

IOWA

College of Nursing

Barbara and Richard Csomay
Center for Gerontological Excellence

2023 - 2024

IMPACT REPORT



**CSOMAY CENTER FOR
GERONTOLOGICAL
EXCELLENCE**

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Mission and Vision

Mission: To advance innovations in research, education, and practice to promote optimal aging and quality of life in all older adults and their caregivers.

Vision: Every older adult receives the *care* they want, when they want.



Director's Letter

Dear Csomay Center Community,

The Barbara and Richard Csomay Center for Gerontological Excellence is thrilled to share our 2023 - 2024 Impact Report. Over the last two years, we have seen immense growth and expansion across our initiatives as we connect, contribute, and create the future.

In the following pages, we highlight our impact and ways we have worked toward our mission to promote optimal aging and quality of life for all older adults and their caregivers. Guided by our strategic plan, we also illustrate how our programs and activities align with the five strategic pillars to: *a) support a diverse pipeline of interprofessionals, b) raise and maintain visibility, c) build diverse partnerships, d) advance age-friendly practices, and e) secure sustainable resources.*

Because of the generosity of Barbara and Richard Csomay and our other donors, our endowed Center will continue to impact and influence research, education, and practice related to aging in perpetuity. With an eye toward the future, we are also excited to share our future priorities and opportunities to engage with us.

Join us as we celebrate the journey of aging.

Sincerely,



Harleah G. Buck, PhD, RN, FPCN, FAHA, FGSA, FAAN
Sally Mathis Hartwig Professor in Gerontological Nursing
Director of the Csomay Center for Gerontological Excellence
University of Iowa College of Nursing

Meet the Team

Since 2022, the Csomay Center staff has grown from a team of two to a team of four, expanding the Center's capacity to make meaningful impact in supporting older adults.



Harleah Buck, PhD, RN, FPCN, FAHA, FAAN,
Center Director



Samantha Wittrock, MPH, MS,
Center Coordinator



Jennifer E. Jones, MHS-PH,
Program Coordinator,
Optimal Aging Initiative



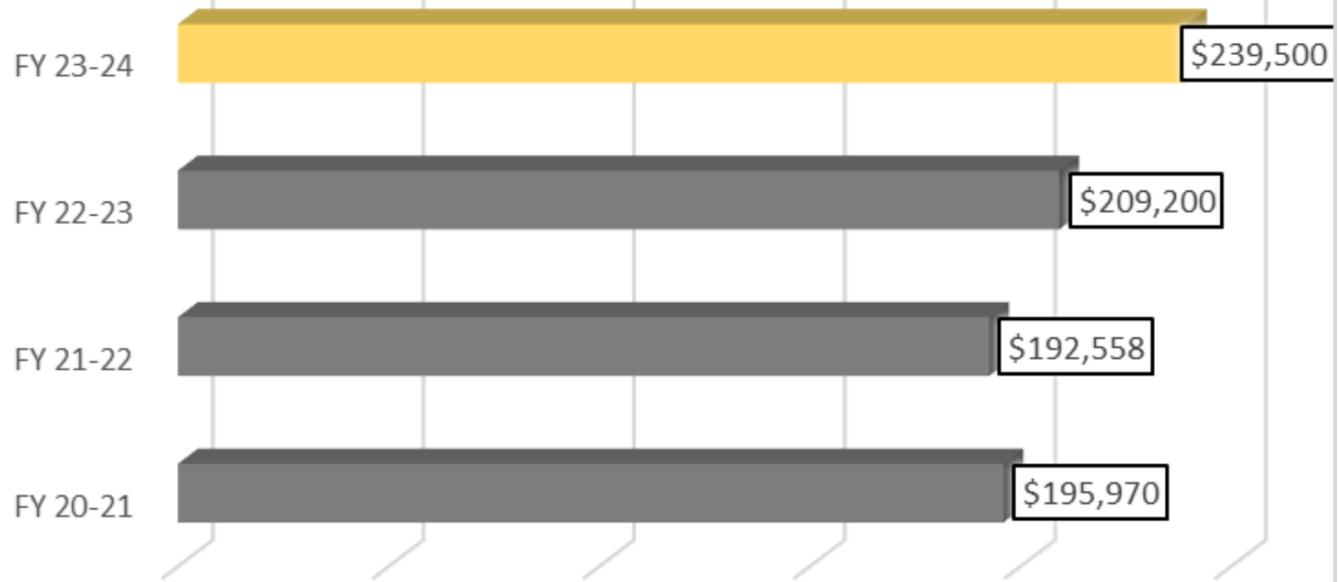
Susan Cui, MA,
Administrative and
Communications Coordinator

