

Operator: Welcome, thank you for standing by. Throughout today's conference all participants will remain in listen-only mode. During the Q and A portion of the call, you may press "star one" on your touchtone phone if you would like to ask a question. Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. Now I'll turn your conference over to Tara Knucklebee. Thank you, you may begin.

Tara Knucklebee: Good afternoon, thank you for joining us today. My name's Tara Knucklebee and I will be facilitating your webinar. Today we'll be having Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians speaking on Tai Chi Quan Moving for Better Balance for Elders Program. There will be a question/answer session at the end of the presentation. At that time, please press "star one" to open up your phone line. Or, you can also type in the WebX chat. The presentation will also be recorded and posted under Older Indians at a later date. At this time, I will turn it over to our speakers and if you'd like to introduce yourself first.

Arlene Naganashe: My name? My name is Arlene Naganashe. I am the Elder Director for the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians.

Marlene Gasco: My name is Marlene Gasco. I work in the Community Health Department under the diabetes program "Healthy Heart" and I actually work over in the Mina Mskiki Gumik Health Department.

Tammy Okuly-Shananaque: And good afternoon, my name is Tammy Okuly-Shananaque. I am the Elder Outreach Coordinator for Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians. And I'm going to go ahead and open up with a little history on the Tai Ji Quan here at our community. Back in June of 2014, we did a survey, 312 surveys to be exact, of our Title 6 service area. 90 elders responded to this survey and we found out that 93 percent of those elders had fallen in the last year. 22 percent had fallen in June, the month of the survey. Fifty percent were worried about falling and then 73 percent were worried about falling in the winter. In November of 2014, we were awarded a grant on elder fall prevention, the Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance. We had Dr. Fuzhong Li come to Michigan to introduce us to the program and instruct the potential trainers. Initially, we had twelve trainers. The introduction to our target audience was deliberate and unhurried. We actually introduced them to our luncheon elders from November to June and then in June we were visited by our Master Trainer, Catherine Reju Yu, and she educated us at that time that we were not initiating our program correctly, that we had about 45 elders at our luncheon that were participating, but as new instructors, we should have only had about eight so that we were able to monitor the fidelity of the program itself. And, focusing on our first slide, what is Tai Ji Quan and how is it effective? It's a research-based balance training regimen designed for older adults and people with balance disorders. It's an adaptive exercise program from the traditional art of Tai Ji Quan and it helps improve balance, mobility, walking, physical and mental wellbeing. This program is specifically tailored to train balance, self-awareness, and controlling body movements in performing various activities of daily living such as getting in and out of a car, in and out of a bathtub, up and down out of a chair, and it also teaches a breathing technique for relaxation. It's a 24-week program where elders participate minimum of twice a week and we've got eight forms of balance technique, along

with a variety of easy to difficult drills and increasingly challenge the ability to control and to adapt to posturally demanding activities. The class can be taught to any age group.

Marlene Gasco: Far too often, we see many elders using canes or walkers to help them assist with walking. We also hear that they have fallen, they broke their hip, their arm, countless twisted ankles, you'll see them show up with bruises on their arms or limbs, or even some black eyes from them falling. And, within this community, when I see that it's really disheartening because a lot of these elders I care about and to see them show up out and about in the community and I heard that they were in the ER because they fell and broke their hip or they have a cast on their arm. And, like I said, seeing black eyes on some of them, it was really sad to see that and to get involved in a program to figure out, you know, what can we do to help avoid, you know, them falling so much and being out on their own and stuff, so. The goal behind this program, the Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance Program, was to help rebuild and retrain their body to help them move at various speeds, reteach them their range of motion and their base of support in order for them to stand, in order for them to walk. And just to kind of be safe to be able to do any kind of daily activities that they can do on their own. I included, there's a link that's to the side there, and that's actually the link that takes you to Dr. Li's Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance Program and that's what we, you know, the Fall Prevention Program, that's what took place. And they have a lot of statistics and other useful information, videos and such that that's where we found a lot of the, when we were looking to see what the program was all about, that was the link that they gave us. And it does have a lot more information on the reason behind the research-based training and that, so, if you want to take a look at that, I suggest you do. And, like I said, it has a lot of useful information for you regarding that program and what it was all about. This was our, we created a flyer trying to promote the classes and everything else like that, so, a lot of the time when people hear Tai Ji Quan, a lot of the elders don't really prefer to do something that they're not used to, especially if they don't know what it's all about. So, what we tried doing is you can see different pictures of people that were out in the community that they see every day. So, we put elders' faces out there that had participated in the actual program. We told them no prior experience was necessary, told them the benefits of what it actually did for them, we had the date and time, we offered a couple of times during the week, different times, different days for them, different areas because of our service area being so large and some elders not being able to get out as much, so we tried putting them in the most visited population areas. Also, told them they can wear, it doesn't have to be exercise clothing, it can be whatever they wanted to just as long as they could move. It didn't cost them anything to do the program, all they had to do was just show up and kind of take part, whatever level they wanted to participate at and then it also gave them the teacher's names so they knew who to look for, and then, also, any information if they wanted to call either one of the departments. I originally had eleven students that ended up going through the class program with me. Generally, I would have anywhere from five to eight that were regulars that I would see twice a week or sometimes we just had some other people, I didn't want to turn anyone away that wanted to come in and try the program. If they wanted to come in and work on the breathing technique and just wanted to see what it was about, I always told them come in and have a seat and they would come in and participate with the program or participate for that hour. And, I know Tammy had, how many did you say?

