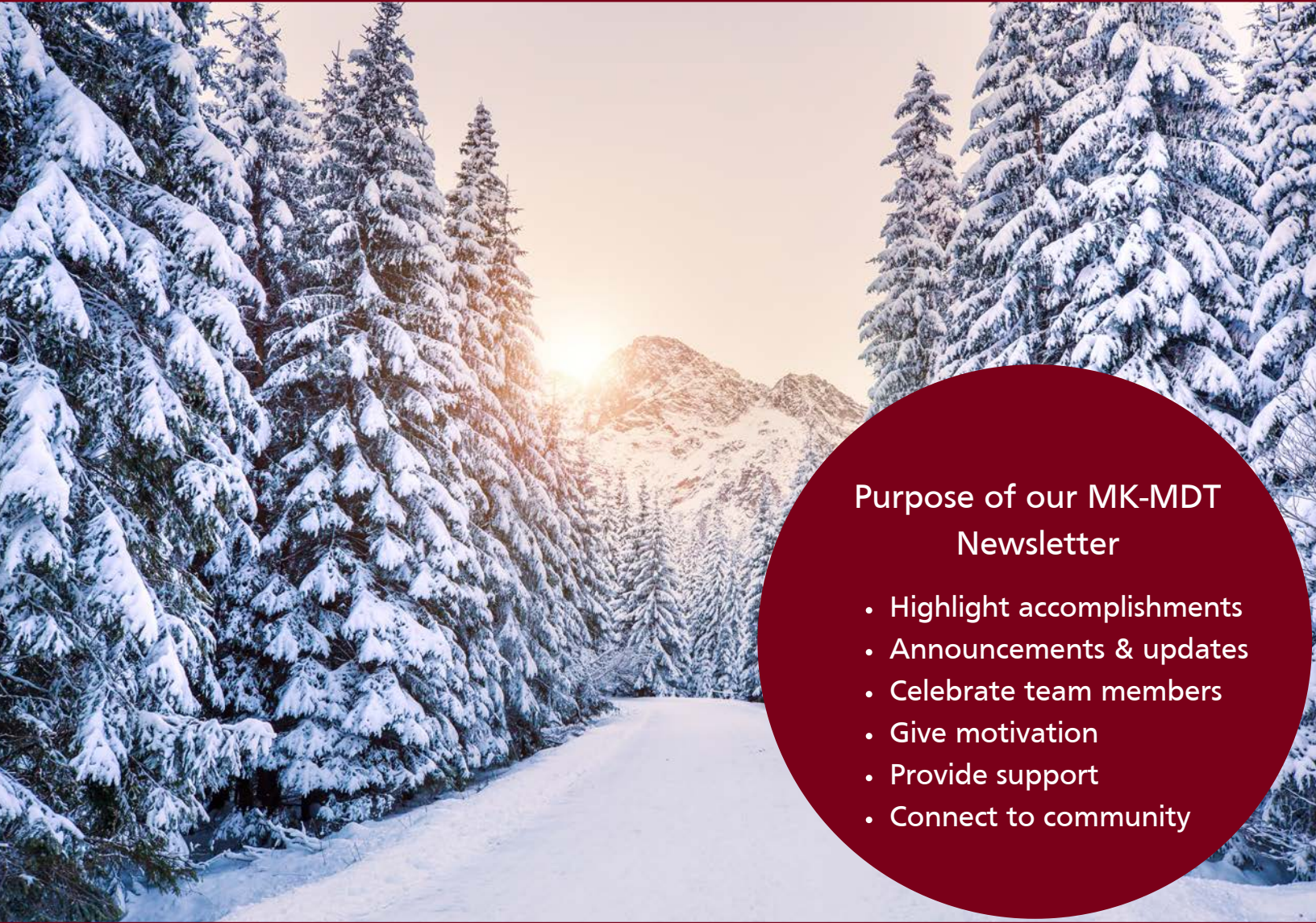


# KEEPERS QUARTERLY

Official Newsletter of the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team (MK-MDT)



## Purpose of our MK-MDT Newsletter

- Highlight accomplishments
- Announcements & updates
- Celebrate team members
- Give motivation
- Provide support
- Connect to community

**WELCOME TO OUR FIFTH ISSUE  
OF KEEPERS QUARTERLY!**



**Medical School,  
Duluth Campus**  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
Driven to Discover®

# MEMORY KEEPERS



## VISION

Transformative research for brain health equity.