Center Leadership Team [🔗](#)

Because aging knows no bounds and every discipline should consider aspects of aging, the Csomay Center leadership team is made up of faculty and staff from the Tippie College of Business, the Carver College of Medicine, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (School of Social Work), and the Colleges of Law, Nursing, Public Health, and Dentistry. Whether it is related to healthcare policy or healthcare practice, social determinants of health, or our aging workforce, we likely have someone on the leadership team with related expertise.

Csomay Center by the Numbers

Csomay Center Budget Tracking



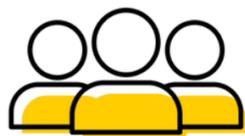
Over the past four years, the Csomay Center has seen a steady increase in its annual, endowed budget.*

*This does not include individual gifts.



16 students

from seven areas of study involved in Center activities



66 members

since January 2024



59 events

attended in the community in 2024



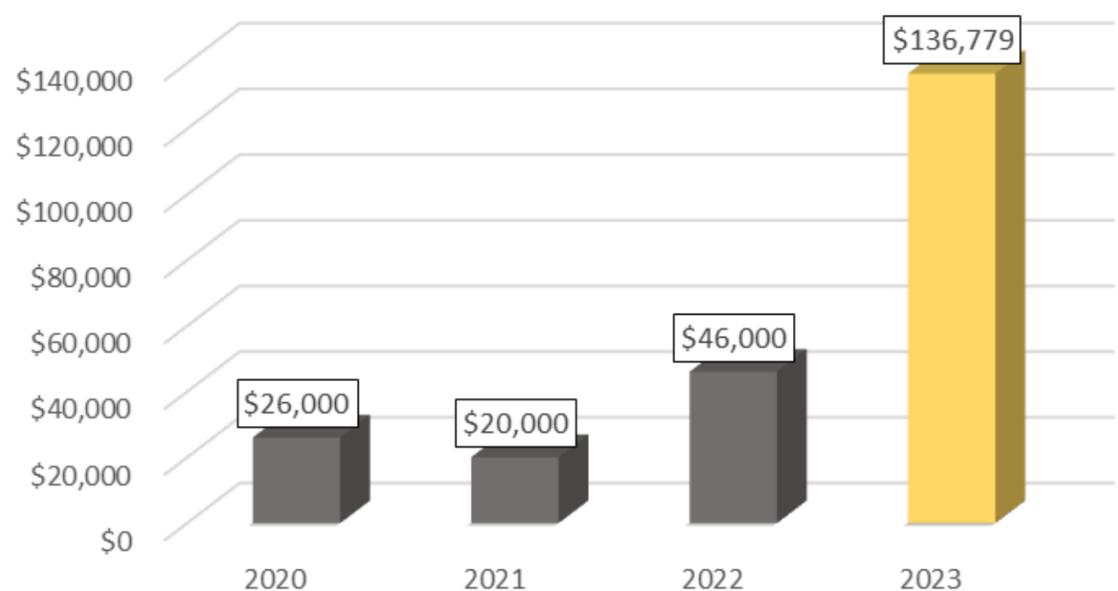
1,298 contacts

introduced to the Center in 2024



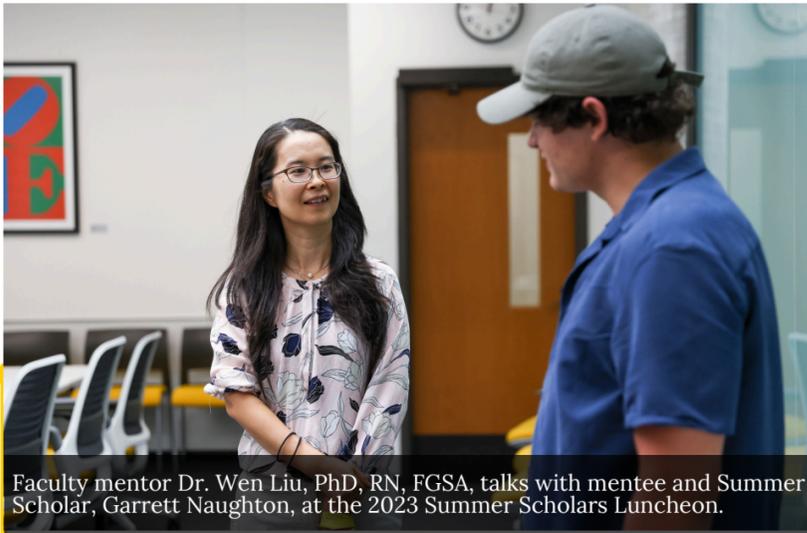
Center grant and research funding has also been increasing. There was a substantial 197 percent increase in funding awarded in 2023 thanks to the generosity of Center contributors and the establishment of the Optimal Aging Initiative.

Csomay Center Grant and Research Funding



Interdisciplinary Pipeline

One of the pillars of the Csomay Center strategic plan is “Support a diverse pipeline of scholars and practitioners from across disciplines,” beginning with undergraduate students. Student opportunities at the Csomay Center include:



Faculty mentor Dr. Wen Liu, PhD, RN, FGSA, talks with mentee and Summer Scholar, Garrett Naughton, at the 2023 Summer Scholars Luncheon.

OUR-Csomay Summer Scholars

The Csomay Summer Scholars program offers research experiences for undergraduate students in partnership with the [Office of Undergraduate Research \(OUR\)](#). A total of nine scholars were matched with mentors.

