

GOOD PRACTICES IN INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING

MODELS ADVANCING POLICY,
PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

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New York State Intergenerational Network/NYSIgN

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Message From The Commissioner

Over the past 40 years, the Department for the Aging/DFTA has actively promoted and supported intergenerational programs involving elders with pre-school through high school-age youth. These initiatives include the Foster Grandparent Program (1972), the Intergenerational Work Study Program (1987), the Community-Based Intergenerational Partners contract initiative (1992), and the Grandparent Resource Center (1994).

This year we are pleased to introduce a new resource available on the DFTA website, *Good Practices in Intergenerational Programming – Models Advancing Policy, Practice and Research*. A joint project with the New York State Intergenerational Network/NYSIGN, this publication offers specific criteria for good practices and features 16 'real world' model programs that exemplify those criteria.

The 16 initiatives are multi-dimensional vehicles for delivering needed services, confronting and dispelling age-related stereotypes, forging mutually enriching relationships between young and old and fostering age-friendly communities. Although some of the program models selected are no longer active, their contributions to intergenerational policy, practice and research, and their potential for replication merit inclusion in this compendium.

Good Practices is designed to be informative and easy to access. Our intent in providing this compendium is to encourage development and implementation of a variety of community-based intergenerational programs by sharing successful practices and providing an information link for those wanting to learn more about them.

We hope that users of *Good Practices* will take from it a desire to engage in intergenerational activities in their communities and that this publication will inspire appreciation for the contributions of elders and youth in our society.



Lilliam Barrios-Paoli,
Commissioner

A Message from New York State Intergenerational Network/NYSIgN

Intergenerational programs have been shown to improve the physical and mental health of elders, the academic performance of youth and children, the economic viability of providing some social services, the coping skills of families and the building of community. It is natural that organizations considering the development of new initiatives would look to existing success stories as the models for their programs. This is the background to this compendium.

The programs presented here represent a *snapshot in time* of some real world examples of generations coming together to enhance each others' lives. There are many ways to set the stage for the "magic" that occurs when young and old come together. Here, we present quite varied settings and activities that are intentionally designed to connect the people of multiple generations. We are pleased to give you a glimpse of these models, even while knowing there are many more.

We have much yet to do to raise awareness of the benefits of this kind of work, and hope that this compendium will contribute to an expanding conversation.

Kevin Brabazon,
NYSIgN President

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FOREWORD

This is a compendium of information about intergenerational programs in New York City and Westchester County that demonstrate good practices. The goal in producing this manual is to encourage implementation of intergenerational programs, to share good practices, to document a variety of programs and to provide professional linkage for those wanting to learn more. It is the result of collaboration between New York City Department for the Aging and New York State Intergenerational Network.

An advisory council of professionals experienced in intergenerational programming helped to insure that the programs selected would meet a consensus of standards and illustrate good practices. There were discussions about elements of good practice and whether or not all programs selected must necessarily demonstrate every criterion of good practice. There was concern that real world programs worthy of notice would be missed if a requirement to meet all standards thus constrained the entries. Nevertheless, there was agreement that these standards do represent important domains in which to build solid programming. Therefore, we present **Good Practices Criteria** at the beginning of this compendium.

Sixteen programs are presented in this compendium, reporting what goes on in and behind the scenes, as well as providing an in-depth context for how these programs have come about. For quick reference, each entry is introduced through an eight-point summary indicating such things as *Provider*, *Goal* and *Interaction*. The next eighteen sections for each entry comprise the bulk of program description, but in digestible size for each and consistent throughout the work. We hope that the design of this compendium enables the reader to quickly identify key features of programs, choose whether or not to read further about a specific program at any time, as well as compare and contrast programs. Some of the topics covered are **Objectives**, **Insider Perspectives**, **Impact**, **Training**, **Collaboration** and **Contacts**. Every effort has been made to present programs both at-a-glance and in-depth, for reader convenience.

All images in the compendium are based on photographs of program participants, with four clearly indicated exceptions. With a nod to the creativity of intergenerational programming, the photographs have been transformed into painterly abstract images.

Citation style for this work follows the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines.