Tammy: I had six.

Marlene: She had six people in her class that would come in and, like I said, it was just whoever wanted to show up and participate. We always welcomed everybody into the program. And, the classes, like I said, were available twice a week for people. The duration of the class, we always tried to aim for 60 minutes of exercise, which included a warm up and a cool down for them. And just kind of dependent on the weather conditions and that. I generally like moving my classes around, especially if it was outside during the summer months instead of being inside in a building. A couple of times we went down to a boat launch, changed the scenery a little bit for them, got them out in the sun a little bit, fresh air, so I was kind constantly, like I said, during the summer months I was always trying to find somewhere else instead of being inside in a building, I always had them change locations and that for them. At the top there is one of my former students that I had in the class. She just gave us kind of a little bit of feedback, talked about how Tai Ji was very refreshing for her. And, she also gave some pointers to the fact that it did get rid of some of her aches and pains that she experienced every day.

Arlene: And this is Arlene. And participation was at the level of comfort or power. These moves could be done in a chair with slight adjustments made. We learned –

Tara Knucklebee: Arlene, I'm going to interject really quick. If you could please move the microphone closer to you? We're a little bit unable to hear you.

Arlene: I have a very soft voice because I raised ten kids and I needed them to listen.

Tara Knucklebee: No worries, thank you.

Arlene: OK. So, we learned there were eight forms to our routine. Form one was “move the ball”, which was basic weight shifting. Form two was “part the wild horse’s mane” or reaching forward and range of motion. Form three, “single whip” was learning rotation. Form four was “weighed hands like clouds” and that was eye movement and scanning. Frequently falls are caused because you don’t check out your environment. Form five was “reverse monkey”, that’s stepping backwards without stumbling. Form six was “brush the knees” and, again, that was another rotation movement. Form seven “fair lady works at shuttle” and that was learning to focus and strengthening. Form eight was “grasp peacock’s tail”, that was strength building and completing a series of more movement for one form. It’s like putting all of our movement together. Along with the eighth form that we’re taught, we as teachers, worked on rotational weight shifting. Engage in toes lift movement and heels to toes progression while stepping. Frequently, you see elders when they’re walking, they’re shuffling, they’re not picking up their feet. So, we needed to work on picking up your feet. I, personally, am a toe to heel walker and, so, I had to change and learn to put my heel down first and then go to the toe. And, we worked on engaging coordinated eyes and head movement. Sometimes you just move your eyes and look around rather than turning your whole head to peruse your environment. Coordinated breathing that’s synchronized with postural movement. It’s breathing in and breathing out and

let your muscles relax. Frequently, we are just, we just breathe using our bronchials and we don't take those deep breaths, so we never move that air down deeper in our lungs. So, we practice that. Move the center of gravity near the base of support. We learn again that center of gravity is behind your belly button, so, therefore, when you make these moves, you need to move your whole body and not be twisting. I recently saw this in an elder that was in my office getting up a chair, getting up, and she was using a walker and she was trying to get up without looking forward. She was twisted and trying to stand that way. And so, I gave her the motions of "sit in your chair, move forward, get your wide base of support, and then stand up". And she was able to stand up safely. Otherwise, she looked like she could have, was at risk of falling. The other thing that we did was, and Marlene was responsible for this because we did ankle sways. And she noticed initially that we were having trouble following her directions, so she created this clock for us. So that, as she was giving directions, we were able to find out which way we were supposed to be swaying. And to think around the core, feet at the center, knees bent, good posture, straight spine. Weight shift forward to twelve o'clock and back to center. Back to six o'clock and then back to center. Weight shift to the left or right towards nine or three and then back to center. Diagonally shift forward right or left towards one or eleven o'clock on the front of the feet and then back to center. That would be shift toward one o'clock back to center, eleven o'clock and back to center. The same way with backwards. Shift back left or right towards four or five o'clock or seven/eight o'clock back on the heels and then back to center.