Areas of study represented include: nursing, public health, biomedical engineering, mechanical engineering, medical anthropology, and psychology.



9 scholars

Young Gerontological Nurse Clinician (YGNC) Program

YGNC is a one to three year mentored program for undergraduate nursing students interested in a career in gerontological nursing. The program continues to provide experiences that involve older adults in a variety of clinical settings.

Undergraduate Students

Graduate Students



Geri Hall Clinical Leader in Residence

The Geri Hall Clinical Leader in Residence program was established in 2023 to support leadership development for DNP students in the College of Nursing. Students in this role lead projects focused on interprofessional collaboration, innovation, and community partnerships with the priority of maintaining and updating the Geri Hall Progressively Lowered Stress Threshold (PLST) Model Repository.

2023-2025 Leader: Misty Brooks, BSN, RN, CMSRN



Summer PhD Student Intern

Established in summer 2023, the Summer PhD Student Intern program was designed to provide a leadership experience, offer a valuable learning opportunity, and continue to support the pipeline of professionals in the field of gerontology.

2023-2024 Intern: Alaa Harb, MSN, RN, PMHN



Spring Public Health Applied Practice Experience

In spring 2024, the Csomay Center hosted an Master of Public Health (MPH) Applied Practice Experience student for the completion of a practicum related to aging and older adults. This experience allows students to demonstrate professional competency in public health in a practice setting.

2024 Practicum Student: Sophia Abodeely, MPH

START

Interdisciplinary Pipeline

Beyond the opportunities designated for students, the Csomay Center offers two communities of support as well as supportive resources for students, scholars, and practitioners at various stages of their career journey.

