

# Introduction

“The age old social compact through which every generation receives resources from its predecessors and passes on material wealth, care, and knowledge to its successors is seemingly being threatened.”—(Henkin & Kingson, 1999)



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THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS, YOUNG AND  
OLD SHARE THEIR TALENTS AND RESOURCES,  
SUPPORTING EACH OTHER IN RELATIONSHIPS THAT  
BENEFIT BOTH THE INDIVIDUALS AND THE COMMUNITY.

# The Intergenerational Concept

Though the media and politicians may wish for us to believe that there must be conflict between the generations, it does not have to be so. It may seem that there are issues that are solely concerned with one generation, but it is impossible to consider issues that affect adults and older people without considering those that affect children and youth, and vice-versa. Social Security is a good example of a policy that most people consider an older person's issue. Upon closer examination, it is clear that Social Security was not only intended to protect the old against income losses, but was also intended to help parents in mid-life direct more resources to their children. (*Strengthening the Social Compact: An Intergenerational Strategy*, 1996)

The following quote, by the former Commissioner of Social Security, Robert Ball, sums up the aforementioned “social compact”:

“We owe much of what we are to the past. We all stand on the shoulders of the generations that came before. They built the schools and established the ideals of an educated society. They wrote the books, developed the scientific ways of thinking, passed on ethical and spiritual values, discovered our country, developed it, won its freedom, held it together, cleared its forests, built its railroads and factories and invented new technology. Because we owe so much to the past, we all have the obligation to try



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and pass on a world to the next generation which is a little better than the one we inherited, so that those who come after, standing on our shoulders, can see a little further and do a little better in their turn.” (p.11, *Generations*, 1999, an ASA publication)

The family depicted in *LEGACY* is truly multi-generational. The family is comprised of a grandmother, Dorothy; two of her children, Wanda and Alaisa; and their children, one of whom is the film’s narrator, Nikki. Even though they don’t all live under one roof, there is much reliance upon, and communication between and across the generations represented. They really do seem to operate on the social compact.

The family has faced many troubles and hardships, the greatest of which was the loss of one of Wanda’s sons, Terrell, to a grudge shooting. Both Wanda and Alaisa, Nikki’s mother, are third generation welfare recipients as well. This family, like so many others, has many odds stacked against it, and yet, they are able to survive, stick together, and even contribute to the community. Their situation may be fortunate, rather than typical, but within it are many good examples of how intergenerational connections and communication can benefit both younger and older people.

It is necessary at this point to define a few terms that will be used throughout this work:

- ✗ An intergenerational framework values the unique wisdom and talents of each generation while acknowledging the interdependence and reciprocity that unites the ages.
- ✗ Intergenerational programs purposefully bring together different generations in ongoing mutually beneficial planned activities designed to achieve specified program goals. Through intergenerational programs, young and old share their talents and resources, supporting each other in relationships that benefit both the individuals and the community.

- ✗ An intergenerational approach seeks to break down the artificially created barriers of age segregation by bringing the strengths of each generation to meet the needs of another.
- ✗ An intergenerational activity is a one-time event that brings together different generations for the sole purpose of creating an opportunity for individuals, families and communities to benefit from a meaningful experience.
- ✗ Community service programs engage citizens in activities and projects to benefit the community and to meet unmet safety, human, education or environmental needs.

Characteristics of successful intergenerational programs are:

- ✗ intentional
- ✗ reciprocal
- ✗ sustained
- ✗ asset based, not deficit focused

They also:

- ✗ View the different age groups as pure potential, rather than as possible problems.
- ✗ Involve the targeted age groups in the planning from the beginning.
- ✗ Use the strengths of one generation to meet the needs of the other.
- ✗ Provide training for young and old to prepare them for participation.

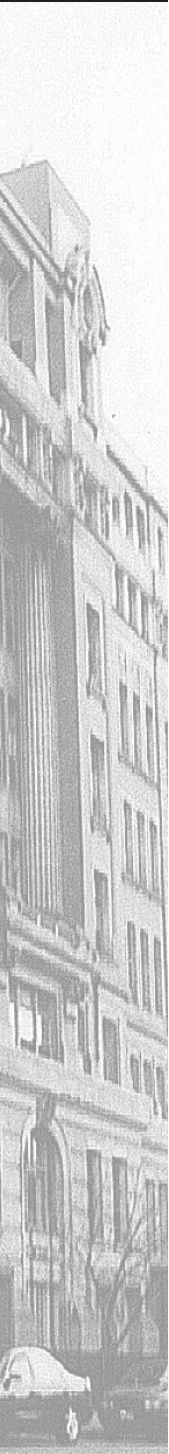
## -MYTH-

KIDS ONLY WANT TO HANG OUT WITH THEIR FRIENDS, AND ARE NOT INTERESTED IN SPENDING TIME WITH THEIR PARENTS.