## MISSION

Our mission is to engage Indigenous and rural communities in culturally meaningful research to improve dementia and brain health outcomes for all.



## VALUES

- Strengths-based lens
- Two-eyed seeing
- Team science
- Community-based participatory research
- Four R's of research: Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility

## 02-03 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Kristen Jacklin, PhD & Jordan Lewis, PhD

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## 04 RECENT NEWS AND EVENTS

IIDRN Conference, Lunch and Learn with Abigail Johnson, Elder Advisory Council Meeting, Staff Recognition at Glensheen & Dementia LIVE experience

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## 05 STAFF MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Shawn McMahon, MD, Margaret Noun, MSW, LGSW, Brian Clow, BA & Courtney Johnson, MPH

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## 06 CONTACT US

Contact Us, Upcoming Events & Careers

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# DIRECTORS' UPDATE

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

**Kristen Jacklin, PhD, Executive Director**

It is such a privilege for me to direct the amazing work being done by our staff and faculty at the Memory Keepers MDT. Did you know we have six community-based researchers who work for the MK-MDT at the University of Minnesota Medical School but in their own communities? We also have community advisory groups (CAG) across northern Minnesota who work closely with the community-based and university researchers on each research project. We are grateful for the time and commitment our CAG members give to support our mission. The contributions of the CAG members and the community-based researchers are vital to our community-based participatory research approach that is embedded in every project we work on.

We now have several funded research studies underway to help us learn how to best support Tribal Nations and rural Minnesotans experiencing increased rates of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Working closely with community-based researcher Martha Williams, Dr. Lewis leads a team with White Earth Nation adapting a caregiving model that has the potential to improve quality of life for current and past caregivers to people with dementia. Dr. Guzmán is in the beginning stages of a project that will determine if providing opportunities for caregivers and their loved one with dementia to use spoken word poetry, stories and songs can improve the caregiving experience and the quality of life for people living with dementia. This is just a small glimpse into some of our work with Tribal Nations. We also have an on-going program of research for rural Minnesota called the Center for Community-Engaged Dementia and Alzheimer's Research (CERDAR) that includes five projects. One of them is aimed at gaining a better understanding of dementia in rural communities through interviews and informal conversations that can help us develop programs that are meaningful to rural communities.

We have been fortunate to have welcomed new staff to our team since our last newsletter who you will see highlighted in this edition, and our new rural advisor Dr. Shawn McMahon, MD. I appreciate and am grateful to all the staff at Memory Keepers who bring diverse talents to our research and who show their commitment daily to our mission to engage Indigenous and rural communities in culturally meaningful research to improve dementia and brain health outcomes for all.

Wishing you all a lovely springtime!

Kristen Jacklin, PhD  
Executive Director, Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team

# DIRECTORS' UPDATE

## Jordan Lewis, PhD, Associate Director

It is hard to believe it is the end of March 2024 and spring is just around the corner. This past March 3, 2024, I celebrated 4 years with the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team and it is an incredible place to work. To be surrounded by passionate, qualified, and engaging staff and faculty has not only inspired my work but has pushed me professionally and let me know we do not need to do this work alone. My NIH grant was funded this past Fall, which is a partnership with the White Earth Nation, to enhance the Savvy Caregiver Program to develop and test a peer mentor component, and this is my first large grant that involves an intervention, multiple team members, and being trained to be a Savvy dementia caregiver. The focus on peer mentors comes from my interest in learning from our Elders and those who have the lived experience, and this study will work closely with Tribal members who have been a dementia caregiver in the past and will serve as a mentor for a community member who is a current caregiver for a relative living with dementia because we tend to listen and learn more from those who have experiences and knowledge from a situation we are currently experiencing. We also trust those who have similar experiences, and not only will current caregivers be paired with a mentor, but the mentors will also have opportunities to share their experiences, which gives them a sense of purpose and meaning, which improves their quality of life.

The other part of my work is based in Alaska and focuses on how Alaska Native Elders define successful aging, or as our Elders tell us, "how to age in a good way," or "age like your Elders." This study has been going on continuously for 17 years and we have completed 162 visits with Elders across the State of Alaska, and we have been honored and blessed by each Elder who has invited us into their home to listen to their stories and experiences over a cup of Lipton tea, smoked fish, and pilot bread. The warmth of their homes, the joys and sorrows of their journey, and the passion and commitment to sharing their lived experiences to be made available for all ages are memories I carry with me every day. We have learned that in order to "age in a good way" you need to have spirituality, community and family engagement, emotional well-being, Native ways of life, and generativity; all of these components are interconnected and enable them to age in a way that gives their lives a sense of purpose and meaning and step into that position as a respected Elder.

