

# Viva Vita and Iona Senior Services Celebrate 4 Years of Partnership with Research Study on Virtual Reality for Seniors

*Shenandoah University Study shows that VR can improve feelings of hope, occupational satisfaction, among seniors*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 25, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Viva Vita and Iona Senior Services celebrate their four-year partnership by releasing the findings of a six-week study. The study aimed to determine whether the repeated use of virtual reality could improve the feelings of perceived hopelessness among older adult participants at Iona and enhance their occupational performance satisfaction. The study, which found significant positive results, was conducted by Shenandoah University Occupational Therapy student and researcher Maureen Piotrowski.

According to research from the [National Institute of Health](#), feelings of hopelessness among older adults are associated with ill health and increased mortality risks. Therefore, the study focused on enhancing the participants' sense of hope and satisfaction through the use of VR technology.

The study was conducted at two locations in northwest D.C., Iona Senior Services' Tenleytown location and St. Albans Episcopal Church, where Iona



Traveling the World with Viva Vita VR

holds programming for seniors. Piotrowski conducted the study with ten participants by administering the virtual reality experience once a week. The study used two standardized and validated measures, Beck's Hopelessness Inventory and the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure.

The study revealed that the repeated use of VR technology significantly decreased the participants' perceived levels of hopelessness and significantly increased their occupational satisfaction levels. Although the study also showed an increase in perceived occupational performance, the data was not statistically significant enough to be conclusive. This means that with the help of virtual reality, senior participants were more optimistic about their own abilities, such as activities of daily living.

Viva Vita has been providing virtual reality technology to Iona Senior Services since 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the pandemic's challenges, the VR program remained in full force to assist participants in "Living Life" to the fullest with virtual travel, education, and entertainment.

"Learning new skills is important at any age, but mastering a new technology as an older adult is particularly rewarding. To this end, Iona invested in VR headsets to bring a virtual reality experience, along with the pleasure and delight of vicarious travel, to participants. In the Viva Vita study, seniors had the benefit of ongoing one-on-one instruction with a dedicated guide. It is no surprise that this combination contributed to increased feelings of well-being among the participants," says St. Alban's Site Manager Frances Bucien.

Viva Vita and Iona Senior Services look forward to future opportunities to continue their impactful work together.

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VR Gets the Conversation Started

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