

BAYCREST BULLETIN

A snapshot of Baycrest news and events - November 2021

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Learn a New Language to Boost Your Brain Health



In a new study jointly conducted by Baycrest and York University, older adults who studied Spanish showed similar improvements in certain critical cognitive skills as did those who engaged in brain training activities that targeted those skills. As well, those who learned Spanish reported greater enjoyment than those who engaged in brain training.

“These results indicate that older adults can reap cognitive benefits from an enjoyable activity in which they might want to participate, regardless of these benefits,” says Dr. Jed Meltzer, Baycrest’s Canada Research Chair in Interventional

Cognitive Neuroscience, a neurorehabilitation scientist at Baycrest’s Rotman Research Institute (RRI) and the lead author on this study.

“The participants in our study showed significant cognitive improvements without becoming nearly fluent in Spanish, which suggests that you don’t have to be bilingual for your brain to benefit from working with another language,” says Dr. Ellen Bialystok, Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of Psychology at York University, and Associate Scientist at the RRI.

In the study, 76 older adults aged 65-75 were randomly assigned to one of three groups: language learning, brain training or a waitlist (with no language learning or brain training). For 16 weeks, those in the language learning group spent 30 minutes a day, five days a week learning Spanish using Duolingo, an online language learning app. Those in the brain training group spent the same amount of time but used BrainHQ by Posit Science. The researchers assessed participants’ performance on specific cognitive tasks before and after the 16 weeks. These tasks were similar to the exercises in BrainHQ.

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They found that participants in the language learning group showed similar improvements as the brain training group in two areas of cognition: working memory and executive function – that is, the ability to manage conflicting information, stay focused and avoid distractions.

“Besides the cognitive benefits, learning a second language may enrich older adults’ lives in other important ways – for instance, by leading to new friendships or opening the door to a new culture or travel, helping them live life to the fullest,” says Dr. Meltzer.

This study was funded by a grant from the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI), with additional support from Duolingo. CABHI and Duolingo had no role in the study design, analysis or interpretation of results.



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The Brain Project People's Choice Winner

The Brain Project is a region-wide art exhibit of brain sculptures created by talented local and global artists that seeks to inspire people to think about brain health, and support Baycrest in its fight to defeat dementia.

This year's exhibit includes a selection of thought-provoking sculptures from past years, as well as new works of art that give us hope and courage.