## -FACT-

76% OF KIDS SAY THEY WISH THEY COULD SPEND MORE TIME WITH PARENTS, NOT LESS

-NICKELODEON, 1999



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In the interest of clarity, it is also important to mention that though intergenerational programs bring together different generations, they are not usually viewed in the family context. People in the same family can be part of the same intergenerational program or activity, but the term intergenerational usually refers to people who are unrelated, but have been brought together through a program or activity.

The Collins family in *LEGACY* can be compared, in some ways, to an intergenerational program. Though they are together because they are a family, and were not purposefully brought together, they can be seen working together toward common, mutually beneficial goals. Each person is supported by the others in meeting his/her own personal goals, such as Nikki getting into college, Alaisa finding and keeping a job, Wanda staying off drugs, and finally, Dorothy having her house built. Each person's individual goal, once met, would ultimately better the family as a whole. That was the overarching goal toward which each of the members of the family was striving.

## II. Intergenerational Programs: A Brief History

"Intergenerational" programs began in the early 1960s with programs such as the Foster Grandparent program, which was an intergenerational model concerned with matching lower income, healthy older adults to children with special or exceptional needs. (Newman, 1989, in Newman, Ward, Smith, Wilson, McCrea, Calhoun, & Kingson, 1997) The intergenerational movement began as a component of the "war on poverty," as well as in response to concerns about a growing separation between young and old, and the growing isolation of the old. Over the last three decades, it has developed into a more systematic effort

to address social problems, especially those affecting low-income children and other isolated groups. (*Strengthening the Social Compact: An Intergenerational Strategy*, 1996)

- ✗ **1970s:** Intergenerational art programs; elementary and secondary school curricula designed to bridge generational distance and stereotypes; programs were prevalent mostly in schools and health care settings; many driven by volunteer efforts.
- ✗ **1980s:** Intergenerational programs began to address more complex concerns, such as changes in family structure, drug use, violence, and the growing needs of low-income children; emphasis was on setting an agenda that would foster and sustain intergenerational programs; grassroots programs began to spring up everywhere, as did coalitions, including Generations United.
- ✗ **1990s:** Intergenerational programming as part of a larger undertaking; intergenerational endeavors recognized by the President and Vice President as important to the future of our nation; many programs exist all over the world; international summits and conferences held to discuss the future of the intergenerational field.

## III. Generations United



Generations United (GU) is the premier national membership organization focused solely on promoting intergenerational strategies, programs and policies. GU represents more than 100 national, state and local organizations and individuals which serve more than 70 million Americans and is the only national organization advocating for the

### -FACT-

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS ARE:

- INTENTIONAL
- RECIPROCAL
- SUSTAINED
- ASSET BASED,  
NOT DEFICIT  
FOCUSED



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mutual well-being of children, youth and the elderly. Since 1986, GU has served as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU acts as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration among aging, children and youth organizations providing a forum to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.

## IV. Problems Facing Youth Today

(The following research comes from, *Protecting Adolescents from Harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health*, 1997, a study on which Robert Blum, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Director of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, University of Minnesota was the primary investigator.)

As is evidenced in certain segments of *LEGACY*, such as the shooting of Terrell, and the stress over making it out of the projects that Nikki spoke of, there are myriad problems facing the youth of today. Juvenile homicide rose 54% during the 1980s. Among African-American males, like Terrell, the increase was almost four times that of the general youth population, at 800%, with an average age of fifteen (which was the approximate age of Terrell when he was killed). Suicide is another problem facing youth, and accounts for 13.1% of all deaths for people from 15–24 years of age.

The National Longitudinal Study revealed that connections between adolescents and adults were critical in reducing risky behavior in adolescents. The factors shown to protect against behaviors such as substance abuse, suicide, emotional distress and violence were parent connectedness and parental presence.

The study revealed that increasing protective factors, rather than attempting to reduce risk behaviors, was more influential in diminishing health-compromising behaviors in adolescents. Among the most successful risk reduction interventions were building strong adult-youth relationships, recognizing community resources (usually people) and recruiting their involvement, and providing life skills, not just problem reduction. The researchers further found that even when a parent is not available, connectedness to another adult is highly protective, as are informal community networks, and connectedness to social institutions.

