

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle WA 98124-4215
Office Address: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Ave, 51st Floor
(206)684-0706 * TTY (206)684-0274 * FAX (206)684-0689
Website: www.seattle.gov/MCAAE

February 18, 2022

Members Present – Sheila Mary, Claudette Thomas, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams

Members Absent – Dr. Benjamin Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Dr. Brenda Jackson, Paul Mitchell

Guests – Marigrace Becker, UW-MBWC, Edna Daigre

HSD/ADS Staff – Michael Bailey, HSD Deputy Director, Mary Mitchell, ADS Interim Director, Dinah Stephens, Karen Winston

I. **Sharing History Through Active Reminiscence & Photo-imagery (SHARP) Seattle**

SHARP Seattle co-leads Marigrace Becker, Program Director of the UW Memory Hub, and ADS senior planner, Karen Winston, presented information about the SHARP Seattle pilot. The Seattle pilot is a replication of the [SHARP Portland study](#).

The 2016 SHARP study was a six-month program in Portland's historically Black neighborhoods, created by Dr. Raina Croff, Assistant Professor of Neurology at Oregon Health & Science University. The SHARP Portland study aimed to maintain or improve cognitive health among older African Americans through increasing physical and social activity. SHARP is culturally celebratory and engaged participants in Black history building to motivate and sustain engagement. Dr. Croff's work focuses on how culture impacts health while striving to honor Black health and history.

Cognitive decline, including Alzheimer's, disproportionately affects older African Americans. So does gentrification. Participants in the Portland study had concerns about gentrification and its impact on their ability to healthfully age in place. Neighborhood and demographic changes left them feeling disoriented, pushed out, and invisible. In response, SHARP was designed to dually address individual healthy aging and community priorities of preserving history.

Dr. Croff's research sought to increase physical activity and social engagement among older African Americans in ways that celebrate culture, history, and community memory. SHARP is a culturally celebratory approach to brain health, that fosters connectivity and a sense of purpose. SHARP also provided a sense of healing from the loss of community, experienced as a result of the gentrification. It allowed older Black adults to be seen, particularly in areas where they had become less visible.

The SHARP Framework

The SHARP study blended three proven modalities (social engagement, reminiscence, and walking) to address multiple modifiable risk factors for cognitive decline that can be changed – isolation, depression, and cardiovascular health. This is critical because

Co-sponsored by:



City of Seattle



King County

African Americans are 2x more likely to develop cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s disease, due to health disparities in our society.

The SHARP study engaged Black adults ages 55 and older in groups of three – two adults with normal cognition, and one adult experiencing mild cognitive impairment according to a baseline assessment. These groups stayed together for 24 weeks, and their goal was to walk 3x a week. Health measures were taken, including blood pressure, weight, and cognitive assessments. Focus groups were also conducted to understand if the logistics were right, and what it meant in terms of cultural significance for participants.

A smart phone application was developed and applied on tablet devices. Each group shared one tablet. With the tablet, participants were able to access 72 themed walking routes. Each route was a one-mile loop, that begins and ends at the same location. At three points along each route are Memory Markers. The Memory Markers are GPS triggered historical images of some facet of history and community (before impacted by gentrification) including two questions. The total time/duration of each walk was recorded, including all of the conversations, which were preserved in a digital oral historical archive. This was how the project gave back to community and it was also one of the driving motivational forces for participant involvement.

SHARP Portland vs. SHARP Seattle

SHARP Portland	SHARP Seattle
6-month pilot	12-week pilot
3x a week, 24 weeks	3x per week, 4 weeks
72 themed walking routes	12 themed walking routes
21 participants	36 participants

The **SHARP Seattle Leadership Team** includes:

- Marigrace Becker, UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center (Co-Lead)
- Basia Belza, University of Washington
- Raina Croff, PhD, Oregon Health & Science University
- Dian Ferguson, Central Area Senior Center
- Stephanie Johnson-Tolliver, Black Heritage Society of Washington
- Lia Kaluna, Student, UW School of Nursing
- Tamera Keefe, Seattle Parks and Recreation Department
- Beverly Kimmons, Alzheimer’s Association, WA State Chapter
- Alice Mukora, UW ADRC Volunteer
- Juell Towns, UW MPH Candidate
- Karen Winston, Aging and Disability Services (Co-Lead)

SHARP Seattle Timeline

The leadership team recently completed two online focus groups with Black community members who used to live or currently live in Seattle's Central District. The purpose of the focus group was to help identify what is important to people, e.g., landmarks, events, people, etc. Themes from the focus groups will be used to develop the walking routes. In early summer, we will begin outreach and will have registration materials for the walking groups. The goal is to launch the pilot in July with a kick-off event and 36 participants. The walks will take place during the summer and end with a celebration event in the fall. Anyone interested in participating and/or know someone who might be interested, email SHARP Seattle at: FriendsOfSharpSeattle@gmail.com

Comment: There was a similar project in the CD that was created by the Black Heritage Society of Washington called Let's Take a Walk, based on a book by Esther Mumford. Another program, called Walking in Rhythm, where participants would walk while listening/remiscing to old tunes from the 20's and 30's. Remiscing is so important!

Question: You mentioned that each walking group will include one adult experiencing mild cognitive impairment. How safe will it be for those individuals?

