Introduction

- It is predicted that by the year 2050, the older adult population will increase by 42% (US Census Bureau, 2012).

- Depression is a significant challenge among older adults, with minor depression affecting 30% of long-term care residents and 8-15% of community dwelling older adults (Fulton, 2009).

- Approximately 45% of older adults experience isolation (Nicholson, Molony, Fennie, Shellman, & McCorkle, 2010).

- Nearly 32% of older adults meet the criteria for anxiety disorder which is more prevalent among older adults facing health challenges and disabilities (Porensky et al., 2009; Van der Kooy et al., 2007; Wetherell et al., 2005).

- The purpose of the project was to develop a pet therapy program for older adults, identify potential funding sources, and write a grant to fund the program at Jewish Family and Children’s Services of Long Beach and West Orange County.
Social Work Relevance

- As professionals serving people, it is the responsibility of social workers to provide aid and support to vulnerable populations. In regard to older adults, it is expected that social workers advocate for them and provide them with services and resources to meet their specific needs and help them maintain a good sense of well-being.

- Since the older adult population is on the rise in the United States, it is expected that the frequency of older adult-related issues will increase as well. Therefore, it is an opportune time to explore new approaches and treatment models for depression, isolation, and health-related issues for older adults. Then social workers can utilize alternative approaches, such as pet therapy, to better serve the older adult population.
Multicultural Relevance

- The aging process is a phenomenon that does not discriminate based on gender, ethnicity, race, or socioeconomic status. Ultimately, everyone ages.

- The city of Long Beach is well known for its cultural diversity (City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services [LBDHHS], 2005). Of the Long Beach population of adults age 65 and older, 9.3% are African American, 16.9% are Asian, 16.3% are Latino, and 55.5% are White (Beach, Crampon & Norman, 2014).

- Women make up 55% of the older adults in Long Beach (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), and women reportedly have a higher life expectancy than men (Ginter & Simko, 2012).
Methods

- **Target Population**
  - The target population for the proposed project will be adults, ages 65 and older, experiencing depression, anxiety and isolation who are residents of Long Beach and West Orange County served by JFCS Older Adult Services.

- **Selecting a Funding Source**
  - To identify potential funding sources for the proposed project, the grant writer utilized Internet research to explore federal, state, and local levels of funding. The grant writer looked at websites including grants.gov, getgrants.gov, ca.gov and the National Institute on Aging to identify sources at the state and federal level.
  - The grant writer visited OneOC in Tustin, California, to obtain assistance and identify potential funding sources at the foundation level. The grant writer utilized the FC search database to research different foundations for goodness of fit for the proposed program.
Methods Continued

- Selected Funding Source
  - After a thorough review of all the potential funding options, the grant writer determined that the Archstone Foundation was the best fit for the pet therapy program being proposed.

- Needs Assessment
  - Sources used for the needs assessment included a thorough review of the literature, The Long Beach Strategic Plan for Older Adults, The Rethinking Greater Long Beach Database, the California Health Interview, and the JFCS website.

- Budget
  - The proposed program has an estimated budget of $92,637.60 for one year of operation. Categories in the budget included Direct Program Costs/Salaries, Direct Operating Costs, and Indirect Costs.
Grant Proposal

• **Program Summary**
  
  Our proposed program will offer both individual and group pet therapy. The specific approach will be tailored to meet the goals and needs of each older adult. The group therapy will be geared toward older adults experiencing lower levels of depression. The individual pet therapy will be for older adults experiencing more severe symptoms of depression who will benefit from a personalized treatment plan with one-on-one animal interactions.

• **Target Population**
  
  The population will be older adults in the Long Beach and West Orange County regions experiencing depression, isolation, and/or anxiety.

• **Sustainability**
  
  This program has been developed to be continually implemented, so long as funding is secured each year.
Goal

The goal of the proposed pet therapy program are to increase the well-being and quality of life of older adults in the Long Beach and West Orange County regions.

Objectives

1) To provide individual and/or group pet therapy for 100 older adults in one year.
2) Older adult participants in pet therapy intervention will self-report significantly lower levels of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and feelings of loneliness as measured by pre- and post- test surveys.

Program Evaluation

- Data will be collected on program attendance and demographics.
- Satisfaction survey
- Geriatric Depression Scale, Geriatric Anxiety Scale, UCLA Loneliness Scale both before and after intervention
Lessons Learned, Implications for Social Work

- **Lessons Learned**
  - The grant writer developed many important skills as a result of developing this program including creativity, language skills in grant writing, attention to details, and budget development.
  - The grant writer learned the importance of having evidence from the literature review and needs assessment to rationalize the need for the proposed program.
  - The grant writer learned the importance of collaboration and how it would have been beneficial to be in more consistent contact with the host agency during the grant writing process.

- **Implications for Social Work**
  - Social workers should work to develop innovative programs and interventions that will provide support and treatment to older adults.
  - Since pet ownership has been shown to have a positive impact on older adults, it makes sense to incorporate animals into interventions for this population in ways such as pet visitation and pet therapy.
  - Grant writing is a very important skill for social workers to have and utilize.
References