Clearly, relationships with adults, such as the one Nikki has with Kenny Butler, her mentor, are crucial to keeping many kids out of trouble. Nikki goes to the Boys and Girls Club after school, a time when youth are very likely to be getting involved in risky activities, such as drugs, sex and gang violence.

It is easy to pick out the risk reduction interventions that are present in the lives of the Collins family, such as strong adult-youth relationships, recognizing community resources, and involving young people in planning and implementation. For example, Nikki is clearly actively involved in planning for her future and education. Her relationships with adults appear strong and developed. She has accumulated the tools she needs in order to escape many of the pitfalls that commonly befall youth, especially those who come from generations of poverty.

## V. Linking Young and Old Through Intergenerational Programs

Historically, the family with its extended network was responsible for the various nurturing, educational

-MYTH-

THE PEOPLE KIDS ADMIRE THE MOST ARE THE PEOPLE THEY SEE IN THE MEDIA, SUCH AS RAPPERS, ROCK STARS, MOVIE STARS, ETC.

-FACT-

NEARLY 80% OF KIDS NAMED PARENTS, AND 19% NAMED GRANDPARENTS AS THE PEOPLE THEY ADMIRE THE MOST.

-NICKELODEON, 1999



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and economic functions required to maintain and support its members. Over the course of the last century, however, America has become highly segregated by age. Family functions have been assumed by a range of age-specific institutions. Children attend age-segregated schools, adults work in environments without children and adults over 65, older adults live in age-segregated housing, and both children and older persons are cared for by age-segregated services.

As a result, the old do not have relationships with the young; and the young do not understand their elders or the aging process. For the past decade, older Americans, families, youth and children have all struggled with the severe cutbacks in essential health and social programs. The myths and stereotypes that result from separating the generations in combination with shrinking resources foster tension between the generations.

Intergenerational programming facilitates mutually beneficial exchange by actively bringing together younger and older persons. These programs have been shown to be particularly effective because they meet numerous needs of individuals and communities and are cost-effective.

## VI. Research on Intergenerational Programs

There has been research done that indicates that intergenerational programs do indeed yield many positive results for both older and younger generations. (Kline, Poling, & Thomason, 1999; Chapter 8, Ward, in Newman, et al, 1997) Kline, et al (1999), found that a program known as "Heart-to-Heart" was actually able to improve the self-esteem of both its participants and its volunteers. In this program, administered in a variety of settings (such as afterschool and summer programs), adult volunteers were trained to teach heritage skills to youth. Pre- and post-tests for self-esteem were given, as well as attitude scales.

The results of the study showed that the youth who participated not only experienced significant increases in self-esteem, but also indicated more positive attitudes about older people following the training. The volunteers experienced greater self-esteem as well, albeit to a lesser extent. They also indicated that their feelings about youth had changed, as had their perceptions of the roles they had, such as helping to instill values and skills in youth. The researchers concluded that "Intergenerational learning can positively benefit both the adults and youth involved." (Kline, et al, 1999)

Many other intergenerational programs that have been evaluated have been shown to have a positive effect on attitudes. (Ward in Newman et al, 1997) Children in intergenerational daycare centers where there were older adult volunteers were better able to differentiate age groups and evaluated the elderly more favorably. However, studies have shown that it is more the quality than the quantity of contact that actually produces the positive outcomes. A number of conditions were identified as being important to produce significant change, such as equal status between groups, intimate rather than casual contact, mutually rewarding and pleasant contact, and the involvement of both groups in important activities and goal setting.

There are many instances in *LEGACY* where the family members can be seen benefitting from intergenerational interactions. For example, Nikki works after school at the Boys & Girls Club, where she interacts with her mentor, Kenny Butler. He is a positive adult male role model in her life (something she has not had in her family), and someone who supports and encourages her. The interactions between

-FACT-

GENERATIONS UNITED (GU) IS THE PREMIER NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION FOCUSED SOLELY ON PROMOTING INTERGENERATIONAL STRATEGIES, PROGRAMS, AND POLICIES.



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them appear to be planned and mutually rewarding. Nikki also works with the youth development programs at the Boys and Girls Club. She acts as a peer mentor for other adolescents like herself. Increasingly, youth, like Nikki, are being seen as assets to the community, as they are actively engaged as partners in addressing critical community issues.

## **VII.** Reasons for the Recent Growth and Expansion of Intergenerational Programs:

### ■ A RAPIDLY AGING SOCIETY

- ✗ Life expectancy for people age 65 was 17.6 years in 1997 and is expected to increase to 20 years by the year 2030.
- ✗ The total population is projected to increase 50% by the year 2050 while that of people age 65 is estimated to grow by 135% if current trends continue.
- ✗ In 1998, 13% of the US population were people age 65 and over. It is estimated that percentage will increase to 20% by the year 2030.