Response: To be inclusive, the Portland study involved two adults with normal cognition, and one adult experiencing mild cognitive impairment. That was also a safety measure to ensure that the person with memory loss had a good experience. Unlike the Portland study, the Seattle project will not do cognitive assessments, but it will open to people with memory loss, so long as they have at least two people with them to provide support.

Question: What is the priority or what will you be looking for when recruitment begins?

Response: SHARP Seattle will engage people ages 55 and older, in groups of 3 with one adult experiencing mild cognitive impairment, who have lived or live in the CD, and who are able to walk at least one mile.

Question: How will you recruit participants, especially since so many who lived in the CD are no longer there?

Response: Planning team members, including the Central Area Senior Center, will help with the recruitment. Flyers will also be created to post on social media. We would also like MCAAE members to help identify participants.

Question: Is there an incentive for those who complete the 12 walking routes?

Response: One incentive is that participants' stories will be preserved in a digital oral historical archive, which was a motivating factor for the Portland participants. Another incentive will be a \$25 gift card.

Question: What kind of information will be compiled to keep people informed of the program?

Response: In addition to the digital archive, we hope to also create a website and video about the pilot, and when the walks are completed in the fall, there will be a community celebration.

II. ADS & Legislative Updates – Mary provided the following updates.

ADS

- Starting March 16, City of Seattle employees will begin returning to office. We are still trying to figure out the new normal.
- The work group that will guide the hiring process for the ADS director position was created. When the job announcement is ready it will be posted online and shared with MCAAE members to share with your networks.
- We are also working on an internal strategic plan for ADS operations, and also working to fulfill the goals and objectives outlined in the ADS Area Plan.
- Four case managers have been assigned to hospitals to assist with hospital discharging. The goal is to get patients discharged and connected to services. A few ADS subcontractors will also be asked to assist.
- HSD is currently having discussions with the Seattle Parks & Recreation Department and libraries regarding opportunities for increasing collaboration and awareness about the programs/services available. Michael will keep us updated on the progress.

State

- During the week of February 21, more information is expected about the budget proviso for the \$12 million ask for the case management program, and also the hospital proviso that would provide support for people who are not on Medicaid with discharge planners.
- The Public Needs Allowance - Senate Bill 5745 passed the senate. The bill will allow people to keep more of their income for personal care.
- The two WA Cares bills have been signed by the governor and is scheduled to be launched in 2023. Modifications to the bill included exemptions for Veterans and for people who live out of state but work in WA. Language was also added regarding the people who may be close to retirement.
- A lot of people participated in advocacy week and there were several of meetings with legislators.
- At the last W4A meeting the new DSHS Secretary, Jilma Meneses, joined. She has a background in civil rights, and she was the first chief diversity officer at Portland State University where she worked to optimize organizational culture and align diversity and inclusion goals with business and academic outcomes. She also held executive positions in risk management and affirmative action and equal opportunity at Oregon Health Sciences University. It was a good meeting.

III. Age Friendly Seattle Updates

Dinah Stephens is the new Age Friendly Manager for Seattle and will provide updates at MCAAE meetings. She started her position in December and is also a new Seattle resident. Dinah's background includes nonprofit work involving women's health and women's rights. She is passionate about health equity and looks forward to addressing this issue with the commission.

Dinah has been examining Age Friendly program accomplishments and read about collaborations with the MCAAE including Memory Sunday, Grandparent's Day, the African American Caregivers Forum: Legacy of Love, and advocacy for extremely low-income housing in Seattle.

What's ahead for Age Friendly – As the program approaches the end of its five-year plan, Dinah will continue reviewing what worked/didn't work; what to do more of/less of; and what should be revised for the next 5-year strategic plan. She anticipates that health and wellness be a big component of the plan and looks forward to more collaboration with the MCAAE. When the report on the first Age Friendly 5-year plan is completed, a copy will be shared with MCAAE members.

IV. MCAAE 2022 Advocacy Agenda - Tabled

V. Digital Equity Network

Update on [HB1723](#) – The bill passed out of the house and has moved to the Senate. It will require a public hearing that is scheduled for February 24, at 10:30 a.m. The Bill includes:

- 1) A **Broadband Assistance Program** to provide discounted rates on eligible voice and broadband services for low-income residents.
- 2) An **Anchor Institution Digital Equity Program** to provide discounted rates on connectivity/telecommunications services and infrastructure costs for schools, libraries, non-profits, low-income housing providers, Tribes, and others.
- 3) A **Digital Equity Opportunity Program** grant program to award grants to local communities and organizations for digital equity projects, to help with internet, training, support, devices, etc. This renames and expands the former Community Technology Opportunity Program. It also removes a match requirement.
- 4) A **Digital Equity Planning Grant Program** to provide grants to local governments, institutions of higher education, workforce development councils, or other entities to fund the development of a digital equity plan for a discrete geographic region of the state.
- 5) Continue the State **Digital Equity Forum** advisory council to provide recommendations on how the state can move forward in planning and applying a digital equity lens to broadband deployment and adoption efforts. It also adds a provision allowing funds to be used to compensate, for any work done in connection with the forum, additional persons with lived experience navigating barriers to digital connectivity.
- 6) Creates a **Digital Equity Account** to put the funds into, and allowing for federal, private, and other contributions to the programs, which could also be designated for one or more of the specific programs. The legislature will still have to allocate the funds for them to be spent.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next meeting will be on **Friday, March 18, 2022**.