

Johnston County Osteoarthritis Project (JoCo OA) Update



Dear Friends:

How delighted I am to share with you the exciting things we have accomplished this year and what new things are on the horizon. This past year has been a productive one as we have progressed through our Time Three (T3) data collection with each of you. Over 200 of you have completed your interview questionnaires online! We expect to finish Time Three (T3) by Spring 2015 and have started planning our analyses and manuscripts. The *Johnston County Osteoarthritis Project* has hosted new studies such as Dr. Yvonne Golightly's *Limb Length Correction* study and Dr. Christine Rini's *Partners in Active Living Study* or PALS. Starting later this year, Dr. Kelli Allen from UNC's Thurston Arthritis Research Center will begin a new study on physical therapy and osteoarthritis in Johnston County. Dr. Leigh Callahan, also from Thurston, and I will be leading an important analysis of the association between osteoarthritis and other diseases like diabetes or heart disease. We are interested in knowing if having osteoarthritis may contribute to the development or worsening of other diseases or even shortens someone's life span. The data collected from JoCo OA over the past two decades (and counting!) will be the main source of information used for answering this research question. Part of this study will include our verifying the current status information for our participants. In this newsletter, we have included a short notice to inform you that our JoCo staff members will be making calls to confirm those who are still living in Johnston County and updating our files for those people who have sadly, passed away or have moved to another location.

JoCo OA Update, continued

Our successes in promoting arthritis research and the increase in the number of studies housed in Johnston County is largely due to your faithful participation in *JoCo OA* and your willingness to be contacted about future studies. Success builds upon success as they say, and we are happy to tell you that we are developing a local advisory board of people from Johnston County to help us chart our plans for the future. As we approach our 25th anniversary of the project, we are developing a plan for adding new people to the study to replace participants who have moved away, are physically or mentally unable to continue in the study, or who have died.

We are also very proud to announce that Dr. Leigh Callahan received the American College of Rheumatology's Lifetime Achievement Award in Boston, MA in October 2014. In addition to this prestigious recognition, Dr. Callahan is now leading the Osteoarthritis Action Alliance (OAAA) that moved its headquarters to the Thurston Arthritis Research Center. As you can tell, our enthusiasm and dedication to advancing research in osteoarthritis is in full stride! As I close this update, I want to say a heartfelt goodbye to three staff members and give a warm welcome to a new person. Please let me express my gratitude for the service of three outstanding women who have served this project with grace and distinction for many years: Linda Miles, Nancy Wade and Janice Woodard. Their contributions are extensive as professional, compassionate and creative team members of this study. Without question, the study became better because of their attention to detail and their devotion to both the science and the participants. We will continue to enjoy their friendship, but will miss them working alongside us. I am also happy to introduce Kelly Johnson, our new interviewer and research clinic examiner who joined us in August. Welcome Kelly!

Please enjoy this latest issue of the newsletter.

Retirements this year

Linda Miles

For 18 years. Linda Miles, the Administrative Assistant for the JoCo OA Project was the go-to person for many studies. She kept the participants' information updated, created forms for different studies and generally made the work easier for everyone on the research team. We will miss her experience, her willingness to always help and her friendship, but we are excited for Linda as she pursues other interests.



Nancy Wade

Nancy Wade served the Johnston County project for 13 years. Nancy says there is never a dull moment in the county because there all always new projects to work on and all of them are interesting. Nancy's smile and friendship have always been important to our JOCO family. Nancy will be missed by all of us in the office and the participants who have worked with her. Her future plans include time at the pool, the beach and having fun with her grandchildren.



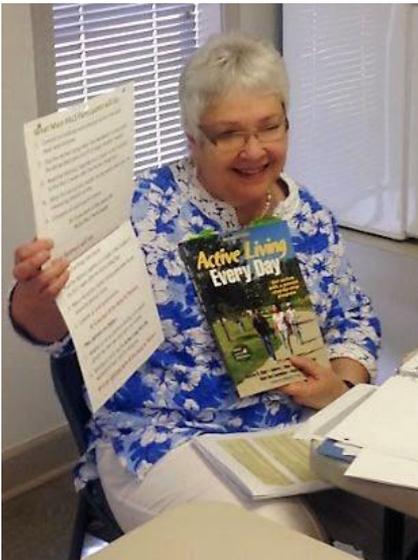
Janice Woodard

Janice Woodard, the Project Director for the Johnson County OA Project retired in November with 25 years of service. Janice excelled as the coordinator of over 15 projects in the county, all related to arthritis and how it affects our daily lives. Janice says she will miss the staff and the participants of the project, but is looking forward to spending more time with her family. She enjoys crafts and is hoping to spend some relaxing days in her craft room. Her contribution to the projects has been invaluable and she will be missed, but all of us wish her the best as she enters the next season of her life.