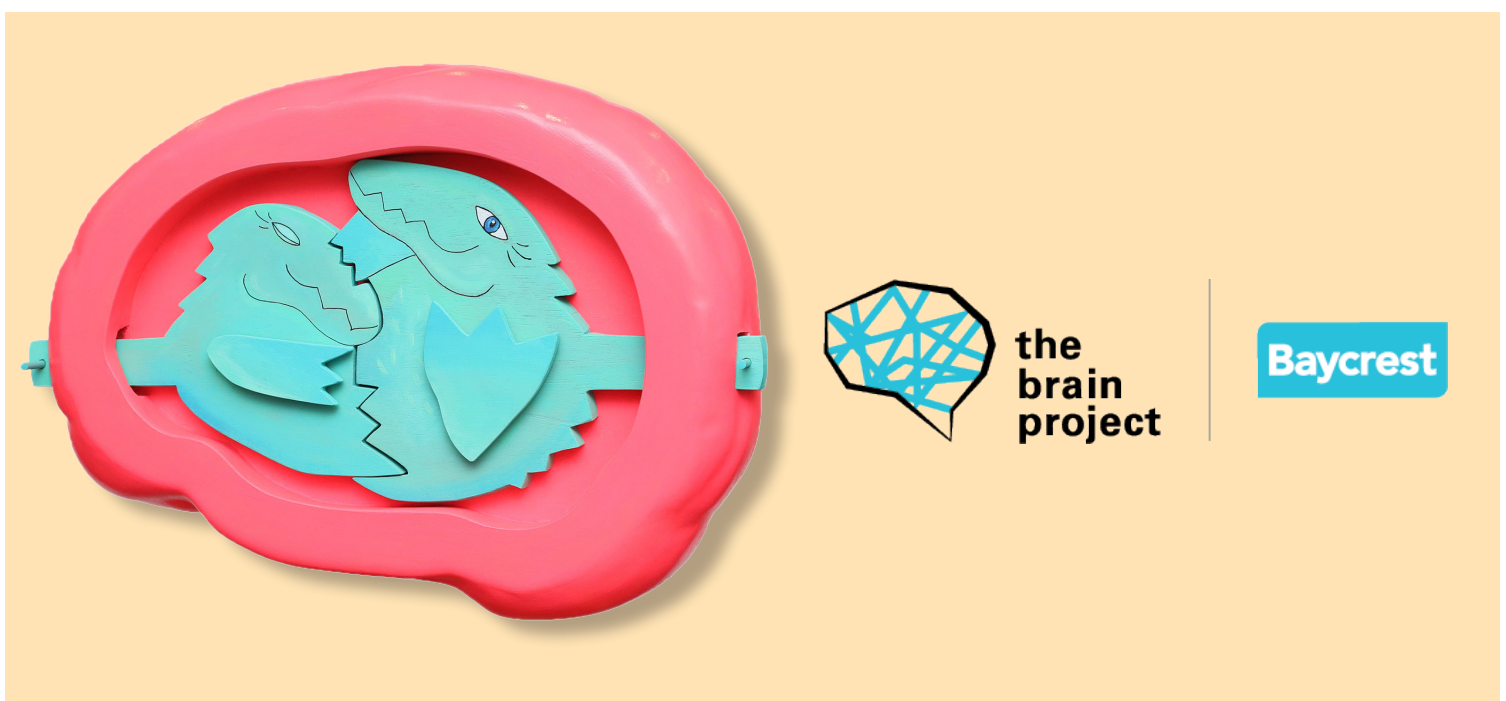
Now in its sixth year, the Brain Project continues to attract painters, sculptors, musicians, broadcasters, influencers, performance artists and creative thinkers who bring their own personal interpretations of brain health to a blank, brain-shaped, three-dimensional form using the mediums of their choice. The sculptures are displayed at a variety of prime locations throughout the GTA.

The Brain Project 2021 is recognized by the People's Choice Awards 2021, in which various artists are acknowledged for their sculptures and provided the opportunity to win this prestigious award. This year's winner is Basak Cansu Guvenkaya, a contemporary sculptor, painter and mixed media artist, whose Memory of a Hug sculpture features two dinosaur figures in a playful and interactive brain design.

In the artist's own words: “Memory of a Hug can be moved to make the dinosaurs hug or separate. The pieces fit like a jigsaw puzzle to become one. This sculpture represents the memory of a hug in good times. Like our memory, it can also become fractured and loose.”

On November 1, The Brain Project made its return to Yorkdale with an exhibit of multiple sculptures from this year.

Visit brainproject.ca to learn more or to purchase a brain.



Baycrest@Home: Helping Older Adults Live Safely, Happily and Longer at Home



Baycrest@Home, a new Baycrest service, empowers older adults to live safely at home by combining innovative technology and Baycrest's expertise in brain health and aging.

This innovative program delivers real-time, virtual access to clinical expertise for families and a rich offering of unique social programming for older adults. The service takes advantage of everyday technology to reach clients via phone, video and web.

Some of the programming offered through Baycrest@Home includes discussion groups, chair exercises, brain games, relaxation classes, instructional art, spiritual care and a storytelling club.



Families have access to a virtual home safety assessment, nursing support and assistance with navigating the health system. A number of pilot programs are currently testing connected devices to improve safety and comfort in the home.

With a strong focus on family caregivers, cognitive health and customized care, the Baycrest@Home team works with participants to identify the services they need and want.

One user said Baycrest@Home keeps his partner, who has Alzheimer's disease, interested and happily occupied for one to two hours a day. "They draw her out and I can hear her speaking, replying, singing. Routine is very important to someone with cognitive issues, and the program helps provide this structure," he said.

Right now, Baycrest@Home is offering a promotion to new members. For \$99 per month, members will receive unlimited access to more than 40 hours of LIVE dementia inclusive online programs every week, plus a vast library of archived classes and a variety of content.

