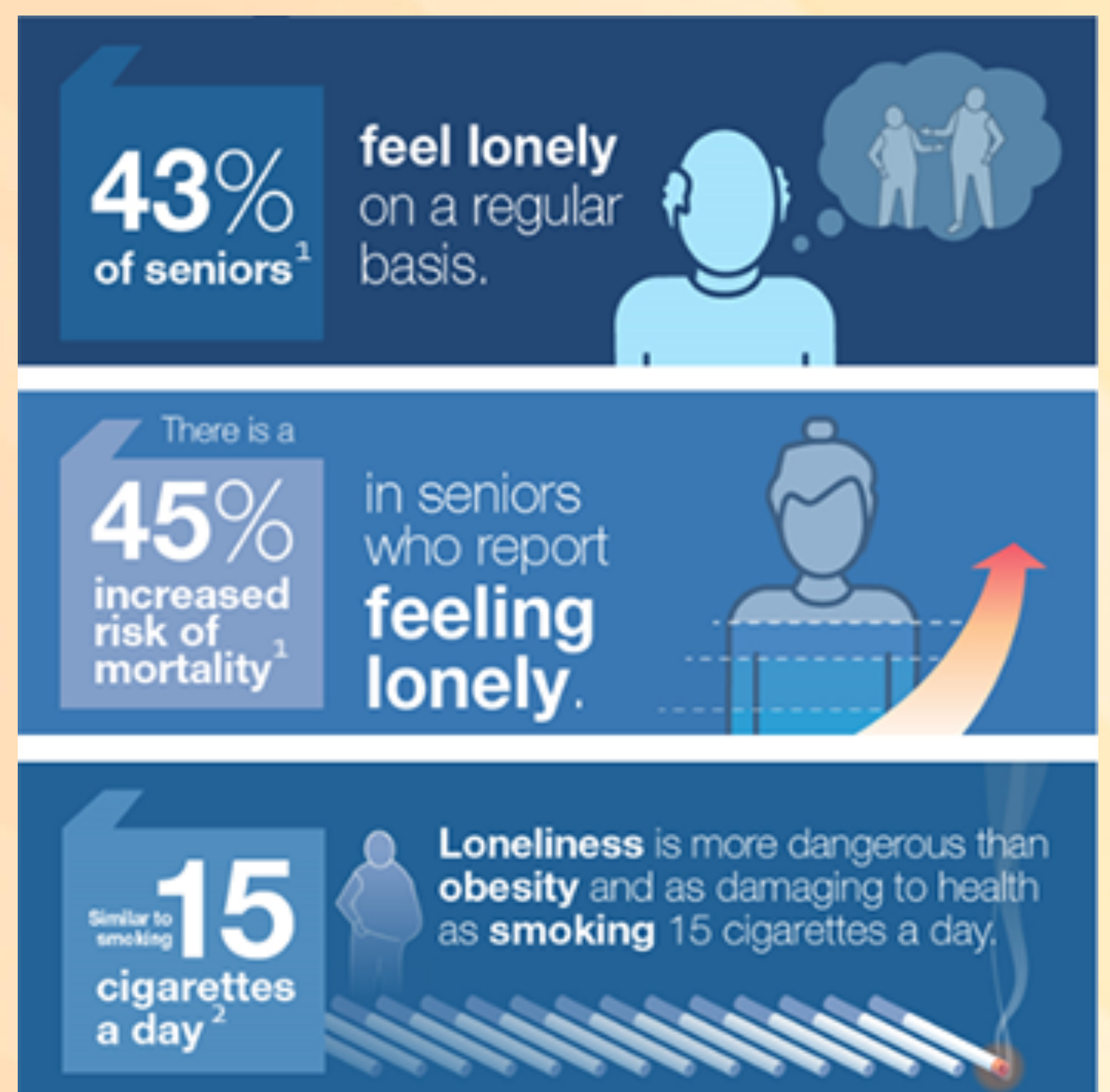


Beacon Communities, LLC and the CSCGE- Virtual Travel Program

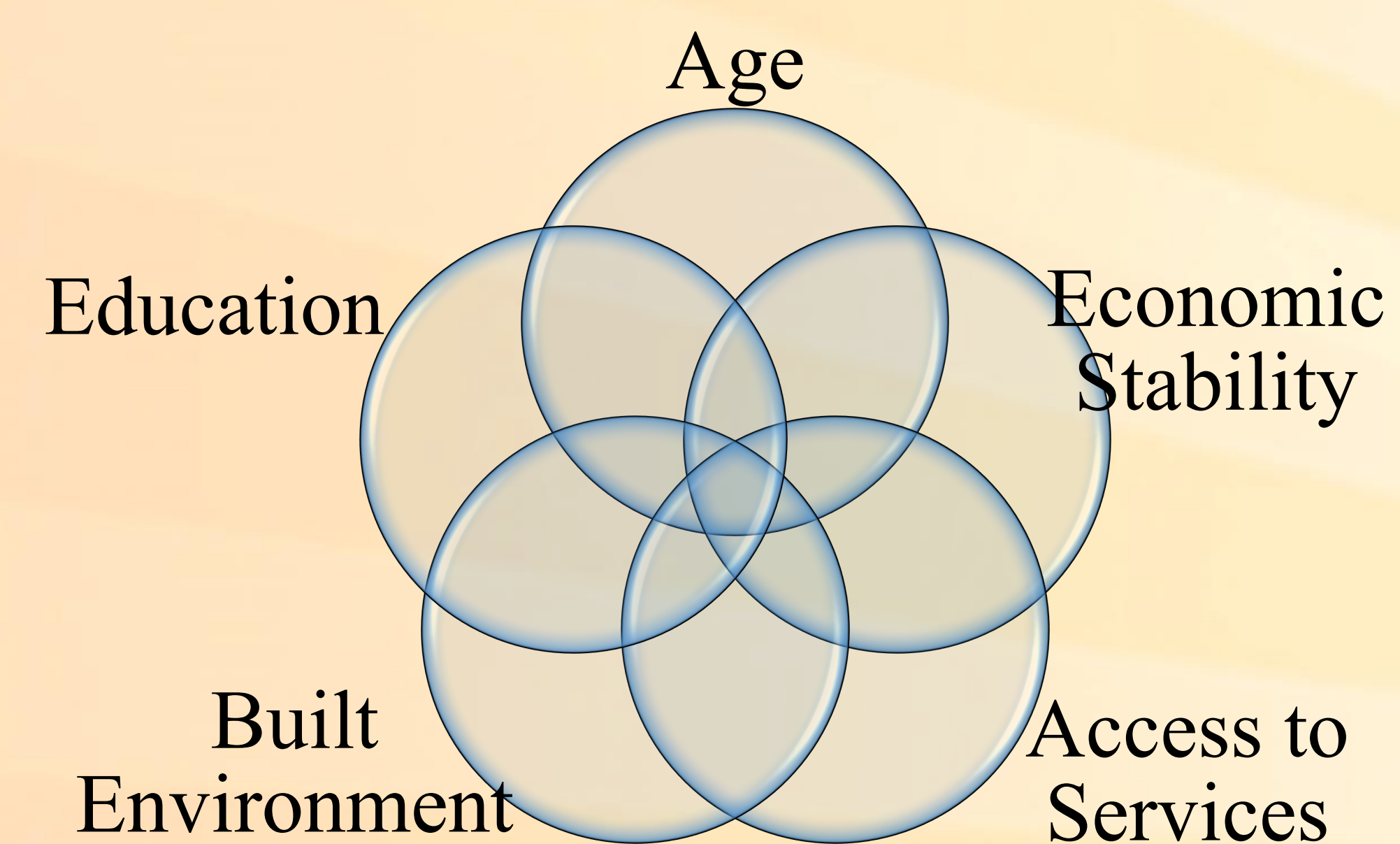
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Abstract

The purpose of this service-learning project is to design and implement a Virtual Travel Program for identified residents of affordable housing units in which the program offers special attention to issues of social isolation and loneliness. These residential facilities, Richford Arms and Highpoint Towers, are operated by Beacon Communities, LLC, Boston, MA. In collaboration with the Center for Social Concerns and Global Exploration, we are looking to provide residents with the means to travel comfortably from their own home, alongside students, faculty and staff from Gannon University.



Social determinants of health outline how specific environments affect health outcomes related to a wide range of contributing factors.² In the affordable housing setting, there are multiple social determinants that have the capacity to give rise to health disparities within the population.



Living Well By Design



Richford Arms- 515 State St #1129 Erie, PA 16501

BEACON
communities

Focuses on maintaining strong communities and the well-being of the individuals who reside within their affordable housing units.

Erie, PA Residencies:

- Richford Arms (Left)
- Highpoint Towers(Right)
- MidCity Towers



Highpoint Towers- 2314 Sassafras St #2722 Erie, PA. 16502.

The work of the **Virtual Travel Program** aims to target the factors that contribute to social decline in older adults within the affordable housing setting in efforts to increase the health and well-being of these too often marginalized individuals, especially in the presence of COVID-19.