Csomay Community of Scholars (CCoS)

[Learn More](#) 



86 members

Established in 2021, the Csomay Community of Scholars continues to grow and adapt to meet the needs of its members.

During academic year 2022-2023, participants expressed an interest in learning more about community engagement. As a result, CCoS hosted a series of six seminars featuring community partners as well as campus resources.



Members of the Csomay Community of Scholars pause for a photo at their end-of-year luncheon and planning session.

Pilot Grants

The Csomay Center typically issues four standing pilot grants per year. Thanks to donor support, there was a significant increase in 2023. Recent awardees are highlighted on page nine of this report.

Early Stage Researchers

Established Researchers

SUCCESS



Dr. May Guo, PhD, FGSA, Dr. Michelle Voss, PhD, and other attendees at the Aging Health Speed Networking event discuss their work and opportunities to collaborate.

Aging Hub [Learn More](#)

Comprised of members from junior/early-career and mid-career to senior levels, and across tracks and disciplines, the Csomay Center Aging Hub **seeks to promote aging-related funding opportunities, resources, and potential for collaborations at the University of Iowa and externally.**

The Aging Hub hosted an Aging Health Speed Networking event in partnership with the [Research Development Office](#) in fall 2023 with the intention of hosting another in spring 2025.



60 members

The support and mentorship provided by the Csomay Community of Scholars have played a pivotal role in fostering the refinement of my leadership capabilities. I organized seminars for faculty members and managed fundraising initiatives like walks in aid of the American Heart Association and the Alzheimer's Association.

- **Natany da Costa Ferreira Oberfrank, PhD, RN,**
Assistant Professor, University of Iowa College of Nursing

Funded Projects

[Learn More](#) 



The Csomay Center has been excited to increase project funding since 2022, thanks to generous donor support. While donors' aims may vary, the overarching goal is to promote both the generation of new knowledge and the translation and implementation of knowledge in practice to promote optimal aging and quality of life in all older adults and their caregivers.

Below are the projects funded in 2023 and 2024.

Year	Project Title	Principle Investigator or Project Lead	Funding Awarded
2023	<i>Natural Language Processing to Measure Person-Centeredness of Care in Older Persons with Palliative Care Needs.</i>	Alaa AlBashayreh	Barbara and Richard Csomay Faculty Research Award & Optimal Aging Initiative Project Award*
	<i>A Human Factors Approach to Understanding the Work of Older People Living with and having Surgery for Degenerative Spine Disease</i>	Andrea Strayer	Barbara and Richard Csomay Gerontology Research Award for PhD Students and Postdoctoral Fellows
	<i>Age-Friendly Practices in Public Health at Cerro Gordo County</i>	Betty Mallen	Optimal Aging Initiative Project Award*
	<i>Usability and Acceptance of the Fitbit Inspire 3 in Rural Older Adults with Type 2 Diabetes</i>	Chelsea Howland	Woodrow W. Morris Gerontology Research Award & Optimal Aging Initiative Project Award*
	<i>Survey and Action Plan to Increase Age-Friendliness in Johnson County, Iowa</i>	Daniel Liebrecht	Optimal Aging Initiative Project Award*
	<i>Community-engaged approaches to develop dementia risk reduction protocol and procedures for primary care settings assisting underserved mid-aged and older adults</i>	Juliana de Souza Talarico	Optimal Aging Initiative Project Award*
	<i>Online Gerontological Nursing Course</i>	Shalome Tonelli & Emily Griffin	Optimal Aging Initiative Project Award*
2024	<i>Clusters of Continuous Glucose, Sleep Monitoring, and Pain</i>	Alison Anderson	Barbara and Richard Csomay Faculty Research Award
	<i>Engaging Rural Adults with T2DM in Adaptation of a Physical Activity Intervention for a Mobile App</i>	Chelsea Howland	Barbara and Richard Csomay Gerontology Research Award for PhD Students and Postdoctoral Fellows
	<i>Circadian Rhythm and Neural Circulatory in Later Life Adults</i>	Chooza Moon	Jo Hoyt Freeman Dementia Education and Outreach Fund & Woodrow W. Morris Gerontology Research Award

*Indicates a newly established award (in 2023 or 2024).