### ■ OLDER PEOPLE AS A RESOURCE

- ✗ Increasingly, older people are being viewed as resources, rather than just recipients of services.
- ✗ Many companies today, such as Chevron, Prudential and Monsanto, are implementing incentive packages, and restructuring jobs in order to hang on to their older, more experienced workers, who are often among their top performers (Reingold & Brady, 1999).
- ✗ Increasingly, childcare agencies are bringing older people onto their staff, either as volunteers or paid staff,

because they recognize the expertise and familial aspect older people can bring to the environment (Newman, Larkin & Smith, 1999).

### ■ YOUTH AS A RESOURCE

- ✗ Increasingly, youth are being viewed as resources, rather than merely recipients of services.
- ✗ Older adult mentors and volunteers often comment that the children they work with “keep [them] young,” and “keep [their] brains working.”
- ✗ There are many programs in which youth serve as teachers to older people, helping them to learn things like computer skills, English as a second language, and filing tax returns.
- ✗ Many programs partner older people with younger volunteers, who assist them with tasks, participate in recreational activities with them, and just provide general companionship.

### ■ CHANGES IN THE WAY PEOPLE LOOK AT RETIREMENT

- ✗ Older Americans are leaving the workforce much earlier than usual. It is estimated that 200,000 people per month reached retirement age in 1998 and that this figure will increase to 1.6 million by the year 2012.
- ✗ “Boomers” are retiring earlier and drawing retirement benefits earlier.
- ✗ 70% of “Boomers” do not intend to retire in any traditional manner. They intend to volunteer as well as start new careers.

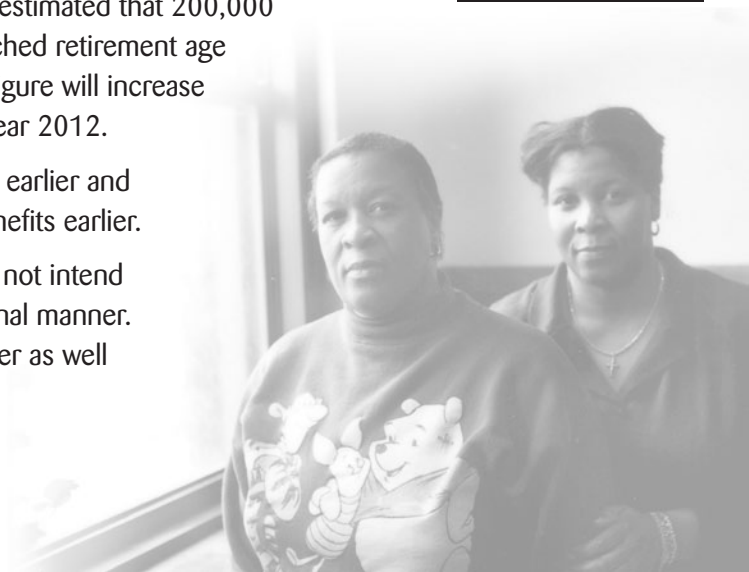
#### -MYTH-

THERE IS NOTHING PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP PREVENT TEEN SUICIDE, EMOTIONAL DISTRESS, OR TEEN VIOLENCE.

#### -FACT-

STUDIES SHOW THAT PARENT CONNECTEDNESS, PRESENCE, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOL ARE ALL FACTORS WHICH HELP TO PROTECT AGAINST THOSE AFOREMENTIONED CONCERNS.

-BLUM, 1999



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## ■ CHANGE WITHIN FAMILIES

- X Society has become more transient. Consequently, family members are living further apart from each other. This has led to families losing their intergenerational composition.
- X The definition of family has changed from the traditional two parents and the extended family to a myriad of configurations leaving voids that can be filled by other caring adults.

## ■ CONFLICT AMONG GENERATIONS

- X The inequity that exists in the financing of social programs creates the perception of conflict between generations. 73% of the increase in social spending in the 1990s is projected to go towards old-age benefits while spending for children is projected to decrease by 4%.
- X In the 1980s and 1990s, safety net programs for children, including education, social services, health income security and nutrition have been targets for elimination and/or modification.
- X Mass media have not helped as they have exploited the potential for intergenerational conflict by writing or reporting on stories such as “Kids Versus Canes,” “Greedy Geezers,” “Gray Avarice” and “Extended Childhood.”