- Pair Gannon Students, Faculty, and Staff with residents from Richford Arms and Highpoint Towers
 - Alternative Break Service Trips (ABST)
 - Transforming Residents Abroad via Engaged Learning (T.R.A.V.E.L.)
- Using virtual means to integrate, interact, and observe group travels dynamics both domestically and abroad
 - Building relationships
 - Cultural experiences



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Center for Social Concerns
and Global Exploration

- Students and Campus Colleagues
- Local and Global Communities
- Purposeful service, exploration, and action for the common good
 - Local service and community engagement opportunities
 - Advocacy and awareness building
 - Group service
 - Cultural Immersion

Research and Service–Learning Potential

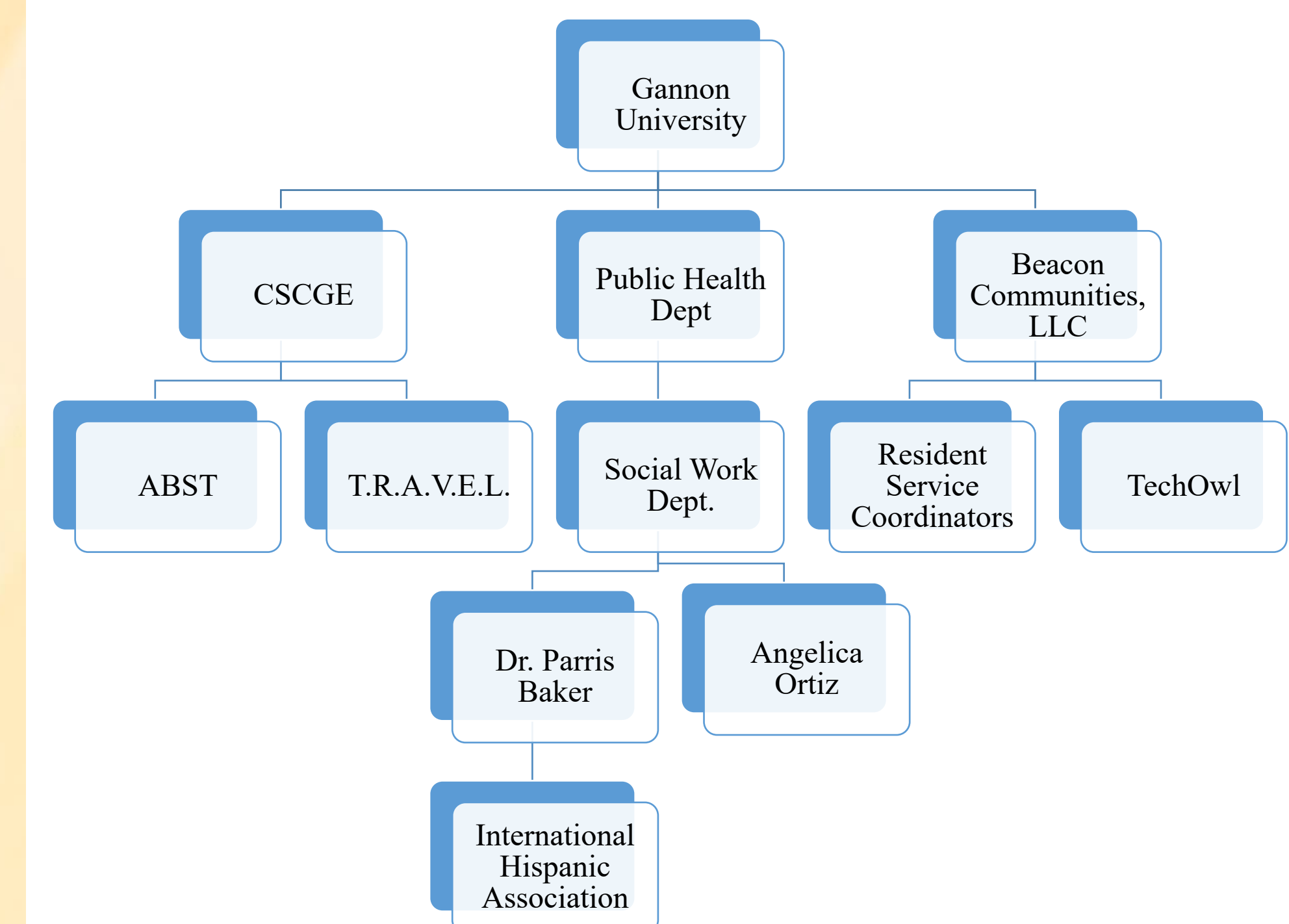
Utilize survey data to determine the significance of changes in feelings of loneliness in older adults before and after the duration of the program.