Visit baycrestathome.ca for more information and use FREE30 at checkout for a complimentary 30-day trial. Scan the QR code below to learn more.



Updates, Questions and Comments

The health and well-being of everyone at Baycrest is our priority, and we are doing everything we can to serve the needs of our residents and patients during this time. Baycrest is committed to communicating with you about COVID-19. For the most up-to-date information, please visit the intranet or www.baycrest.org and sign up to get email notifications

when there are COVID-19 updates. Please also refer to the list of Frequently Asked Questions, which we continue to update. If you have questions or comments, please email covidquestions@baycrest.org

Innovation Updates - Upcoming Webinars



Free Baycrest Medication Management Service

Baycrest is piloting a new medication management service for older adults and their caregivers living in the community. This service is custom-tailored to each individual's needs and provides a combination of one-on-one pharmacist consultations and advocacy, an exploration of medication management devices and educational resources to enhance understanding of medications and how they interact. There are currently 20 spots available for this service. **To sign up, go to bit.ly/mmpilot**



Reminder: Upcoming Baycrest@Home Webinar - Thursday, November 18, 2021

Please be advised that the September 29 webinar "Supporting a Move to Long-Term Care for a Person Living with Dementia" has been postponed to November 18 at noon. Led by Laura Petta, attendees will explore the process of the weeks and days leading up to the move, as well as how to manage and cope with moving day. The presentation will also touch on the following components: where one fits in this new environment, an overview of responsive behaviours and why they might happen, the importance of Family Councils and the significance of self-care for caregivers. If you have registered for the September date, you do not need to register again. **If you have not registered yet, go to bit.ly/LTCandDementia**

Stay Safe. Get Your Flu Shot!

Getting your annual flu shot provides protection against influenza and helps fight the flu in our community. Influenza, like COVID-19, creates an increased risk of complications for those with underlying, chronic conditions. Vaccination is the best defense against the flu, and therefore, we must stay safe and protect our vulnerable client population.

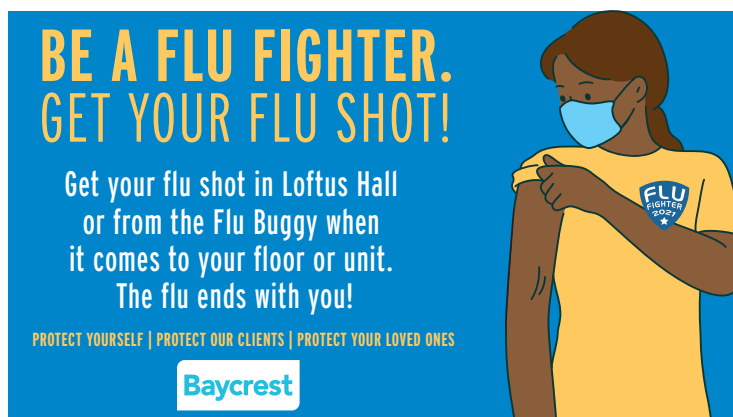
The Flu Buggy will be rolling out once again in October, as we launch the annual staff influenza vaccination campaign. Again this year, teams from different areas of the organization will be competing for the highest vaccination rates to win the Flu Champion trophy, as well as the Early Bird incentive for a team pizza lunch. This year, the pizza lunch will look a little different in order to adhere to all of the additional infection prevention and control protocols currently in place, but it will be just as delicious! Watch for more details on prizes on the intranet.

Where to get the flu shot:

- The Flu Buggy will be making its rounds on all clinical departments and units. The schedule will be made available on the units and on the intranet.
- Loftus Hall, located across the W.A. Café near the Apotex Entrance.

- Drop by the Occupational Health & Safety office on the second floor of the hospital, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Visit your own healthcare provider and provide OH&S with written confirmation that you've received the vaccination.

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that everyone on campus do their part to reduce the risk of infectious disease, not only to protect our vulnerable population, but to avoid any further strain on our healthcare system.



Baycrest



Baycrest is fully affiliated
with the University of Toronto

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