

BAYCREST BULLETIN

A snapshot of Baycrest news and events / February - March 2023

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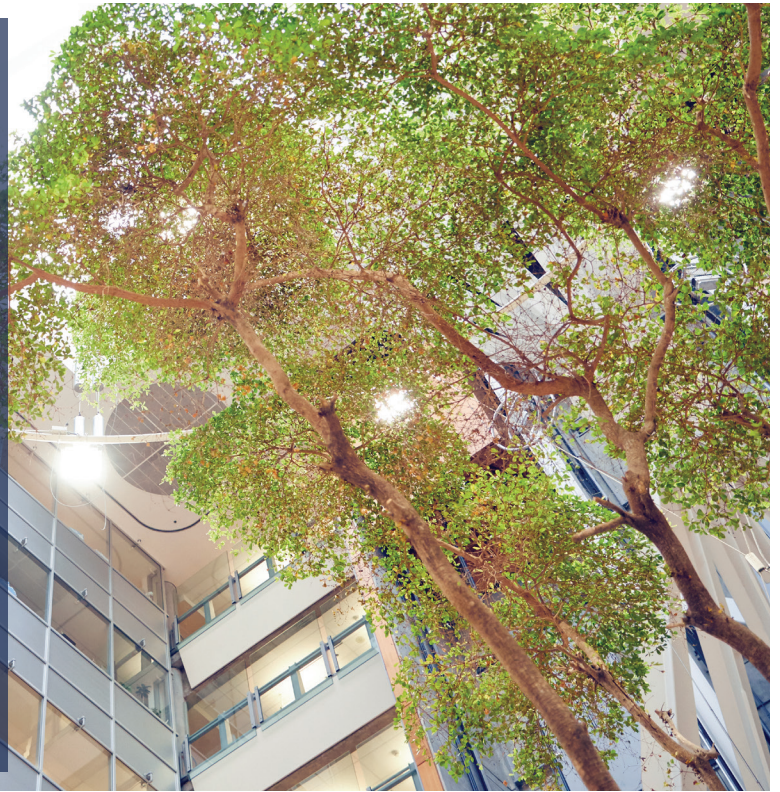
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New Smartphone App Shown to Significantly Improve Memory Recall



In a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, University of Toronto (U of T) and Baycrest researchers have demonstrated that their new smartphone application helps to significantly improve memory recall, which could prove beneficial for individuals in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or other forms of memory impairment.

Known as HippoCamera for its ability to mimic the function of the brain's hippocampus in memory construction and retention, the app enhances the encoding of memories

stored in the brain by boosting attention to daily events and consolidating them more distinctly, thus later enabling richer, more comprehensive recall.

In a two-step process, HippoCamera users record a short video of up to 24 seconds of a moment they want to remember with a brief eight-second audio description of the event. The app combines the two elements just as the brain's hippocampus would, with the video component sped up to mimic aspects of hippocampal function and to facilitate efficient review. Users then replay cues produced by HippoCamera at later times on a curated and regular basis to reinforce the memory and enable detailed recall.

"We found that memories with an associated HippoCamera cue were long-lasting, and that it worked for everyone in the study - healthy older adults, those starting to show cognitive decline, and even one case with severe amnesia due to an acquired brain injury," said study coauthor and Baycrest Senior Scientist Dr. Morgan Barense, Canada Research Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience who is leading the development of the app. "Many months after the initial part of the study ended, and participants had not watched their HippoCamera

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cues, they were able to recall these memories in rich detail.”

The study also found that reviewing memory cues with HippoCamera resulted in more positive sentiment during later retrieval. “So, there’s something about being better able to remember these events that made people feel closer to them and more positive,” said Barens, who is also a professor in the Department of Psychology at U of T. “This is a really important finding given what we know about dementia and the fact that positive reminiscence or focusing on positive life events and positive emotions can improve both memory and well-being in dementia.”

One key factor in HippoCamera’s effectiveness, the researchers say, is the sense of purpose and intention inherent in its use. By its very design, the intervention prompts users to think about what it is that they want to remember and why a particular moment is important to them, and then regularly re-engage with the memories in a meaningful way.

“Someone who is committed to using HippoCamera is going to go through their lives paying attention to what is happening to them, asking themselves if this is an event they

want to capture,” said Dr. Barens. “If it is, they’re going to take the time to stop and describe that event. And that act of approaching events in our lives with more attention is going to be good for memory. Then later, there’s an intention with how we study those memories, taking the time to review them using optimal learning techniques.”

The researchers note that as people begin to lose their existing memories at any point in their lives, as well as their ability to create new ones, they start to lose their sense of self. As a result, they often become disengaged from the people and events in their lives.

“Memory and our sense of identity are very closely linked,” said Dr. Barens, who is receiving support from U of T startup accelerator UTEST to take the app from lab to market. “We understand who we are as people by remembering the things that we’ve done. Our hope with HippoCamera is that by helping people feel closer to these people and events in their lives, we can help give them back their sense of self.”