Marlene: I'm just going to add a little bit to these ankle sways. The reason I put this slide in there, like Arlene had said, was I noticed when I first started doing it and teaching that, a lot of the students were having a problem following what demand, not demand, but what instruction I was trying to tell them. So, I added this little visual and I always had it up on the wall any time they came in and sometimes I'd even have left and right up on the wall because for them to be able to understand what direction I was giving them and what instruction I was giving them, it just, you know, they found a lot more easier to follow if they had a visual to look at. So that was one of the reasons why I had the clock up on the wall. And then, also, with the ankle sways and that, with a lot of my students, it all starts with that. I think when it comes to you're walking and you're trying to make those steps or you're walking on uneven ground a lot of the times, that's where we see some elders stumble or fall. These ankle sways were just something important that I thought that really helped them start the building block on gaining their strength and their mobility back and learning their range of motion and these ankle sways, I actually still teach, I went and I'm a personal trainer now, and pretty much the people that I work with, the clients that I currently have, I make sure they learn how to do their ankle sways. I've had people come up in the office and ask me, what can I do to work on this or that? And I always make sure that I tell them these ankle sways are something that are just awesome. It's a simple exercise, but there are so many benefits that people can have from it. I, myself, personally, I'm into sports. I play softball, I play volleyball, I run, and in seasons passed and stuff like that I was always hurting my ankle, along the line I had twisted ankles every time I'd go out and play or something. But, after doing these ankle sways with the elders and that, I just found out that it was really beneficial for me, so it was just, you know, it only, I really important to teach everybody and anybody that comes up. It doesn't matter the age and that, but with this

elders program and learning this and this Tai Ji Quan, like I said, it's been really beneficial and not just for me or for elders, it's just important for everybody.

Tammy: I just wanted to add also that what we're doing is a lot of repetitive exercise with the different forms and many times I would tell the elders, just like a basketball player, shootin' the hoop, shootin' the hoop, and doing this repetitive exercise, you are strengthening and training the muscles. There's one of the forms where we actually put ourselves off balance and recover. And again, that is where we are hoping that the elders have that muscle memory that will prevent those falls in the future.

Arlene: This is Arlene, again, and I am a registered nurse and my hospital experience was in orthopedics and psychiatric nursing. In orthopedics, I remember learning about the wide base of support. I worked with broken hips and knee replacements and hip replacements, so, having that wide base of support was very important to the recovery of my patients there. Now, using that wide base of support in standing, you can move to the front of the chair. Frequently, people try to stand up from sitting at the back of chair. If you move to the front of the chair, you're putting your knees over feet, changing the angle from which you're trying to stand, which decreases the stress of the hips when standing. Some of the movement involves scanning your environment. Look where you're walking. I know frequently we forget to do that. We're just busy thinking about something else or focused where you're going and don't see, scan your environment. And in the psychiatric nursing, I worked with the patients on deep breathing. Deep breathing can reduce anxiety, promote oxygenation of the body, help the muscles to relax, and to release stress. Also, Tai Ji, Dr. Li, when he came, he stressed movement. He was only here two days and we needed to learn how to do the movement. So, he didn't talk about the, I guess the theory of Tai Ji and where it comes from. But I did learn this from other people who practiced Tai Ji and I heard one person talking about connecting with the energy of the earth. And, I, as an Odawa elder, I understand that. You know, I was taught as a child about the energy of the Mother Earth and being connected to the Mother Earth and I thought, oh, I know this. And so, some of the movement that we do connects with the energy of the Mother Earth. Some of the hand movements, the pushing away, to push away that manata or that negative energy and then as you turn your hand and pull it toward you, to pull nishian in or that positive energy towards you and in your hands, form a ball. When you make these movements and you form that ball, you can feel that energy in your hand and that ball is a symbol of a circle. That circle in which we live our life. And, the other thing that has helped me with that spirituality is making the butterfly. We understand that the butterfly is a symbol of everlasting light. So, when you sit there and you use your hands and you make that butterfly, you make the circle, and make the head, pull it back towards you, pull the circle towards you, move back, and pull that circle again with you, and then you crunch your hands push away manata, pull in nishian as you make the wings. All of that, you can close your eyes and you make those movements and you can go on a little spiritual journey.