GOOD PRACTICES CRITERIA

- 1. GOALS AND RATIONALE**
The program has clearly identified goals and rationale.
- 2. PLANNED ACTIVITIES – DOCUMENTED**
Intergenerational activities are planned, implemented and documented, and descriptive materials are available.
- 3. BUDGET**
A budget is specified and utilized.
- 4. RECRUITMENT**
The program has a recruitment plan.
- 5. SENSITIVITY TRAINING**
Sensitivity / competency training is provided to intergenerational participants.
- 6. PUBLICITY**
The program is publicized.
- 7. COLLABORATION**
The provider collaborates with other organizations and / or internal departments to produce the program.
- 8. EVALUATION**
The program uses evaluation tools.
- 9. SUSTAINABILITY**
The program has a plan for sustainability.
- 10. FOLLOW-UP**
Follow-up procedures are used to track post program effects on participants.

FORMAT KEY

AT A GLANCE

<i>Provider:</i>	The organization.
<i>Goal:</i>	The program goals.
<i>Classification:</i>	ELDERS SERVING YOUTH, YOUTH SERVING ELDERS, JOINT/SHARED PROGRAM, COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY
<i>Interaction:</i>	Brief description of activities.
<i>Location:</i>	Program activities may occur outside the organization.
<i>Participants:</i>	Number of people registered and age groups involved.
<i>Target audience:</i>	Requirements for participation.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Duration of intergenerational activity.

DETAILS

OVERVIEW	Good Practices Social Issues Addressed Objectives
CORE CONTENT	What Happens Insider Perspectives Impact Evaluation
PREPARATION	Recruitment Training
RESOURCES	Collaboration Budget Program Context Provider History
FURTHER INFORMATION	Key Informants Dates Contacts References

YOUTH SERVING ELDER PROGRAMS

DOROT Teen Volunteer Programs

www.dorotusa.org

UPDATED 08.27.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	DOROT, Department of Family, Youth and College Volunteer Services (FYCVS).
<i>Goals:</i>	The goals of DOROT are to: “Enhance the lives of older people through...partnership of volunteers, professionals and the elderly; foster mutually beneficial relationships between the generations; and provide education and leadership in developing volunteer-based programs for seniors,” (VolunteerNYC.org, 2006). The goal of DOROT’s FYCVS Department is to connect youth with elders.
<i>Classification:</i>	YOUTH SERVING ELDERS
<i>Interaction:</i>	HOME VISITS - Ongoing relationships between youth and elders are nurtured through DOROT’s school-based service-learning connections and internships for students in grades six through eight and in high school. The service-learning and internship cohorts engage in different activities, but in each, young people visit with older adults and share friend-ships on an ongoing basis year-round. The contact generally has a focus such as delivering birthday cakes or holiday meals or teaching computer skills to elders in their homes.
<i>Location:</i>	RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS on the East and Upper West Sides of Manhattan and events at DOROT’s headquarters on the Upper West Side.
<i>Participants:</i>	DOROT has about 10,000 volunteers and 10,000 clients (VolunteerNYC.org, 2006). About 300 youth visit and develop friendships with about 285 elders through DOROT’s Teen Programs (Turner, 2007).
<i>Target audience:</i>	DOROT’s total outreach spans a diversity of older adults living independently. Most are frail and isolated; many are homebound. All need some assistance. Some are in transition from temporary to permanent housing.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Youth, in pairs, visit with elders on a weekly or monthly basis. There are short-term and one time volunteer opportunities.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

The value of multigenerational relationships has long been recognized by DOROT. The DOROT Teen Volunteer Programs were put into action in 2001. According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, the Teen Volunteer Programs meet all ten standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION, SUSTAINABILITY and FOLLOW-UP. Of particular note, DOROT is recognized as a leader in the use of multi-generational volunteers to address social isolation of the elderly and provide cultural and educational enrichment programs.

Social Issues Addressed

Volunteerism is widely recognized as an important human resource to bridge the isolation of people aging in place, yet the pressing demands of potential volunteers can severely limit access to and sustainability of this group as a resource. Flexibility in volunteer opportunities is essential. An organized volunteer corps can make a vital difference in the lives of older persons, but volunteer needs must be part of the whole program design.

Objectives

- To foster mutually beneficial interactions between the generations while exposing young people to a positive volunteer experience;
- To foster in teen interns a concern for elders while giving elders the opportunity to share their accumulated knowledge and wisdom;
- To build volunteer skills and deepen understanding of aging issues;
- To enable teens to gain practical work experience by assisting isolated and homebound seniors;
- To provide an array of essential services to the elderly while also fulfilling school community service requirements;
- To benefit from professional staff training, guidance supervision, self-reflection, and engagement.

