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WKU's Bingocize program receives state grant to support research

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com Mar 29, 2019

Andrea Anderson

AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com

This summer, thanks to a new grant from the Kentucky Academy of Science, Western Kentucky University junior Andrea Anderson will run cognitive tests on older adults to research Bingocize, a program developed at WKU that combines a bingo-like game with exercise and health education.

For Anderson, a psychological sciences major from Benton, it's an opportunity she probably wouldn't have had otherwise, one that will give her an edge as she pursues her dream of becoming a clinical psychologist.

"It just always interested me to think about all the things that the brain can do," Anderson said, adding she's interested in doing both research and therapy professionally.

Anderson will be one of several students this summer conducting research as part of an ongoing clinical trial funded by the National Institutes of Health to study the benefits of the app-based Bingocize program.

Matthew Shake, an associate professor of psychological sciences at WKU, said the new grant from the Kentucky Academy of Science will support that work.

Researchers are working with senior centers across the region from as far east as Johnson City, Tenn., to Murray in western Kentucky. In a news release, Shake noted that older adults are often resistant to exercise, despite research-based benefits for cognitive and physical health.

"Many of the barriers they face are psychological: They are afraid to do it, believe it will be unenjoyable and aren't motivated to do it alone," Shake said. "The Bingocize clinical trial tests the efficacy of an app we developed here at WKU to overcome those barriers."

Shake added that students are vital to that work.

"Students such as Andrea are critical to the success of the project because they travel to senior centers throughout the region to administer a wide battery of tests to the older participants, both before and after three months of using the Bingocize program," Shake said.

– Follow education reporter Aaron Mudd on Twitter @BGDN_edbeat or visit bgdailynews.com.

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.

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