Tammy: I'd just like to take a moment and speak about our Master Trainer, Catherine. Again, initially as instructors I personally found myself pretty overwhelmed by the number of forms that we had to master in what was just a couple days of presentation. And, to have the proper

technique for each of those forms and the responsibility as an instructor to teach our elders so that they would be gaining and be doing it safely. I know that Catherine and her being there was the key to our success as new instructors. And so, I just want to recommend that if you are starting a new program, that you are able to find a Catherine for yourself that can help to review and help you to maintain the fidelity of your program.

Arlene: This is Arlene, again, and I just wanted to reiterate that, you know, I think we wouldn't have progressed as far with our program if we had not met Catherine. And Dr. Li brought her with him when he was training. And Catherine is located in Lower Michigan so that she was more accessible to us. And we did a contract with her and she came and broke down the teaching into two forms at a time. She would come up and just concentrate on two forms and make sure that we learned them well and we're doing them correctly. And, like I said, Tai Ji has refreshed my training as an orthopedic nurse and a mental health nurse. As an elder participant, it has helped me to strengthen my upper sides and reduce my risk of falling. I have a chronic muscle illness and it's always been difficult for me to stand without pushing myself up and using my arms and taking Tai Ji, I was able to learn how to stand with, just on my own, without using my hands to push myself up. As the Elders Director of the Fall Intervention Program, Tai Ji, to me, when I found that connection with the Mother Earth, and that congruence with the oriental teachings, and some of the movement and the Anishinaabe connection to the Mother Earth really helped me to take a hold of Tai Ji. And I practice on my own at my house, outside, and in the office, and wherever I can. I like it.

Tammy: And this is Tammy, again. When I began Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance in 2014, it was new, exciting, yet, as I indicated, somewhat overwhelming as I implemented an exercise program that was quite foreign to me from the jumping jacks and pushups and all those types of exercise. However, as I was further instructed by my expert trainer, again, referencing Catherine, and became skilled at the form, I watched my students week after week returning and becoming increasingly adept themselves at the forms, it was delightful to see them progressing in their strength, balance, and mental awareness of their surroundings. Especially rewarding were those students challenged by medical conditions who reported positive feedback, not only personally, but through their physician and through their physical therapist. The elders that have participated in these classes have requested for us to continue classes in the future and that we contact them and that is really exciting because, at first, everybody was a little apprehensive. We also are eager to not only motivate our tribal elders, but the young ones on the pathway to a healthier life. The LTB Elders Department and their partners in "Healthy Heart" at the tribal clinic are excited to continue with an exercise program that has proven to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our tribal communities.

Marlene: And this is Marlene, again. I was sort of a late add-on to this program. I didn't get a chance to meet Dr. Li or go to the two-day course that he had. And, like I said, I was kind of a late add-on and I just came into the office one day and my director, my boss was like, you're going to get involved in this program, so here's a little bit of the background, so, this is when you're going to meet with the Elders Department, and this is when you need to show up and you're going to meet this Master Trainer and you're going to learn this art form and teach us

how to be stronger and help our elders and stuff, so. I was happy to do it, I was a little shocked at first because I had never done this type of exercise with it. I wasn't sure exactly how it was going to end up going. I coached, I have a coaching background and that. I was, like, ok this is just going to be just kind of like coaching and it definitely was not. I had to take a couple steps back and I'm thankful for Catherine who took the time to do one-on-one training with me and I think I worked with her every single time she was up here, I'd take a couple of hours and work with her just personally. And she taught me how to instruct and how to work with elders and how to make sure I told them the right direction and used the correct verbiage to get them to do what I needed them to do and the little cues that I needed to watch out for when they were doing a form, if it was too difficult for them or if I was rushing really fast because once I get something I just want to take off and go with it and she taught me how to slow things down a bit, make sure they understood and everything else like that, so. But, like I said, I was happy to jump on board and be given this opportunity. Like I said, my elders, all my elders are important to me. My mom is getting up there in years and so watching her, Arlene had talked about elders shuffle and they stumble and falls happen and that. I've seen my mom shuffle, I've watched her stumble, but luckily she has not completely fallen in front of me. So, learning this type of program helped me help her improve on her walking and her physical strength and that and a lot of the elders, the other elders I had in my class, I really made a connection with them and when I see them out in the tribal community and stuff, you have that friendship and you have the reconnection and it's just important for me to be able to give something back to my community. And especially my elders who have taught me so much. And that's basically what I've figured out my purpose and my passion in life is to do something within the fitness realm. And so, after learning and becoming a Tai Ji Quan teacher, there was some trainings that were provided by the Native American Fitness Council and I went to several other trainings and I was able to get my personal training certification through them. I also have my group fitness instructor, medical conditions and exercise training, and then, also, a functional exercise trainer, so, thankfully with starting in this direction, learning the Tai Ji Quan and becoming a teacher and learning and teaching students and working with my elders, I've been able to figure out what I want to do and what my passion is and what I want to be able to give back to this community that gives so much to me, so. That's one of the reasons why I'm thankful for being a part of this program.

