



Message from Dr. Jennifer O'Brien PACT Study Principal Investigator

As the **PACT** Study moves forward, I continue to be inspired by the dedication of our participants. More than 3,400 participants have now completed their 3-year follow-up visit, and we anticipate that approximately 4,000 more participants will reach this important milestone by January 2028. The progress we have made would not be possible without the commitment and partnership of participants like you.

Since **PACT** began in 2021, many participants have been affected by hurricanes and other major weather events. This spring, more than 1,200 participants completed our Hurricane Experience Survey. Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences. Your responses will help us better understand how these experiences may affect the lives and health of older adults taking part in clinical trials.

I am also excited to introduce our newly redesigned **PACT** website at www.thePACTstudy.org. Created with you—our participants—in mind, the new website includes expanded information about the study journey, participant resources, and research updates. We are proud to share it with you and invite you to explore the new site. Be sure to see the article on page 2 to learn more about the website's new features.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the **PACT** Study. Every participant's contribution is incredibly valuable, and together, we are making an **imPACT**!

Inside This Issue:

- Message from Dr. Jennifer O'Brien
- PACT Study Update
- In the News
- Community Spotlight
 - Meet the Team
 - Participant Perspective

Locations:



- **Tampa, FL** –
 - (813) 974-6703
 - MCOM-tampapact@usf.edu
- **St. Pete, FL** –
 - (727) 873-4090
 - MCOM-sppact@usf.edu
- **Lakeland, FL** –
 - (863) 800-0835
 - MCOM-lakelandpact@usf.edu
- **Sarasota, FL** –
 - (941) 500-4447
 - MCOM-sarasotapact@usf.edu
- **Greenville/Seneca, SC** –
 - (813) 974-7552
 - MCOM-sagelab@usf.edu



- **Gainesville, FL** –
 - (352) 294-8314
 - PACTUF@php.ufl.edu
- **Jacksonville, FL** –
 - (904) 244-4695
 - UFPACT904@jax.ufl.edu

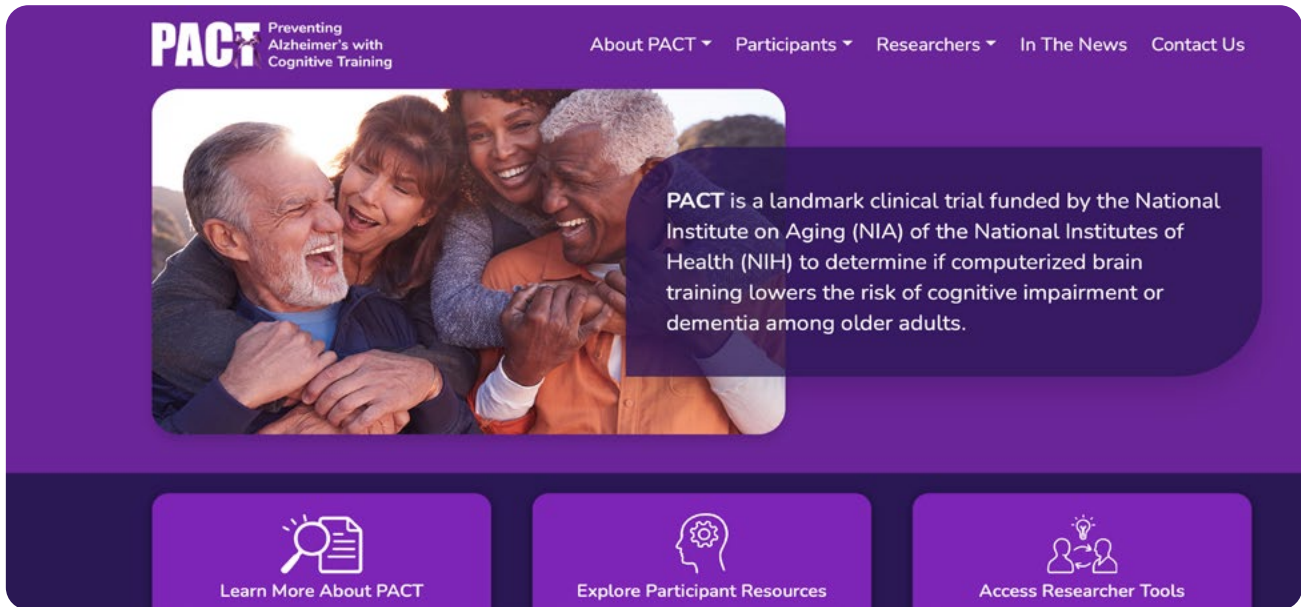


- **Durham, NC** –
 - (919) 668-3154
 - PACTStudy@duke.edu

PACT Study Updates

Explore the New PACT Website

We are excited to introduce the newly redesigned PACT website at www.thePACTstudy.org. Our community of PACT participants were at the front of our minds during this redesign. With a fresh look, expanded content and improved navigation, the updated website makes it easier than ever to learn about the PACT Study, find participant resources, stay informed about study news, and understand the participant journey from enrollment through follow-up visits.



Some highlights include:

- A new [Participants](#) section with information tailored specifically for PACT participants, with an entire page dedicated to [Study Newsletters](#).
- An expanded [PACT Study Journey](#) page (housed under the new **About PACT** section) that explains each phase of participation and what to expect along the way.
- A new [In the News](#) section highlighting the latest articles featuring the PACT Study as well as broader research news related to cognitive health and healthy aging.

We invite you to explore the new website and bookmark www.thePACTstudy.org to stay connected with the PACT community.

In the News

Continuing the Good Work Together

When challenges such as hurricanes disrupted daily life across the Southeast, PACT participants continued to show remarkable dedication to advancing Alzheimer's prevention research. That commitment is highlighted in a recent Spectrum Bay News 9 story featuring participant, Julie, and announcing an additional \$2.8 million in federal funding to support the study.