I also want to report that my last day with Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team is Monday, June 3. I will be returning to Alaska to serve as the Director of Research for the Center for Rural and Community Development and the Center for Alaska Native Health Research, which is a really exciting opportunity. This was a difficult decision because I absolutely love the work we are doing here in Minnesota, but we also look forward to being closer to our immediate and extended family and closer to the Elders and communities we have worked with over the past 17 years. We will stay connected to everyone here and look forward to finding ways to collaborate and continue supporting this important work.

Jordan Lewis, PhD

Associate Director, Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team

# RECENT NEWS AND EVENTS

REGISTER NOW FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS DEMENTIA RESEARCH NETWORK (IIDRN) CONFERENCE!

[WWW.IIDRN.ORG](http://WWW.IIDRN.ORG)



#IIDRN24  
OCT 20-23, 2024



## LUNCH AND LEARN WITH ABIGAIL JOHNSON

Dr. Abigail Johnson, Assistant Professor, Division of Epidemiology & Community Health, the inaugural C. Faster Diabetes, Memory, and Aging Scholar at the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team, gave a great presentation on “Exploring Dietary Patterns and the Human Gut Microbiome.”



## STAFF RECOGNITION DINNER AT GLENSHEEN

Leadership hosted a staff recognition dinner at The Glensheen Mansion to show appreciation to the team’s work by providing dinner and a tour.

## ELDER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

The Elder Advisory Council came together to discuss research updates, community engagement and any concerns.



## DEMENCIA LIVE EXPERIENCE

Northwoods Technical College came to MK-MDT to go through a dementia simulation. We broke into groups, went through the experience in rotation and came together for a discussion and lunch afterwards.



# STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

More additions to our team!

## SHAWN MCMAHON, MD

### Rural Advisor

Shawn McMahon is a family physician with over 30 years of serving rural community health needs. His practice included ambulatory care, hospital-based care, and long-term care with special interest in long term care and prehospital/emergency medicine.

As a Rural Advisor, Shawn collaborates with the Memory Keepers team, providing guidance and medical knowledge to support the research on dementia and Alzheimer's-related diseases.



## MARGARET NOUN, MSW, LGSW

### Research Assistant

Maggie Noun, MSW, LGSW, brings a background in social work and environmental studies. Maggie is interested in transformative change through research.

Her aims include helping to eliminate health care inequities and promoting person-in-environment care practices.

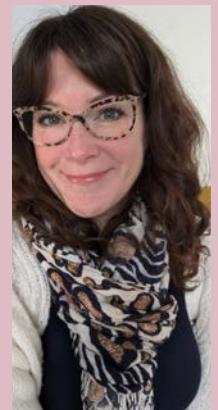


## COURTNEY JOHNSON, MPH

### Research Associate

Courtney joined the Memory Keepers team as a Research Associate in February 2024 and is working with Dr. Jordan Lewis on several projects. She comes from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus where she was previously working in clinical research within the School of Public Health.

Earning a Master of Public Health in Global Health from St. Catherine University in 2019, she was also serving as an adjunct in their MPH program, providing instruction for their Qualitative Research Methods course.



## BRIAN CLOW, BA

### Graduate Research Assistant

Brian is a graduate research assistant for the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team. He works where needed but is primarily focused on research related to successful aging in Alaska Native populations.

In June of 2023, he moved from his hometown of Las Vegas, Nevada to work toward his MA in Psychological Science at the University of Minnesota Duluth.



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Honoring Elder Wisdom Conference - April 15-17, 2024

ICARE Retreat - June 24-28, 2024

International Indigenous Dementia Research Network (IIDRN) Conference - October 20-23, 2024

## WANT TO BE A PART OF OUR TEAM?

We are hiring!

<https://memorykeepersmdt.com/careers/>

<https://med.umn.edu/memory>

### LEADERSHIP TEAM



### CONTACT US



**X (TWITTER):**

**@MemoryKeeperMDT**

**LINKEDIN:**

**<https://www.linkedin.com/company/memory-keepers-medical-discovery-team>**

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