## ■ AGE SEGREGATION AND ISOLATION

### AMONG GENERATIONS

- X Society has become more age segregated, providing very little opportunity for intergenerational interaction. Children go to daycare, while seniors go to senior centers.
- X Community infrastructures such as families, schools and churches are more isolated.

## ■ GAPS IN SERVICES PROVIDED TO

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- X It is estimated that more than 40 million children and adults are illiterate.
- X In a study of 6th –12th grade youth conducted by the Search Institute, it was found that only 49 percent of young people have non-parent adults they can turn to for advice and support.
- X Just 42 percent of kids say that they have frequent in-depth conversations with non-parent adults.
- X There is a strong need for role models, counselors and mentors.

## ■ GAPS IN SERVICES PROVIDED TO OLDER PERSONS

- X Older people are often left behind in the job market, because they lack the skills necessary to keep up, such as computer skills, which are crucial to most fields.
- X Older people who immigrate to America often do not have the language skills needed to communicate socially or professionally.
- X Despite new developments, many older people are lonely and somewhat isolated, and would benefit from contact with younger people, either as volunteer buddies or as mentorees.

—FACT—

OVER THE COURSE  
OF THE LAST  
CENTURY, AMERICA  
HAS BECOME HIGHLY  
SEGREGATED BY AGE



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## VIII. What Are the Various Types of Intergenerational Programs and Who Is Involved?

### ■ FOUR MAIN TYPES OF PROGRAMS

Though there are many configurations of intergenerational programs, they often fall into four basic categories:

#### • Young Serving the Old:

In this model, young people provide services to older people such as teaching older people computer skills.

#### • Old Serving the Young:

In this model, seniors often work with young people to address specific needs, such as working in the schools and teaching children how to read.

#### • Old and Young Serving Side By Side:

This model involves seniors and young people working together to address some concern, issue or need within the community. It may also involve generations simply having fun together and gaining some collateral benefits out of the interaction, such as playing in a band together.

#### • Intergenerational Shared Site programs:

These are programs for young and older persons such as a nursery school and a nursing home that share the same facility. These programs provide for frequent interaction between the generations.

Generations United's newest initiative is meeting dependent care needs through intergenerational shared site programs, or co-located facilities. These programs represent a growing trend across the nation as communities strive to serve their

citizens of all ages, and increasingly look to intergenerational approaches as effective strategies. As public resources shrink, collaborative approaches to delivering services and/or programming at the local level are becoming not only options, but essential strategies. Intergenerational approaches to providing services and programming are inherently collaborative and have yielded many creative programs, intergenerational shared site programs among them.

Though in the vast majority of programs one age group is the provider of services and another age group is the recipient of services, both age groups will benefit from the exchange. Older volunteers or mentors will learn as much, if not more, than the children they serve.

Developing intergenerational programs requires building partnerships among two or more groups such as:

- ✗ Childcare agencies
- ✗ Youth organizations
- ✗ Government agencies
- ✗ Parent groups
- ✗ Long-term care facilities
- ✗ Health care organizations
- ✗ Schools and educational agencies
- ✗ Senior/retiree organizations and agencies
- ✗ Senior and adult daycare centers
- ✗ Cultural and ethnic organizations
- ✗ Community based organizations
- ✗ Volunteer groups and organizations
- ✗ Corporations and businesses
- ✗ Service groups
- ✗ Religious institutions
- ✗ Social service agencies
- ✗ Disability groups
- ✗ Arts groups

### -MYTH-

OLDER PEOPLE  
ARE ALL  
NEEDY, FEEBLE,  
DEPENDENT,  
AND POOR.

### -FACT-

THERE ARE MANY  
OLDER PERSONS  
WHO ARE VERY  
ACTIVE IN THEIR  
COMMUNITIES,  
AND WHO WORK OR  
VOLUNTEER WITH  
INTERGENERATIONAL  
PROGRAMS.





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## IX. Benefits Of Intergenerational Programs

Intergenerational programs provide ways to:

- X Help dispel stereotypes about young and old. Young people learn to understand the aging process and become less fearful of older people, and older people become less fearful of the young.
- X Promote understanding of shared values and respect for individuals in all stages of life.
- X Allow the strengths of one generation to help meet the needs of another.
- X Provide opportunities for interaction among people of diverse backgrounds, ages and experiences.
- X Bring people together to address the needs of the ages through cooperation and pooled resources.
- X Prevent unnatural age segregation.
- X Increase awareness to issues that affect both old and young.
- X Unite and take action on public policy issues that address human needs across all generations.
- X Fill gaps in community-based services for special populations, such as persons with disabilities, frail elderly and at-risk youth.
- X Help empower communities by facilitating community collaboration, pooling resources and engaging in cooperative problem solving.
- X Promote an appreciation for rich cultural heritages, traditions and histories.
- X Enhance the ability of public and private agencies to meet family and community needs.