Tammy: I'd just like to add on, this is Tammy, that Marlene did come in later. Our other instructors I don't think initially had a good understanding of the time and involvement that it took to become a Tai Ji instructor. But I do know that, with someone like Marlene, it has been just a blessing to me because we've been able to work together where we can watch one-another, critique one-another, and give some feedback back and forth between our classes. So, I just wanted to add that. Our next slide, we discuss where we demonstrated our Tai Ji Quan and, again, a big thing is to get out in the community and get them an introduction to what this exercise program is and we've just had a blast out there. A few of the places, the Odawa Health and Wellness Fair in 2016 and in 2017. We did it at the Elders' Christmas Luncheon. Additionally, our community meeting, all of our tribal citizens are able to come in and participate from different regions. So, it was introduced there. And we have restarted an introduction again at our Elders' Luncheons. So, we are just so happy that the comfort level

with this particular program and the value is being recognized by our community now. A couple of individuals I'd like to talk about is an 82-year-old elder, and we'll just say EA, said that she really enjoyed the Tai Ji classes, that they were well organized and so helpful in maintaining her strength. She's had less problems with balance since the class and would enjoy continuing to attend. A 72-year-old elder, MG, says that Tai Ji has helped her a lot with balance and also with improving her mobility during her regular exercise. She also has enjoyed the companionship with other elders who have participated in the program. The other just little tidbit that they had, also told me is that they're doing, like, swimming and inside of the pool they will do their Tai Ji moves and so, again, just finding various ways of continuing on with the different forms. We had incentives also and actually our incentive after participating for a twelve-week period were Diamond Willow walking sticks. Again, trying to maintain some of our cultural sensitivities and to do something that would be valuable to our elders. These walking sticks were presented at Elders' Luncheon and I don't know if you're able to see real clearly, but our elders have really got big smiles on their faces. There's a 75-year-old male that said that Tai Ji has helped him with better balance, which was one of the biggest helps. It also strengthened his ankles, aiding him in his better balance. Then one of my great successes is our 62-year-old elder who said that Tai Ji was good and that he wanted to continue taking the classes. In addition to that, a little history is that he was actually post-stroke and had a very weak side and had difficulty with language and these programs and these exercises, they are the ones where the physician and the physical therapist were just astounded at how he was able to progress in regaining some of what he had lost.

Marlene: We're just about towards the end of our presentation and that we just kind of put this slide in there for any contact information if any of you have any questions and want to get a hold of us if we're not able to cover everything over this webinar or if you have future questions that come up, this is our contact information here. Arlene, Elders Department, her email address and phone number. Tammy Okulyy- Shinanaque, her email address, and then mine as well. And then if you have any questions, if for some reason you can't remember anything, there's our Little Traverse Bay Band Odawa, that's our main mailing address and if you put anything attention to any of us, we'll generally get it, so. We just kind of included that slide in case anyone had any questions or wanted to contact us later, so, that's what that information is there for. And, Arlene?

Arlene: And, again, we try to incorporate our culture whenever possible and the fact that we needed to do presentations to encourage other tribal committee members to join Tai Ji classes and figure out what is our uniform going to be, and, so, this is our uniform, and we say [phrase in another language]. It's, "Don't fall, I know Tai Ji." Woohoo!

Marlene: And that is it.

Arlene: And if you want to know who Arlene is, she's the one down there on the bottom in the center. The little short one. Next to Marlene who's got the big smile on her face. Do you have any questions?

Tara Knucklebee: Thanks, guys! So, if you guys have any questions, again, you can either press “star one” and the operator will patch your line through or if you have questions please feel free to put it in the chat as well. If you’re interested in receiving the slides after the webinar, please feel free to put your email address in the chat. Again, put your email address. Alright, I don’t see any questions coming through so, I guess that wraps it up for today. Thank you again, ladies, you did an excellent job. And if anybody would like to receive the webinar presentation, please feel free to either email me or, again, you can put your email address in the chat and I can send that over to you.

Tammy: Thank you.

Marlene: Thank you.

Tara Knucklebee: Thanks, guys.

Arlene: Thank you.

Tammy: [speaks a different language]

Tara Knucklebee: Have a good afternoon.

Operator: Thank you for your participation in today’s conference, this concludes the call, you may disconnect your lines at this time.