The continued support from the National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health reflects the importance of this research and the valuable contributions of participants like you. Every training session completed, follow-up visit attended, and survey answered helps move Alzheimer's prevention research forward.

Thank you for your commitment to the PACT Study and for continuing this important work together.

[*Read the full story to learn more about Julie's experience and the future of PACT.*](#)

Community Spotlight

Meet the Team – Marlayna Cromedy, Tampa, FL

Written in the Stars

Some career paths are carefully planned. Others seem to unfold one opportunity at a time. For Marlayna Cromedy, Site Coordinator for the PACT Study at the University of South Florida, her journey into research may have been written in the stars.



Before joining the PACT study, Marlayna's first research experience was far from the world of cognitive aging. As an undergraduate student, she participated in astronomy research and worked with a university planetarium. The experience introduced her to the world of scientific discovery and sparked an interest in research, although she had little idea where that interest would eventually lead.

After moving to Florida to complete her bachelor's degree at the University of South Florida, Marlayna became involved in psychology research focused on health and well-being. Around the same time, she enrolled in a class taught by PACT Principal Investigator, Dr. O'Brien. What began as a classroom connection soon led to an opportunity to serve as a teaching assistant and, later, a chance to help launch a brand-new research study called PACT.

Marlayna joined the study as a student volunteer shortly after graduating. Over the years, her role expanded from volunteer to Clinical Research Associate and eventually to Site Coordinator. Along the way, she also began pursuing a Master of Public Health degree, driven in part by her growing appreciation for research that focuses on long-term health and wellness.

One of the aspects of PACT that resonates most with Marlayna is its focus on non-pharmaceutical approaches to healthy aging. While many clinical studies center on medications or medical devices, PACT examines whether cognitive training may help support brain health. She appreciates that the study focuses on helping people maintain their cognitive health and quality of life through an approach that participants can use in their everyday lives.

What Marlayna enjoys most about her current role is the opportunity to work with a wide variety of people. From undergraduate students exploring research careers to graduate students completing theses, physicians, psychologists, and study participants, each person brings a unique perspective. She values being part of a collaborative team where different experiences and ideas contribute to a common goal.

Of course, participants remain at the heart of the work. Marlayna enjoys hearing the stories that participants share about their lives, careers, families, and motivations for joining the study. Some have personal experiences with Alzheimer's disease or dementia that inspired them to participate. Others simply want to contribute to research that may help future generations. Those conversations serve as a reminder that PACT is more than a research study—it is a partnership built on shared hopes for healthier aging.

When asked how she would like to be remembered, Marlayna's answer is simple. She hopes participants and colleagues see her as a friendly face—someone who is always willing to answer questions, provide support, and help others navigate their journey through the study.

For Marlayna, the most rewarding part of research is not just the data collected or the questions answered. It is the people she meets along the way and the opportunity to contribute to work that may improve lives for years to come.

Is there content you would like to see featured in our next newsletter? Please send to MCOM-SAGEmarketing@usf.edu with subject line "**Newsletter Ideas**"

Participant Perspective – Clyde

A Blessing, Not a Burden

For Clyde, a PACT study participant in Florida, living well means striving to be a blessing to others rather than a burden. Now in his late 80s, that simple philosophy continues to shape how he spends his time, cares for his health, and approaches aging.

Throughout his life, Clyde served others through church leadership and music ministry. Today, he remains active in his congregation, helping care for fellow church members and staying connected to the community he has served for decades. A man of deep faith and strong family ties, Clyde treasures time spent with his children and grandchildren. Through hospital visits and years of supporting others, he has witnessed the challenges that Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia can bring to individuals and families. While he has not experienced dementia within his own family, seeing its impact on others strengthened his commitment to maintaining his health and independence as he ages.

For Clyde, staying engaged is one of the keys to healthy aging. He enjoys meeting new people and values every opportunity to connect with others. In fact, he jokes that after a Sunday church service, if he hasn't met a new family, he feels like he has missed something. Building relationships, remembering names, and learning about others keeps him engaged and, he believes, helps keep his mind sharp.

His commitment to brain health extends beyond social connections. Clyde enjoys playing the piano, learning new songs, and memorizing music. He also stays physically active and believes that physical and mental health go hand in hand. Whether he is taking a walk, practicing music, or challenging himself with a new task, he looks for opportunities to keep learning and growing.

After seeing information about the PACT study online, Clyde decided to enroll. He quickly connected with the study team and appreciated that study visits felt like more than simply completing assessments. Over the years, he has enjoyed getting to know the staff members who have supported him throughout his participation.

One aspect of the study that especially appealed to Clyde was the opportunity to challenge himself. He enjoyed tracking his progress during the brain training activities and found motivation in setting goals and working to improve over time. While some days were more exciting than others, he embraced the experience as another way to stay engaged and continue learning. Even after completing the study, he hopes to continue exploring activities that challenge his mind.

Living alone following the loss of his wife several years ago has made Clyde even more appreciative of everyday interactions. Whether exchanging a smile with someone during a walk or spending time with fellow church members, he values the opportunity to connect with others and brighten someone's day.

When asked what message he would like to share with others, Clyde returned to the philosophy that has guided him throughout his life: be thankful to God for the blessings you have been given and look for ways to be a blessing to others. He believes that helping others ultimately enriches your own life as well.

Through his commitment to staying active, connected, and engaged, Clyde reminds us that healthy aging is not simply about adding years to life, it is about continuing to live with purpose. His goal remains the same today as it has throughout his life: to be a blessing, not a burden.



Thank you for your contribution and commitment to the fight against dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease.

For updates on the PACT study, visit www.thePACTstudy.org.