## X. Model Intergenerational Programs

Following is a sampling of model intergenerational programs, which can be replicated in your community, from the Generations United program database. Our database contains over 350 programs. To request more information about these or other programs, please call Generations United at (202) 662-4283, or e-mail us at [gu@cwla.org](mailto:gu@cwla.org).

**ACTION FOR BOSTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD)**  
**Family Friends Program Boston, MA**  
 1455 Tremont Street  
 Roxbury, MA 02120  
 (617) 442-8737

Collaboration of ABCD, Children's Memorial Hospital, and the Medical Foundation.

The goal of this program is to match senior volunteers with families of children with disabilities. The volunteers provide support services to the families, such as respite care, companionship and emotional support. The project matches families with volunteers who share a similar cultural heritage, and sometimes the same native tongue.

The Family Friends program was started in 1986 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The volunteers are people over 55 who are willing to devote much time and energy to befriending the children and their families. The volunteers work with a broad range of disorders, such as autism, Spina Bifida, Down Syndrome and Cerebral Palsy. Beginning in 1991, the Administration on Aging and the National Council on the Aging became sponsors of the program. It has grown and spread rapidly over the years. At present, there are over 35 Family Friends projects throughout the United States.

-FACT-

THERE ARE MANY INSTANCES IN LEGACY WHERE THE FAMILY MEMBERS CAN BE SEEN BENEFITTING FROM INTERGENERATIONAL INTERACTIONS.



# The Intergenerational Concept

## PROJECT 2000 INCORPORATED

Academic Support and Mentoring Program  
Stanton Elementary School  
Alabama & Naylor, SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
Dr. Spencer Holland  
(202) 543-2309

Project 2000 Incorporated is a private, nonprofit organization. It was established in 1994, with the goal of providing educational mentoring and academic support services to inner-city African-American youth, particularly males. The program follows the children from 1st through the 12th grades. It was first implemented at Stanton Elementary School in Washington, DC, in the fall of 1988, when the Class of 2000 entered the 1st grade.

During the Elementary School Phase (1988-1994), Program 2000 was a volunteer program that recruited and trained adult volunteers, mostly African-American men, to serve as Teacher Assistants in the classrooms, assisting with reading, writing and math. The program was expanded past the primary grades, due to the positive response from children, teachers, volunteers and parents. By 1994, it was necessary to create a fully staffed organization, which is still in operation.

Project 2000 has its program facility located in the housing project where most of the students who attend Stanton Elementary live. Providing program services in the community where the participants live is an integral part of the Project 2000 concept, which includes engaging inner-city boys in educational activities outside the school. Most of the mentors are at least 10 years older than the students with whom they work. Extra effort is spent seeking mentors who are retired.

## ACROSS AGES: AN INTERGENERATIONAL MENTORING PROGRAM

Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning  
1601 N. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19122  
Andrea Taylor, Assistant Director  
(215) 204-6708

Across Ages is an intergenerational mentoring program developed by Temple University's Center for Intergenerational Learning. It was originally designed as a school-based program for substance abuse prevention, but was later expanded to address multiple risk/protective factors and can be utilized as a wide-ranging prevention strategy in a variety of settings. The mentors in the program are older adults, ranging in age from 60-85, and the youth range in age from nine to 15. Participating children live in the city's most economically depressed neighborhoods, characterized by poverty, a high incidence of substance abuse, drug-related crime, and blocks of abandoned houses. The mentors work with the children to develop awareness, self-confidence and the skills they need to overcome overwhelming obstacles, do better in school, and feel better about themselves. They also receive classroom instructions to cope with stress and promote positive decision making.

In addition to the mentoring, the children in the program are also involved in community service activities that benefit the neighborhoods around their schools. The program also provides support to the children's teachers, parents and family members through workshops, recreational events, and counseling or referral. Based on published outcomes for participating youth, Across Ages is one of six model projects selected for national dissemination by the funding agency, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), and is currently being replicated in sites across the United States. Since 1991, Across Ages has served at least 1000 children.

### -MYTH-

OLD PEOPLE DO NOT  
WANT TO LEARN  
ANYTHING NEW.