New Study Helps People Become More Active to Reduce Joint Pain and Stiffness

Do you have osteoarthritis or joint symptoms such as pain and stiffness in your hips or knees? You may be interested in a new research study that is a partnership between Johnston County and researchers at the Thurston Arthritis Research Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. These researchers are studying the best ways to help people become more active in their daily lives. Physical activity is one of the best non-drug treatments for joint pain and stiffness. The **Partners in Active Living Study (PALS)** teaches people easy ways to add physical activity to their daily life. It is focused on couples because research shows that people are most likely to increase their level of physical activity if their spouse or partner supports them as they try to become more active. The study is voluntary, confidential, and includes compensation of up to \$280 per couple. You do not have to be a member of the Johnston County Osteoarthritis Project to participate in PALS. If you would like to learn more about the study, a toll free number has been set up to provide information: (844) 966-7538.



UNC investigator Mary Altpeter leading a PALS “Active Living” class in the Johnston County Osteoarthritis Project offices in Smithfield, NC

“Once I got started it was easy. I made it a game. How can I find more ways to be active today? My husband helped me keep going when it was hard, or when I had to get going again after a bad day...”

--PALS participant--



In July, Drs. Yvonne Golightly and Amanda Nelson attended the International Workshop on Osteoarthritis Imaging in Reykjavik, Iceland. Participants at this 3-day meeting discussed new advances in X-rays and MRIs of joints with osteoarthritis. After the meeting was over, Yvonne and Amanda enjoyed the sights of Iceland during a 1-day bus tour with their fellow workshop participants and Yvonne's husband Chad and her son Grant.

A new study starting in Johnston County...

Dr. Kelli Allen from the UNC Thurston Arthritis Research Center will be enrolling participants with knee osteoarthritis into a new study that is comparing exercises taught from an online program with face-to-face physical therapy sessions. This project has great potential to impact health care performance and outcomes by evaluating strategies to improve pain, function, and other patient-centered outcomes among the large number of patients with knee OA. Johnston County Osteoarthritis Project participants who have agreed to be contacted about future studies will receive a call from our JOCO OA staff to see who is interested and eligible. As always, participation is voluntary!

New staff member

Kelly Johnson

Kelly Johnson joined the staff of the Johnston County Arthritis Project in August. She and her husband Mark have two daughters. Kelly enjoys relaxing at the beach, scrapbooking and the 2 Zumba classes she teaches every week. Her favorite thing to do though is to spend time with Mark and the girls. We welcome her to the team.



An Update: Keeping Current on Study Participants...

The Johnston County Osteoarthritis Project has been ongoing for 24 years. During this time, many of our participants have moved to other places, have decided to skip data collection activities due to health problems or sadly, have passed away. The study will be updating its records over the next two years to determine the current status of all the people who ever took part in the Johnston County Osteoarthritis Project. We hope to be able to find everyone so we have the most complete records!

You may receive a call from one of our staff members to ask you to confirm the information we have as correct (such as address) or if we need to update your information. If you know of anyone who was in the study but perhaps is not anymore, let him or her know that they can call us at 919-934-1295 to update us. We would love to hear from them!

We wanted to get the word out so our participants would know about this call. The information we collect will not only help us have accurate contact records for future data collections, but we will be able to analyze an important study question. Researchers are interested in knowing if having osteoarthritis may be associated with having more health problems and possibly a shorter lifespan than people who do not have osteoarthritis.

Spotlight on a JoCo OA participant

To celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary, David and Brenda Gooding's children gave them a trip to Seven Devils, N.C. to go Zip Lining. The trip included 11 trips down the Zip Line. Brenda said the view was awesome as they moved over mountain streams, swinging bridges, Christmas trees and the surrounding mountains. They are both ready to go again.



Tai Chi Lecture in Asheville, Dr. Paul Lam

On October 3, Sue Guin, our study radiology technician, attended a lecture in Asheville, NC on Tai Chi for Arthritis and all of its benefits. Dr. Paul Lam was the principal speaker, sharing how research has shown that Tai Chi for Arthritis has a positive impact on several aspects of health. Data have shown that Tai Chi for Arthritis can help prevent falls, relieve pain, reduce stress and promote general well-being. Sue was a certified instructor for Dr. Leigh Callahan's Tai Chi for Arthritis that took place in Johnston County.



Success Stories

Annie has been one of the many success stories coming from the Leg Length Study. After receiving the insert for her shoe of the shorter leg, she began to notice less hip and knee pain. She says at night when she removes her shoes with the insert and puts on her slippers, she can feel the hip and knee pain returning. She along with others in the study were amazed that something as simple as the inserts could make such a difference.



Annie West for
Leg Length Study



Photo shoot

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) chose Johnston County for a national campaign titled "The Faces of Arthritis". A team came to the county in August and took photos and videos of some JoCo OA participants to show how active you can be even with arthritis. Pictured in the pool (left to right) Smithfield residents Shelby Sellars and Elaine Langley; on the side was the CDC photographer.