDC

A Taste of African Heritage

Improve health outcomes in your family & community with traditional foods!

Join our cooking and nutrition education series and learn a healthy eating model.

Dates & Times
4 Virtual Sessions, 5:30 - 7 pm
Wednesdays; Feb. 7, 21,
March 6, 13

Register HERE



2 in-person cooking demos
Wed., Feb. 28 at the Isaka Shamsud-Din Bldg
Wed., Mar 20 at the Alders Common

Oregon State University Extension Service | rediscovr goodnss | **OLDWAYS** | **wic** | **REACH** | Multnomah County Health Department

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). For information on nutrition assistance through Oregon SNAP, contact Oregon SafeNet at 211. OSU Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services, activities, and materials. This flyer will be made available in an accessible format and accommodation requests related to a disability should be made by Wednesday, January 31st, to Meilana Charles at meilana.charles@oregonstate.edu.

Other Events

Black Artists of Oregon – September 9th – March 17th, 2024. About the exhibit Black Artists of Oregon – Portland Art Museum. At the Portland Art Museum 1219 SW Park Ave. Link for tickets – [Tickets](#) – Portland Art Museum

Albina Community Archive Release Party – A panel discussion with Kenneth W. Berry, Paul Knauls, Sr., Norman Sylvester, Calvin Walker, and Bobby Smith. Saturday, February 3, 2024, from 6pm to 9pm At the Oregon Historical Society 1200 SW Park. Free and open to the public.

The Black Children's Book Week Shoppable Virtual – Black Children's Book Museum Grand Opening! Saturday February 24, 2024 11:00 – 1:00 pm. A special museum opening in celebration of Black Children's Book Week and Black representation in children's books. Visit The Black Children's Book Museum!

2nd Annual 8 Seconds Juneteenth Rodeo in Portland at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum. June 16th, 2024 doors open at 3:00 pm and show is at 7:00 pm It will feature some of today's bravest riders, nastiest bulls, tastiest, food, and live beats from DJ OG One.

Thank you for reading!

Many thanks from our team:

Dr. Raina Croff

Charles Fennell

Patrice Fuller

Launa Newby

Taryn Gordon