(Turner, 2007)

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Youth

There are several ways that young people develop ongoing friendships with elders through DOROT's Family, Youth & College Volunteer Services Department. Many high schools require students to fulfill service-learning or community service credits in order to graduate and DOROT helps them obtain these credits by providing two youth volunteer avenues: (a) Service Learning and (b) Teen Internships.

Teen Interns provide a critical adjunct to DOROT staff, providing direct service such as food shopping, grocery delivery, making home visits, and bringing birthday and holiday packages. Teen Interns also take part in intergenerational cooking and baking sessions, where they prepare food for clients in DOROT's Homelessness Prevention Program.

They also assist staff in helping seniors move from DOROT's temporary shelter into permanent homes. With all of these interventions there is a focus on linking elders to the community in practical, social, intellectual and cultural ways, as well as emphasis on youth and elders developing friendly relationships. (Turner, 2007). At the end of each service day every young person must complete a feedback form. Supervisors immediately read and discuss the student's feedback with them. DOROT's social workers communicate with the elders to ensure that the visits are going well.

Elders

Social workers interview and assess the needs of older adults referred to DOROT. A comprehensive array of social services, friendly visiting, learning opportunities, cultural enjoyment and social occasions are options for older adults who register with DOROT. Depending on interests, an elder will sign up for an individualized package of services delivered by a host of volunteers through different projects. The elders may be homebound or somewhat limited in strength and mobility. They may be receiving home assistance or personal assistance managed through a care agency. What DOROT provides is the social contact in a multitude of ways, which enhances or broadens the lives of its clients.

From the client perspective interaction with high school students happens in a wider context of the multi-generational community that DOROT fosters through its many programs and opportunities for connection. Social workers match elders to volunteers, linking people who are likely to be compatible and share common or complimentary interests. There are weekly home visits from youth to do an oral history project or help with a task, there may also be visits and assistance from a college student or an adult, and on occasion, whole families, or small groups of students pay visits. Key to satisfaction for the parties is careful matching and continuous follow-up and support.

Insider Perspectives

B.G. (Columbia Prep 10th grader)

"A lot of my friends have done this. It's great. We do different activities with seniors—like the computer visit. I need to use it [the computer] for school. I'm not an expert. What I know is very simple. But they need the basics – and I can teach them that. This opens up a whole new world for me. It helps us both. In such a simple way I'm helping a lot. It's perfect.

"So far I've met with 10 seniors. They're very welcoming. It implies a relationship to grow into. I can continue—and birth a new friendship. Like last Monday—she [a client] had a party and invited ME. Every senior is a lot of fun. Keeping company makes us both happy.

"My grandma is the most active senior I know. She's 87 and drives two and half hours to see us. She plays in Bridge tournaments, we visit her, it means the world to her, but she has a lot of friends—more than I do, even.

“What I’ve learned is that a little thing can have a big impact. I’ve learned to be patient. The understanding I’ve gained gives me a whole new perspective—meeting with them gives me a whole new world.”



Figure 1 Sharing a Photo Album

S.C. (Horace Mann 11th grader)

“I’ve been working here sporadically since 7th grade—summers and occasionally after school. It started with my Bat Mitzvah—I had to do community service, so I made birthday cards. I like that—when they come out well. I like art. My favorite art is photography. I have to go to the dark room later to develop some film.

“I go on visits—two or three per day to talk to people. I go on Birthday visits, computer visits; I drop off meals at their house. Grocery trips involve calling them, getting the list, going shopping and delivering groceries and staying for five or ten minutes. Last year I tried different departments at DOROT. I liked the accounting department, too.

“See—this is what’s in the Birthday Bag. A little cake—it’s decorated with Happy Birthday, a present—a handmade box with candy inside. We personalize the card with their name, their birthday, and ‘Love, all your friends at DOROT’.

“I met this one senior through DOROT—she was so interesting to talk to. I talked with her four or five times. She was so sharp. She had an opinion about these topics that others didn’t talk about. Whenever these topics come up I think of her. She liked having

someone to talk to. I told my friends about her, she is so amazing. She's in her mid eighties, she was in one chair, she had an Aide, said she went for a walk one time a week.

"This [kind of work] has become an option. It would be nice to have career rotations. I'd also like to be a doctor and a photographer. Everybody wants to know what my career plans are."

M.R. (DOROT client)

"I live around the corner from here. My family lives in Massachusetts and North Carolina—I have no relatives here. I brought friends to take to the cemetery to put a stone on the grave. That's a service of DOROT. It's a blessing to be able to do that.

"I had a stroke 8 year ago—I can't do much. But I've been volunteering here for 3 years. I do a lot. Phoning--five mornings a week.

