

# *Pitching Against Alzheimer's*

## *A Study of Baseball Reminiscence Programs*

### **Executive Overview**

**BACKGROUND:** Reminiscence, invoking pleasant memories of the past, is a widely used technique to help improve the well-being of people living with dementia. In recent years, sports has increasingly been used as a topic for reminiscence. Volunteer members of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) have been offering baseball-focused reminiscence programs in their communities since 2015.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** In 2021, SABR conducted a study of these programs with the overall purpose of determining their effectiveness. While anecdotal evidence and participant feedback has been uniformly positive, the study sought to quantify the value of these programs and their impact on the well-being of participants and their care partners. The study also solicited qualitative feedback from those involved, including volunteers, that could be used for program improvement and recruiting.

**RESULTS:** Thirty-one (31) participants and care partners were interviewed for this study. These respondents were from four programs in Los Angeles and Central Texas. In addition, twenty-five (25) volunteers responded via self-administered questionnaires. The volunteers represented programs from six metro areas nation-wide.

**Participants and care partners** self-evaluated their current quality-of-life, rated the effectiveness of the baseball reminiscence program they were attending, and provided demographic data. Some key summary results were:

- Twenty-nine (29) of thirty-one (31) respondents – 94% - answered positively that they enjoyed “hearing baseball stories”, “hearing about other stories from the past”, and “sharing their memories of the past”.
- Respondents strongly agreed that they valued the opportunity to interact with others, that they felt they were valued members of the group, and that participation helped their overall well-being.

**Volunteers** were asked what motivated them to participate in these programs, what their experiences have been, and their assessment of the value that participants and care partners are receiving. A few key results were:

- Twenty-four (24) of twenty-five (25) responding volunteers - 96% - were motivated by a desire to help others. 72% were also motivated because a family member or friend had dealt with dementia, loneliness, or isolation.
- Volunteers strongly agreed that they enjoy doing the programs, that it's a rewarding experience, and that they are helping others. 96% agreed that the programs were valuable for their audience.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data that demonstrated the value of baseball reminiscence programs. Participants, their care partners, and program volunteers all strongly expressed that the programs were very worthwhile and had a positive impact on all involved. Respondents felt strongly that attendance helped improve their quality of life. Furthermore, the study found that men and women benefitted equally from these programs. The study quantified these results, as well as gathered qualitative data (over 160 responses) that further supported the value of these programs.

The study results also demonstrated that baseball is a strong topic for reminiscence that is especially meaningful for the current generation of participants and their care partners. Born mostly in the 1940s and 1950s, they have deep and varied memories of playing, watching, listening to, and reading about baseball during the sport's peak as the national pastime.

The full report is available at: [SABR Research Report 2022 – SABR Baseball Memories](#)  
For more information about SABR's Baseball Memories programs, including contacts, visit: [SABR Baseball Memories – Home plate for baseball reminiscence programs](#)