Registration Is Open for the 2023 Rotman Research Institute Conference

This year’s Rotman Research Institute conference will take place virtually from March 20 to 21, 2023. The theme of this year’s conference is the Vascular System and the Aging Brain, featuring four plenary sessions, two interactive poster sessions and networking events with speakers and sponsors. Baycrest staff and students benefit from a discounted registration rate, with an even greater discount if they register by March 4, 2023. Visit research.baycrest.org/conference for more information.



Employee Spotlight: Janet Mangupag



Janet Mangupag, an aide in the Food Services Department at Baycrest, came to Canada from the Philippines in 2005 to work as a children’s caregiver. Soon after, she expanded her education with a personal support worker program, which helped her obtain a role in nutritional services at Baycrest.

When she started as a food service aide in 2010, she fell in love with looking after Baycrest clients. “I enjoy learning about them personally and their specific food preferences,” she says. “It is rewarding when they express their sincere appreciation after providing them with a love-filled meal.”

Attention to detail in food service is a craft in which she takes pride, from knowing how the clients like their eggs to what

seasonings or sauces they enjoy. “I believe it all enhances their quality of life,” she says.

“This position is more than a job for me; it’s like looking after my family. Not only do I take the time to get to know the resident in my care, but they also get to know me too. Knowing when I am away and expressing that they miss me is what makes going beyond worthwhile,” says Janet.

We appreciate and thank our Food Services team and all of our dedicated staff for their tremendous role in supporting our clients.

Show your Baycrest Spirit With *Fear No Age*™ Clothing

As Baycrest's *Fear No Age*™ campaign continues to be featured on television, in print and online, staff are encouraged to show their Baycrest pride. A *Fear No Age*™ clothing line of hoodies, baseball caps, t-shirts and zip-up track jackets is now available for purchase. Staff will receive an exclusive discount of **50% off** all *Fear No Age*™ merchandise.

Shop online at **Shop.Baycrest.org**. Staff can use promo code **STAFFMERCH50DISCOUNT** during the checkout process to receive their discount. *Fear No Age*™ clothing line orders can be picked up at the Baycrest Foundation office on Thursdays between 1 and 4 p.m. Should you have any questions, please email **BaycrestMerch@baycrest.org**.



CABHI Summit 2023

On March 22, the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation, powered by Baycrest, will host its fifth annual summit. The CABHI Summit 2023 brings together innovators, investors, older adults, caregivers, healthcare providers, buyers, thought leaders and companies from around the world to accelerate innovation in aging and brain health - all focused on improving the quality of life as we age.

The theme of this year's Summit is Daring to Disrupt: Reimagining the Aging Experience. The virtual event will feature stellar speakers, digital networking opportunities and an exciting agotech showcase featuring the top 20 finalists from CABHI's MC² Capital, in partnership with National Bank. Get your complimentary tickets at **www.cabhi.com/summit**.



**Thank you
Team
Baycrest**

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Innovation Updates



Free Virtual Concert and Live Musical Performance Saturday, February 11 from 2 - 3 p.m.

In partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Toronto, TO Live and Xenia Concerts, Baycrest@Home is proud to present this dementia-friendly online concert, broadcast over Zoom live from Meridian Hall. All listeners are welcome! Participants will be able to interact with each other and the artists, and ask questions in the chat.

Registration is required.

To receive the Zoom link, visit <https://alz.to/event/xenia-concert-ladom-ensemble/>.



Upcoming Caregiver Webinar: Dementia Risk Reduction Thursday, February 16 from noon to 1 p.m.

This month's presenter, Baycrest Senior Scientist Dr. Nicole Anderson will review the evidence for dementia risk factors, both non-modifiable and modifiable. Participants will hear about plans for Baycrest's Kimel Family Centre for Brain Health and Wellness, the world's first research-driven community centre that will provide and evaluate the efficacy of personalized dementia risk reduction programming.

Registration is encouraged here: <https://bit.ly/FebruaryCaregiverWebinar>



Introduction to Caregiving 101 & Ask the Experts (webinar) Thursday, February 23 at 7 p.m.

Join Yuliya Goloida and Selina Chan, Baycrest@Home Social Workers and Dementia Coaches, for an interactive information session. Focused on learning to care for someone living with dementia, the hosts will share an overview of "Caregiving 101: What Every Caregiver Needs to Know." Participants are invited to ask questions related to caring for someone with dementia or cognitive changes. Register now to participate in this free webinar: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jNE7C2neS5WPSc-KpzHthQ



Funding Opportunity for Staff Innovation Projects from BIO

The Baycrest Innovation Office (BIO) wants to hear about and support staff innovation projects across the Baycrest campus. Thanks to a generous donation from The Home Society, the team is now prioritizing staff projects that may qualify to maximize the impact of the funds. Up to \$10,000 in funding is available and may be used by staff to buy state-of-the-art equipment or other innovative solutions that enhance the quality of life for Baycrest patients and residents. Staff are encouraged to apply soon as proposals will be reviewed and funds will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. To apply, please complete this initial intake form: <https://bit.ly/HSFunds>. For any questions, please contact BIO at innovation@baycrest.org or at 416-785-2500 ext. 5454.

Baycrest

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