"I was recommended by a Social Worker—from SPOP.

"The children come from school and the college students. I try to let the children talk. I ask them what they like, where they've been. Sometimes we take pictures.

"They call me when they need a senior at baking class. I'm a 'supervisor.' I help mix. It's for the Jewish Holidays.

"The City College students – they talk. A lot have been to Israel. I haven't been. This one girl is Muslim. She wears a 'habit.' She's majoring in Jewish Studies. Actually all three are Muslim. They like the professor. This one wants to work in a Jewish outfit. She got caught in the war last year. But she came back and graduated. She wants to work in a charity in New York.

"It's very pleasant to have somebody visit.

"In '39 I graduated from University of Massachusetts. Boy, times have changed. The lap tops, the cell phones. It's really nice of the children to help old people."

G.K. (DOROT client)

"I got involved when a woman next door to me in her 70's needed services. I started to look around for help for her. Eventually I thought I could benefit from DOROT. I use DOROT in two ways--grocery shopping and delivery, and University Without Walls. In University Without Walls they have really good topics. I enjoy talking with other adults my own age.

"The high school kids are very sweet. They are a breath of fresh air. There's a certain amount of talk. Some chat, some don't. I've gotten to know one young man—but it's not in depth. I ask him about school, what he's interested in. The connection is very superficial—that's the way it should be. I'm a retired teacher—I know about the bond that can develop between student and teacher. But that's not my role here. Don't get me wrong. The kids are delicious and adorable. It's good to know there are really nice, caring, involved young people. Some don't do it for credit and that's really laudable."

Impact

Students

- Gain some understanding of the needs of frail elderly and challenges presented by aging, loss, and loneliness;
- Gain practical experience in the work force;
- Earn course credit or community service credit;
- Gain experience in the not-for-profit world;
- Receive mentorship and guidance;
- Develop communication and social skills;
- Develop a sense of responsibility;
- Gain self-esteem.

Elders

- Nurture the growth of a younger generation;
- Receive assistance with everyday tasks or chores;
- Share skills acquired over their lifetimes;
- Reflect upon and share life experiences;
- Learn about today's adolescents;
- Help build bridges between the generations that enhance communication--developing trust and understanding;
- Pass on their values to youth;
- Serve and be served, give and receive;
- Leave a legacy.

Evaluation

Program efficacy is monitored and assessed at many junctures. Teen Interns take pre-, mid- and post-surveys. The Home Visit questionnaire that students fill out after every home visit is an important daily exit tool. It focuses attention on student perspectives and observations about the person visited, and it advances communication between students and staff, and facilitates supervision. The information is immediately passed along to the community social worker, which may prompt a phone call to the senior. Teens are also encouraged to write in the Student Logbook, which facilitates monitoring and peer sharing. Additionally, volunteers randomly call seniors to get feedback on their level of satisfaction with services.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

The students are recruited based on their school or youth organization affiliation. There is an outreach effort to older adults who live alone in apartments on Manhattan's East and West Side who may be interested in community/social connection or need assistance to remain in their homes or may need help moving into assisted living. The target constituency is multi-cultural.

It is interesting to note that there is extensive recruitment for DOROT volunteers of every age, with every level of experience – from professionals who raise funds or provide administrative expertise, to specialists in accounting or graphic design, to families who wish to visit elders for traditional holidays or birthdays, to graduate students seeking social service internships, to community-minded college and high school students, to elementary school student cohorts taking part in group initiatives. (*Volunteer Opportunities*, n.d.).



Figure 2 Pleasure in the Details

Training

DOROT is well known for its training and educational programs. Its Merrin Institute, formerly The Generations Institute, through which professionals can learn how to develop and run volunteer visiting programs, has information kits replicating two of its programs - Friendly Visiting and University Without Walls.

Training for youth in the volunteer programs is comprehensive and ongoing, according to Judith Turner, Director of Volunteers. It begins with the application process where the students receive an orientation to DOROT and its mission. Next, a DOROT staff person leads small group and one-to-one sessions—using DOROT’s booklet *Teen Guide To Visiting With Seniors*. They use role-play conversations, which gives students preparation in talking with elders and talking through difficulties that might arise during visits. Next, an experienced volunteer always accompanies a new volunteer. Workshops are provided periodically on a variety of social and cultural awareness topics. Some examples are: Issues of aging and social isolation, Hispanic Cultures, Chinese Cultural

Awareness, Gay and Lesbian Issues, Cultural Differences, and Community Work as a Career. Training is truly ongoing in that, as mentioned, students communicate with their supervisors following every home visit.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

DOROT works with 156 schools, both public and private. Some of the school connections occur through linkage with New York City Department for the Aging. DOROT also works with youth organizations and synagogues.