Center Membership



Connect.



Contribute.



Create the Future.

Become a Member of the Csomay Center

Considering that one in five people in the U.S. will be over age 65 by 2030 (Rural Health Information Hub), our communities will need support and resources specific to an aging population.

The Barbara and Richard Csomay Center for Gerontological Excellence is uniquely positioned to bring people, organizations, and resources together to meet those needs. **We invite you to become a member of the Csomay Center as we connect, contribute, and create a vibrant future where we can all age optimally.**

Scan to Join



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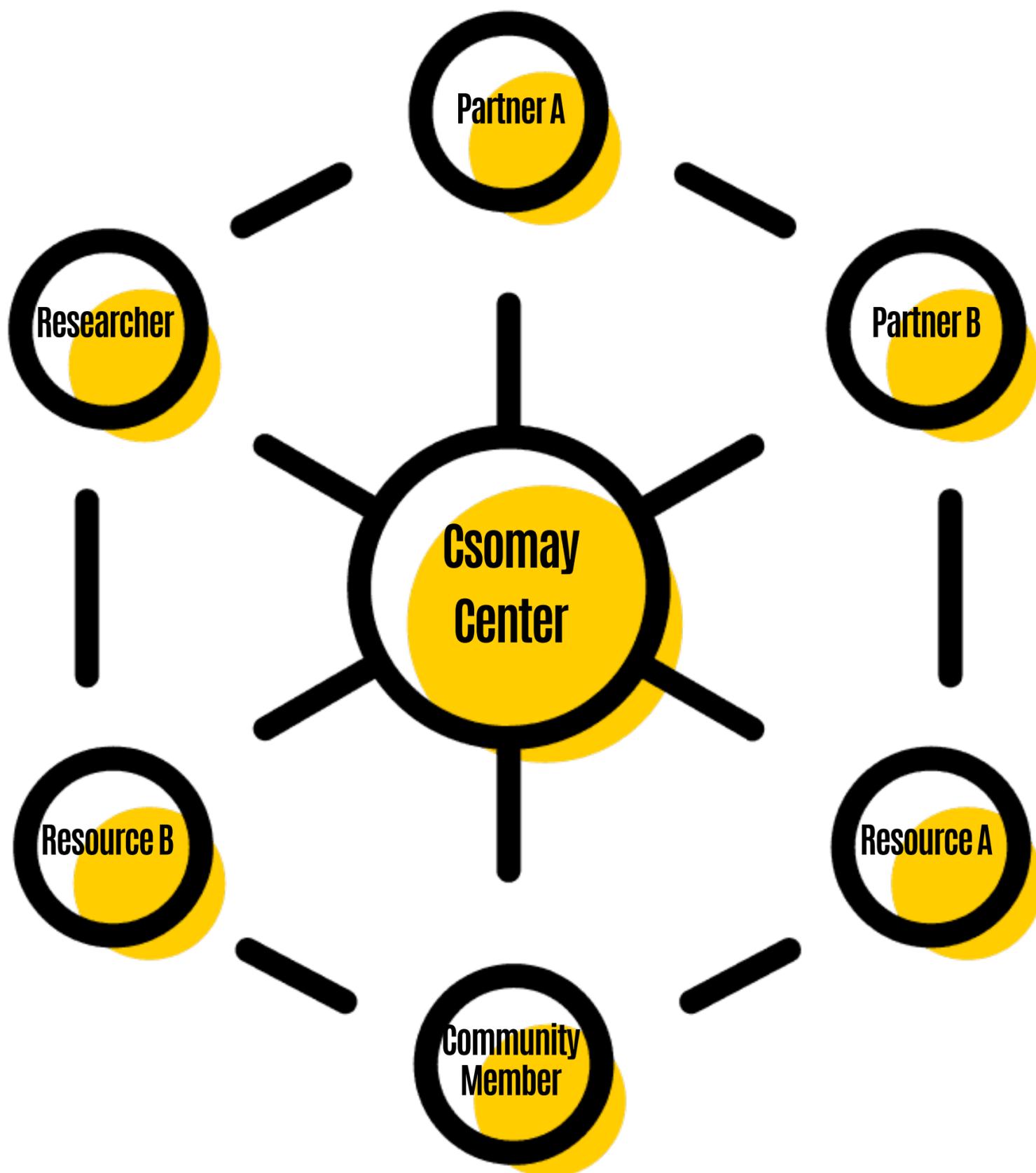
Visibility and Diverse Partnerships