Eventually can expand to additional Beacon Residencies and Universities to implement and collect data.

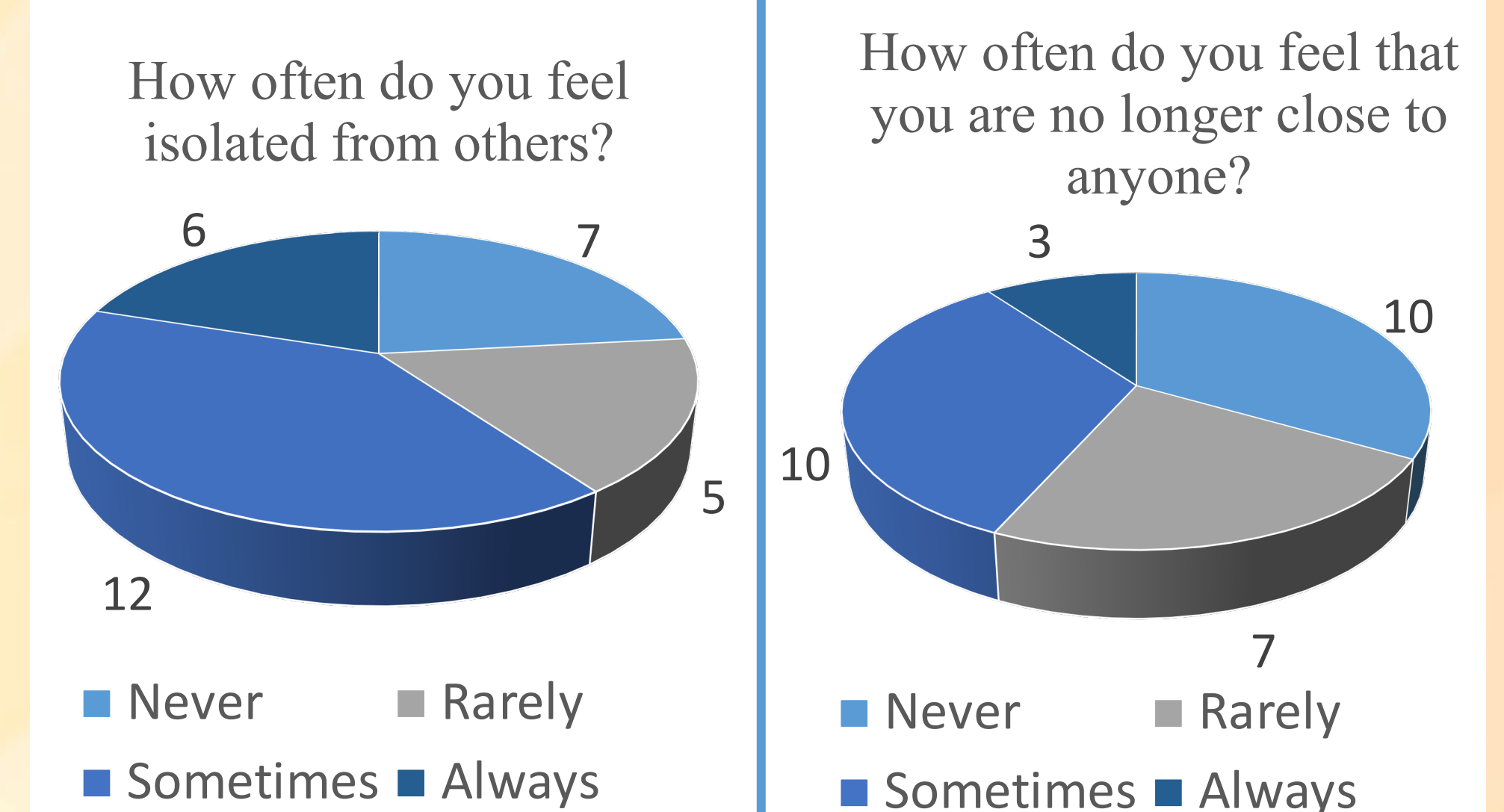
Understanding the impacts on not only older adults, but the students involved as well.

Work To Date

- Brainstorming
- Logistics
- Collaborations and Interdisciplinary Approach



- Needs Assessment/Interest Survey



- Christmas Basket Fundraiser
- Resident/Trip Match Ups



References

¹The "Loneliness Epidemic". Official web site of the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration. <https://www.hrsa.gov/enews/past-issues/2019/january-17/loneliness-epidemic>. Published January 10, 2019. Accessed March 26, 2021.

²Social Determinants of Health. Social Determinants of Health | Healthy People 2020. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>. Published October 8, 2020. Accessed March 26, 2021.