### -FACT-

PEOPLE OVER 50  
ARE THE LARGEST  
GROWING GROUP OF  
INTERNET USERS.  
DOROTHY, ALAISSA,  
AND WANDA, IN  
LEGACY, HAD  
LEARNED ENOUGH  
NEW SKILLS TO  
TURN THEIR LIVES  
AROUND BY THE END  
OF THE FILM.



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## LINKING LIFETIMES: NATIVE AMERICAN MENTORING PROGRAM

North American Indian Association of Detroit, Inc.

22720 Plymouth Road

Detroit, MI 48239

Marie Verheyen, Program Director

(313) 533-2635

As part of the National Linking Lifetimes Program, this intergenerational mentoring and relationship building program began in August 1990 to serve Detroit's Native American communities. Program partners include the Detroit Indian Health Center, Urban Indian Affairs American Indian Services, and the Can-Am Indian Center. Eighty-two percent of funding is provided from foundation support; the remaining 18 percent is through in-kind support from partner agencies.

The Linking Lifetimes Native American Mentoring Program is designed to stabilize and enhance the lives of young Native Americans through interaction and friendship with an older adult mentor and role model. The program matches Native American adults and elders ages 45 and older with young persons ages 10-17. Currently, 10 older adult mentors work with 11 middle school youths and 10 high school students. The intergenerational pairs work together for two and one-half hours each week. Typical activities include homework assistance and special attention to school issues, career planning, goal setting, and cultural understanding of Native American customs and traditions. The older adult mentor and youth meet at the Indian Center or in the mentor's home throughout the year. The mentor's responsibilities include: offering youth unconditional guidance; serving as a friend, coach and listener for the youth on personal, school, career and other issues; assisting youth in developing and working toward life goals to enable him/her to be a productive member of the Native American community; to pass traditional values and culture to the youth; and to teach and model for the youth important life skills.

Both older adult and young participants are recruited through advertisements (print, visual, radio); at regional and area pow wows, and through personal referrals. A recruitment flyer is also distributed. A doctor's certification of health, a criminal background check, and three personal references are mandatory qualifications for mentors. Training is provided by the program director, both individually and in a group. Regular monthly mentor meetings for support and additional training are provided. Each mentor receives a \$40.00 per month stipend and \$.25 per mile reimbursement for travel. Up to \$10.00 each month is also reimbursed for special events. The staff interview all participants at six and twelve month intervals in order to evaluate their experiences, and participants are encouraged to keep a reflection journal. An annual banquet honors participants.

## INTERGENERATIONAL DAY CARE CENTER

The Community Programs Center of Long Island, N.Y.

141 Rodeo Drive

Edgewood, NY 11717

Marie Mason, Center Director

(516) 586-4644

This center, newly opened in the spring of 1999, is one of the largest intergenerational shared site daycare centers in America. It accommodates about 200 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers as well as 60 frail and impaired older adults, some of whom suffer from Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's and other chronic illnesses. Programs for 6-12 year-old children are held during holidays and summer vacations. The center's child-to-staff ratio exceeds New York State's licensing requirements, and provides great opportunities for learning and individualized attention.

Various activities, such as art, music, movement and cooking are held throughout the day, with the two generations coming

-FACT-

IN THE 1980S AND 1990S, SAFETY NET PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, INCLUDING EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH INCOME SECURITY AND NUTRITION HAVE BEEN TARGETS FOR ELIMINATION AND/OR MODIFICATION.



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together to participate. Even the building and surrounding grounds are designed to facilitate socializing between the generations. An intergenerational sensory garden is located directly outside the center's eldercare suite. The garden provides participants with a safe, secure, and accommodating environment that alternately provides opportunities for physical activities, privacy and sensory stimulation for both generations.

The center is located in a business complex making it accessible to the employees of many area companies, as well as area residents who need dependent care services. Financial support for the daycare center came from local politicians, businesses, grants and major fundraising efforts of the Community Program Center.

## DESIGN 2000

### Intergenerational Programs

#### Division of Community Education & Participation

#### Dade County Public Schools

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Design 2000 is a unique, multi-generational program that brings together young students and the elderly to search for practical solutions to help the aged maintain their independence, while sparking a sense of caring among the youth.

First started in 1991 by the Stein Gerontological Institute (SGI), in collaboration with Dade County Public Schools, Design 2000 has already attracted national attention for its creative approach to engaging the hearts and minds of young people to help solve the problems of aging.

Using an innovative curriculum designed by SGI staff and Dade educators, workshops sensitize students to the aging process. Young people are encouraged to explore their own feelings about

aging and examine the misinformation about the aging process. Through basic simulations, they experience what it might be like to have poor eyesight or diminished physical strength. Schools are paired with local nursing homes so students can meet regularly with the elderly and exchange ideas about practical ways to cope with the physical changes of age.