Increasing Center visibility and building diverse partnerships via community engagement has given the Csomay Center the ability to impact aging and quality of life for older adults across Iowa.

Through engagement (and as illustrated in the graphic below), the Center connects:

- one resource to another because of the potential for collaboration or partnerships.
- the public to University and other resources to help with their aging and caregiving needs.
- researchers to populations who might participate in research, or who could benefit from the education provided by the researcher.

In this manner, the Csomay Center is contributing and creating the future of optimal aging.



We have developed a great partnership with the Csomay Center which has and will continue to improve aging in the community. The Optimal Aging Initiative recently provided crucial funding to help us progress in identifying strengths and areas that need to be developed to ensure that Johnson County is an AARP Age Friendly Community.

- Jeff Kellbach,
Aging Specialist, Johnson
County Aging Services

Center Events



Kay Weiler, Dr. Juliana De Souza Talarico, and others converse over pastries and juice at the Center Open House.

Center Open House - January 2024

In January, the Csomay Center hosted its inaugural Open House. Hosted by Kay Weiler, community partners converged to exchanging insights and perspectives about aging. Attendees had the chance to answer Center staff's favorite question: "How are you optimally aging?"

It was a dynamic occasion filled with camaraderie, valuable exchanges, and a shared commitment to enhancing the journey of aging which will be repeated in the future.

Visits from State Leaders

In late April and early May, the Csomay Center hosted visits with the Iowa Aging and Disability Services Division, along with the Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing. These meetings included the Dean of the College of Nursing, Deans from the other Health Sciences Colleges, and members of the Csomay Center Leadership Team.



Eugenia Kendall, Dr. Leo Marchini, Dr. Sato Ashida, Dr. Jennifer Margrett (Iowa State University), Jen Jones, Dr. Shalome Tonelli, and Jeff Kelbach discuss the State of Iowa's Multisector Plan on Aging (IA SAIL).



Dr. Harleah Buck giving her presentation on Florence Nightingale.

Nightingale Birthday Tea

The Nightingale Birthday Tea celebrated Florence Nightingale who was a pioneer in the field of Nursing. The celebration was hosted at Oaknoll Retirement Residence, a continuing care retirement community and Center community partner. Nurses gathered together to celebrate and share stories about their time in the nursing profession.

Eight over 80

In May the Csomay Center team attended the Eight over 80 award luncheon. Through this award, the University of Iowa Center for Advancement honors Iowa alumni, age 80 and older, who carry the Hawkeye spirit of achievement and continue to help others. The Csomay Center co-sponsors the event every year. The 2024 Eight over 80 award winners were: Tom Brokaw, Dr. William J. "Bill" Daniels, Robert M. Fleming, Dr. Jeffrey Knox, Luanne Puhl, Karen Spurgeon, Pamela Willard, and Robert "Bob" Wubbena.



Misty Brooks, Susan Cui, Jen Jones, Dr. Harleah Buck, Sam Wittrock and Alaa Harb pose for a quick photo before the Eight Over 80 Luncheon.

Other Events

Beyond those highlighted above, the Csomay Center has served as a sponsor, exhibitor, attendee, and planner at a number of mission-aligned events throughout the state.

