



UL ENGAGE

Community Briefing

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AgeWell Ireland Project

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UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

UL Engage

share

enable

grow

Promoting University Community Collaboration

Project Aim

The aim of our project was to assist capture the essence of AgeWell in a concise brochure that could be given to community members.

Project Objectives

Our objectives included...

- Learning about AgeWell, its foundation, its function, and its effectiveness.
- Talking to members of the AgeWell program to understand its effect on Limerick.
- Creating a brochure that captures the key components of AgeWell

Project Rationale

This project was undertaken because AgeWell Limerick currently does not have a concise way of showing potential clients or donors what AgeWell is. The Limerick programme was the first AgeWell pilot to be launched in Europe and its culture is different than the pilots in Africa and America. Because of this, the Limerick programme is not very well represented by the AgeWell Global website. By creating a brochure with only the most important information about AgeWell, it will make it easier to attract clients and donors.

COMMUNITY

Overview of Community Organisation

AgeWell is a peer-to-peer programme providing companionship and health monitoring to people over the age of 60 in order to reduce loneliness, promote overall wellbeing, and keep people in their own homes as long as possible. The first AgeWell pilot launched in Cape Town, South Africa and was very successful, and even featured as a best-practice by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2015. The Limerick pilot launched at the beginning of 2017 and matches able people over the age of 60 with less able elderly people. The able, “AgeWell companions”, pay weekly visits to their clients to provide companionship and they conduct regular assessments on a smart phone app to catch early warning signs of mental or physical health problems. In the case of such detection, a care coordinator matches the client with the appropriate care in a timely fashion so that they can deal with problems when they are simple, and avoid more complex and costly problems down the road.



Community Partners

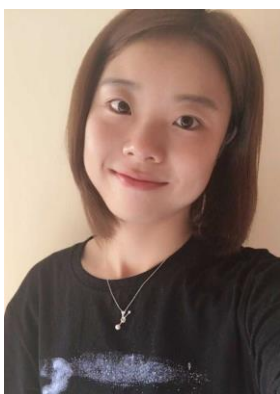
Carmel Boland and her partners, Deirdre Hogan and Shirley Byrne requested not to be photographed, however they were wonderful partners to work with. They oversee the AgeWell pilot here in Limerick. They trained the AgeWell companions and matched them with clients. They coordinate the meetings with AgeWell companions every two weeks and they provide a lot of support in dealing with any issues that may arise. Beyond their work, they set the tone for the AgeWell programme and ensure that it maintains its light and happy energy as well as keeping it highly effective.

STUDENTS



Trisha Nickerson– University of Kentucky

I am currently in my second year of college studying chemical engineering. I enjoy spending time with friends and family, being outdoors, and doing yoga. I am also very interested in holistic health and the connection between mental/emotional and physical wellbeing.



Shuqi Wu – Shandong University of Technology

SDUT is a public university of Shandong Province. It's one of the National key universities in China. I study Computer Science there. My studies focus mainly on computer software design. Because UL and SDUT have a programme together, I came to Ireland for one year as an international student. In China I usually do yoga and work out at the gym frequently. Also, almost every summer holiday, I have helped to do something for the elders in our community, such as cooking and delivering the food to them.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the AgeWell project on the community have been huge to those involved. We were able to interview AgeWell companions and, even though they were not the clients in need, they too have benefitted greatly from being involved in the service. For clients, it has enabled them to stay in their homes, feel less lonely, and actually improve in activity and wellbeing scores as shown in AgeWell's midline assessment of their progress.

Some quotes from people involved show that these impacts are real:

"I never thought I would be able to accept a stranger into my home. Now I have a friend. It's like winning the lotto" -AgeWell Client

"My Dad receives a visit every Wednesday. He is in great form when I get home- I love Wednesdays too now." -Family member of a Client

"I like it because it has brought me out of myself and I have even started to go back to the community centre for my dinners. I feel like I am not judged by the way I live." -AgeWell Client

"I am getting just as much out of it as my clients. After my kids graduated and I retired, AgeWell has allowed me to give something back." -AgeWell companion

The outcome of our brochure is unsure, as it is still being tweaked. However, we hope that this will enable AgeWell to spread their name and gain more financial support to keep the program going and reach out to more elderly people in need.

TESTIMONIALS

“Working with Shuqi has been wonderful. She has a lot of knowledge on caring for older people from her own culture and experience at home. She was also extremely thoughtful in all the work that she put into the project. She made time to visit the AgeWell location several times even though it was a trek to get there. It was great to learn about AgeWell with her and share our ideas.

This project has impacted me by introducing me to a non-profit organization and showing me a very effective model of care for older people, and other demographics alike.”

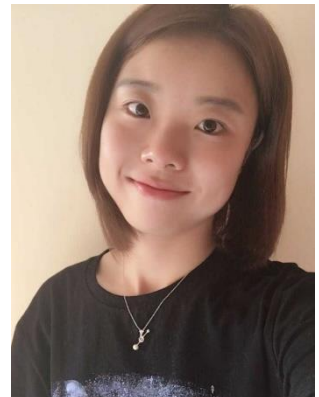
-Trisha Nickerson



“At very beginning of this semester, when I saw ‘AgeWell’, it interested me and I immediately wanted to work with that programme. I met Trisha, my partner. She is really a nice and responsible girl. We successfully managed a lot of things including our timetables, our assignment and the presentation. She did a lot for our project.

I would never have met so many of the great people in AgeWell if I didn’t choose this project. The whole project is so warm. Everyone there gets supported by both AgeWell Global and Carmel’s team in Limerick. They are highly connected. It’s magic when those AgeWells finally get the trust from their clients. And all of this only happened within several weeks. It’s an awesome project.”