The program has resulted in some very creative ideas and variations on existing products: an all-terrain walker with headlamps, hydraulic wheelchairs, mechanized closets and cabinets, and a toothbrush with a built-in tube of toothpaste. All products were created as a result of empathy turned to inspiration. The inspiration has resulted in better school attendance, better grades and better attitudes among the participating students.

## SELF ESTEEM THROUGH SERVICE (SETS)

### Interages Montgomery County Intergenerational Resource Center

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Self Esteem Through Service (SETS) is an intergenerational service-learning intervention. It is targeted to involve at-risk middle and high school students with isolated and often frail adults in activities designed to enhance the self-esteems of both groups, provide supportive relationships, change stereotypes, and give both groups the opportunity to engage in community service projects to help yet other needy populations.

The project has been operating since 1991, and is a collaboration between Interages, the Montgomery County Public School system and the

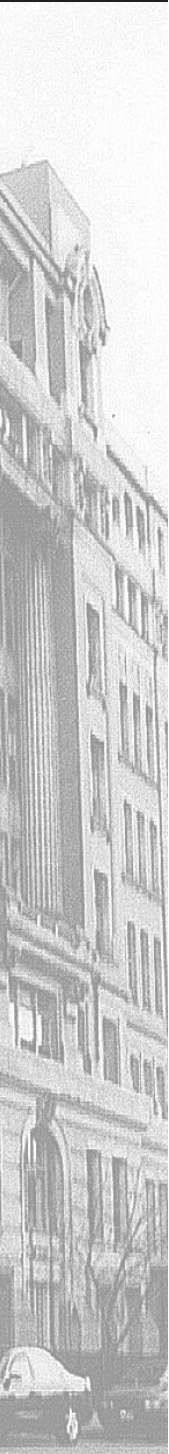
## -MYTH-

CHILDREN WHO GROW UP IN SINGLE PARENT OR FOSTER HOMES ARE DOOMED, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT GET ENOUGH PARENTAL INTERACTION.

## -FACT-

EVEN WHEN A PARENT IS NOT AVAILABLE, CONNECTEDNESS TO ANOTHER ADULT, SUCH AS NIKKI HAS WITH KENNY, HAS BEEN SHOWN TO BE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE, AS ARE COMMUNITY NETWORKS, AND CONNECTIONS TO SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

-BLUM, 1999



# The Intergenerational Concept

Housing Opportunity Commission. Interages is a nonprofit agency in Montgomery County, Maryland whose mission is to foster the development of intergenerational projects as ways to meet compelling needs in the county. SETS receives 33% of its funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service under Serve-America (subtitle BI, 1990). It receives 33% of its funds from Interages and 34% from in-kind support.

SETS unites isolated seniors and at-risk youth in community service projects, such as making valentines for the children's ward of the local hospital or making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for a homeless shelter. These intergenerational groups, including about 10-15 youth and 8-10 seniors, meet once every three weeks at a suburban senior facility for one hour during the school day. Interactive activities such as sharing personal mementos, playing games, and conducting personal interviews provide opportunities for the seniors and youth to foster personal relationships with each other. Working as a team, they learn from each other's experiences, thus developing a positive self-image and increased self-esteem. The students also have the opportunity to exhibit initiative and leadership skills.

The students spend a total of four hours in classroom orientation and volunteer training. The teacher uses activities and discussion to introduce the concept of working with older people. The resident counselor of the senior facility provides a professional volunteer training session in which the students fill out volunteer applications, receive guidelines about volunteering, and express any concerns about the project. An orientation session introduces seniors to the project. Those interested in participating attend a training session led by the classroom teacher, the resident counselor and the program coordinator. They use this time to discuss common stereotypes about adolescents, the characteristics and needs of the students, the contributions of the seniors, and any other concerns or questions.

Evaluation of this project confirms that the SETS program enhances feelings of self-esteem in both age groups. Teachers report positive changes in the behavior in the students involved, and the seniors comment on their improved feelings of self-worth.

Since its inception, more than 125 vulnerable youths from four schools have found kindness, support and friendship from senior adults in four apartment complexes, who in turn, have been enriched though knowing that young people enjoy being with them. It is a win-win situation that will continue to make a difference in the lives of all participants.

## XI. References

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-FACT-

AS PUBLIC RESOURCES SHRINK, COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO DELIVERING SERVICES AND/OR PROGRAMMING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL ARE BECOMING NOT ONLY OPTIONS, BUT ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES.