Csomay Center Collective

The Csomay Center serves as a home for projects, programs, and initiatives. The relationship between the Csomay Center and members of the Csomay Center Collective is described as an "umbrella." Entities that join the Collective receive strategic direction, staff support, and sustainability planning to ensure each one has the resources necessary to perform their critical work.



Current members of the collective also support the Center's strategy to "advance age-friendly practices (i.e. practices that incorporate older adult care preferences, cognition, medications, or mobility).

GeriatricPain.org

GeriatricPain.org is dedicated to providing quality resources and tools for pain care for older adults. This site provides access to free evidence-based pain assessment tools, pain management strategies, and resources to help identify and manage pain in older adults.

GeriatricPain.org recently underwent a significant content update with the support of the Csomay Center that was launched in June 2024.

geriatricpain.org

Certification Center

The Certification Center develops and manages curriculum and testing for the direct care workforce in Iowa.

The Certification Center along with all 15 Iowa Community Colleges, the State Department of Inspections Appeals and Licensing, and facility-based training sites work together to ensure a well-trained, competent direct care workforce in the State of Iowa.



>14,000 exams
administered annually

Optimal Aging Initiative

The Optimal Aging Initiative seeks to advance discovery and adoption of age friendly practices across Iowa. Through community engagement and outreach, as well as collaborations and funding opportunities, the Optimal Aging Initiative has created an expansive network of people and organizations whose visions align with the initiative. These connections and partnerships contribute to the initiative goal:

Optimal aging for every Iowan.



Health/Caregiver Resource Fairs



Elder/Aging Consortium Meetings & Events



Csomay Center Community Presentations & Education



Disrupt Aging Classroom Facilitator



AARP

Future Priorities and Sustainability

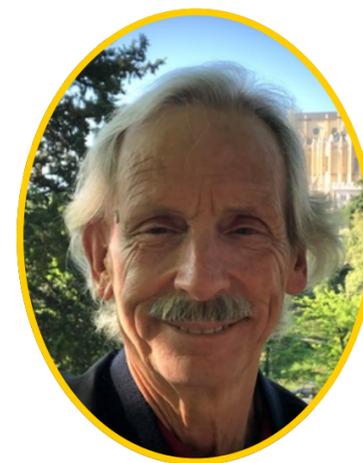
The Csomay Center aims to ensure the Center's future remains as bright as the past by *securing sustainable resources*. Below are the projects and efforts the Center will be prioritizing in the coming year.

- **Statewide Reach** - Expand partnerships into Central and Western Iowa to provide statewide resources and connections.
- **Student Engagement** - Increase student engagement with the Center by offering new opportunities and expanding existing programs.
- **Center Communication** - Launch a podcast spotlighting the stories of older adults and people engaged in aging-related work.
- **Project Funding** - Increase project funding awarded to support early career investigators and community initiatives.
- **Friends of the Csomay Center** - Identify and engage a group of Center members who will work with the Center Director to gain greater statewide and national visibility, broaden networks, advance partnerships, engage University leadership in aging as a priority, increase and diversify funding, and grow sufficient resources to support the mission and vision of the Center.

John Bowers, Center Member, on his involvement with the Csomay Center

"My association (since 2018) with the Csomay Center, its leadership team, and the University of Iowa College of Nursing has been gratifying, rewarding, challenging, and enlightening. It has helped to

- broaden the focus of my advocacy beyond improving care for persons living with dementia to include their caregivers, and further to all older adults.
- introduce me to nursing research and inspired me to participate in nursing research organizations and to take advantage of educational opportunities regarding nursing science.
- encourage me to participate in projects and activities of the Csomay Center/College of Nursing that were enabled/accomplished with my financial support."



To explore these or other opportunities to contribute:



Dayna Ballantyne

The University of Iowa Center for Advancement
Director of Development, College of Nursing

☎ 319-467-3727

✉ dayna.ballantyne@foriowa.org

To Donate



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