-Shuqi Wu



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Capture photographs of companions and their clients from the Limerick programme to feature in the brochure and add to the AgeWell Global website.
- Find out about enhancing the information section about Limerick on the website.
- Create a short video that captures the essence of AgeWell to cut down the stigma of “in-home care” since AgeWell is not a caregiving service.
- Brainstorm fundraising methods or reach out to organizations or agencies that would be potential funders for AgeWell.

GALLERY



Rena is an AgeWell companion in the Limerick programme. She agreed to be interviewed and recorded to tell us what AgeWell has meant to her.

Greg is also an AgeWell companion who feels the programme has deeply impacted him. He also allowed us to interview and record him.



This is a picture of an AgeWell meeting that is held with all the companions every two weeks. Carmel, our project leader, is sitting at the head of the table.

APPENDICES

Brochure:


The AgeWell Impact

At the start of the programme, a baseline assessment is carried out by trained assessors on clients in their home. Areas assessed include wellbeing, loneliness, emotional and informational support, self rated health, and physical activity.

Clients are reassessed after several months to evaluate progress.

- Statistically significant increases were seen in well being scores, levels of social support, physical activity, and self rated health.
- A significant decrease was seen in loneliness scores.
- There was a 100% follow up rate with all 20/20 referrals by care coordinators to ensure that clients were matched with appropriate care in a timely fashion.

100% client satisfaction
All clients would recommend to a family member or friend.





If you or someone you know could benefit from weekly visits from an AgeWell companion...

If you would enjoy being an AgeWell companion to others...

Contact Carmel Boland at
carmel.boland@agewellglobal.com
087-796-0220

To learn more about AgeWell globally, please visit www.agewellglobal.com



"There's a quote that's really stuck with me and that is, 'Nowadays, we can send a man to the moon but we struggle to cross the street to have a chat with our own neighbour.'"

- AgeWell Companion

What is AgeWell?


AgeWell is a peer-to-peer programme providing companionship and health monitoring to people over the age of 60 in order to reduce loneliness, promote overall wellbeing, and keep people in their own homes as long as possible so they can... live well & age well.

Europe's first AgeWell pilot launched in Limerick in 2017.

AgeWell hires seniors called "AgeWell companions" to provide support to clients in their home.

- AgeWell companions are carefully selected, vetted, and trained before being thoughtfully matched with clients.
- AgeWells make a weekly home visit to each client and check in with phone calls between visits.


In 2015, the World Health Organization recognized AgeWell as a best-practice and featured AgeWell as a case study in the WHO's World Report on Ageing and Health.




Why does it work?

It creates friendships
AgeWells and their clients are from the same community and are close in age so they can often relate to one another and form a genuine, trusting bond. This combats loneliness and promotes mental and emotional wellbeing.

It uses technology to track health
AgeWells are trained to conduct a 20/20 assessment of their client every second visit using an app on their smartphones. The 20 questions and 20 observations were developed by AgeWell's committee of gerontologists to catch early warning signs of health or social problems. When an issue arises, a referral is automatically triggered by an algorithm in the app.




It is sustainable
The AgeWell companions are a very dedicated and compassionate workforce and they report that they "get just as much out of AgeWell as their clients". Both the service providers and recipients feel they truly benefit from this model of care.



Who can benefit?

Everyone! Clients, family members of clients, and AgeWell companions alike feel that the programme is truly beneficial and has enhanced their lives.



"I never thought I would be able to accept a stranger into my home. Now I have a friend. It's like winning the lotto."
-AgeWell Client

"My Dad receives a visit every Wednesday. He is in great form when I get home- I love Wednesdays now too."
-Family Member of a Client

"I like it because it has brought me out of myself and I have even started to go back to the community centre for my dinners. I feel like I'm not judged by the way I live."
-AgeWell Client

COMMUNITY VIDEO

Video Link: <https://media.heanet.ie/page/bcfda8773ea1aee83eeb90ef39d73bbe>

AgeWell Video Abstract

Our community project, AgeWell, is a peer-to-peer programme providing companionship and health monitoring to people over the age of 60. AgeWell hires seniors called “AgeWell companions” to provide support to less able older people in their home. AgeWell companions are carefully selected, vetted, and trained before being thoughtfully matched with clients. They make a weekly home visit to each client and check in with phone calls between visits. AgeWell aims to reduce loneliness, promote overall wellbeing, and keep older people in their own homes as long as possible.

To assist AgeWell, our goal this semester was to construct a brochure that our project leaders, Carmel, Deirdre, and Shirley, could use to more easily express the AgeWell programme to potential clients or donors.

Our group responsibilities included doing preliminary research on AgeWell by exploring their website and reading supplementary information specific to the Limerick programme. We then met with our project leaders several times to get a better understanding of AgeWell and what they hoped to accomplish with their brochure. We were able to interview some of the AgeWell companions and get a better idea of what this programme means to them. Shuqi attended two general meetings of the AgeWell companions and recorded and compiled videos for the final project. Trisha thoroughly read all the information available on AgeWell and created the first draft of the brochure. We both met with the project leaders and got feedback on the brochure. Trisha made the changes they requested and sent the second draft of the brochure back to Carmel and is awaiting feedback.

The importance of brochure is to inform more people about the AgeWell programme and gather more support for it, particularly financially. The AgeWell programme ends in December and to continue it and eventually expand it, more funding will be required. The brochure can be handed out people who are interested in learning more about AgeWell. It can also be implemented by printing out copies and leaving them on display at local hospitals and community centres.

Going forward, we will keep working on the brochure until it is exactly the way that the project leaders want it. AgeWell will continue to pursue more funding to continue the programme but they need to improve the Limerick programme’s presence on the AgeWell website by getting more pictures and videos from the Limerick pilot.



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