Budget

DOROT's institutional budget is \$6,500,000. This comes from individuals, foundations and corporations, the UJA-Federation, public funds/grants, and nominal fees (DOROT at a Glance, n.d.). DOROT has a staff of 60. The Family, Youth and College Volunteer Services Department consists of one full-time and one part-time person, trained office volunteers and is supervised by the Director of Volunteer Services.

Program Context

"We have mobilized thousands of volunteers to implement programs that have enhanced the lives of the frail elderly and bring the generations together for their mutual benefit," stated Sara Peller, Associate Executive Director of DOROT, at an annual public hearing before the New York City Department for the Aging, (Transcript, 2003).

Programs connecting the old and young

Serving Elders

- Tween and Teen Volunteer Programs;
- College Volunteer Services;
- Family Volunteer Program: Families visit elders at home on special occasions and bring treats and handcrafted gifts. Families also join seniors onsite for Bubbe's Bakery, an intergenerational baking program.

Elders In Service

- Intergenerational Library: Seniors read to children and share stories;
- Bubbe's Bakery: Seniors teach young people how to prepare their favorite foods.

Mutual / Shared Programming

- Generations Exchange: Youth and elders engage in a variety of arts, crafts, music, reminiscence and cultural activities;
- Computer Pals: Older adults are helped by teens to use the computer and the adults then become "e-Grandpals."

The utilization of a volunteer corps to deliver a large array of programs is a unique and defining feature of DOROT. A major focus of the organization is to develop, support and retain a multi-aged volunteer corps. This effort has the advantage of linking youth with active, socially engaged elders so that the youth are not exposed exclusively to frail elders, which would otherwise risk reinforcing a one-dimensional preconception about age and aging.

The organization attends to the full range of human interests, from such basics as food, housing and social service, to wellness programs, arts classes, cultural celebrations, music and other arts events, and to educational programs for elders and caregivers. DOROT is organized into a number of centers and institutes that administer thirty-two programs, which evolve in response to needs over time. DOROT means generations in Hebrew. Part of DOROT's message is that people of every generation are essential. All of its programs are concerned with promoting and strengthening the connection between generations.

Provider History

The organization was started in 1976 by a group of Columbia University graduate students who were concerned about the neighbors they noticed who were aged, struggling to be independent and living alone. It began as a small grass roots group that enlisted fellow students to be outreach volunteers to make contact with the older neighbors. They wanted to know what assistance the older people needed in order to maintain their independence and remain in their homes. The idea was that community involvement could go a long way to reduce elders' preventable decline and the likelihood of institutionalization. The effort was so successful that in time it grew into the large organization that DOROT is today, serving the East Side and Upper West Side of Manhattan. The organization has received worldwide recognition because of its cost-effective volunteer-based intervention that helps older people so they can remain in their homes.

DOROT Core Programs

Friendly Visiting
Holiday Package Deliveries
Kosher Meals for the Homebound
Shop and Escort
Homelessness Prevention Program
University Without Walls
Information and Referral

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Sara Peller, Associate Executive Director, Programs
Judith Turner, Director, Volunteer Services

Credits

All images in this section by photographer Paule Rogol, courtesy of DOROT.

Observation/Interview Dates

November 11, 2005
June 20, 2007

Contact

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Isabella Caring Partners Program

www.isabella.org

UPDATED 08.02.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	Isabella Geriatric Center
<i>Goals:</i>	The goals of the Isabella Caring Partners Program are: (1) to augment the service provided by Isabella staff using high school students trained to deliver non-intimate assistance, (2) to promote intergenerational relationships, (3) to give students experience in the workplace and provide them with stipends and (4) to facilitate students' exploration of health careers (Caring Partner Program, n.d.).
<i>Classification:</i>	YOUTH SERVING ELDERS
<i>Interaction:</i>	CAREER EXPLORATION in AGING brings students to skilled nursing floors where they visit and assist residents one-to-one and assist with group activities under the supervision of a charge nurse. Youth participate in workshops related to geriatric health care and issues of aging and health careers. It is an after-school paid working experience (Youth opportunities, n.d.).
<i>Location:</i>	SKILLED NURSING FACILITY SITE: Isabella Geriatric Center, in northern Manhattan
<i>Participants:</i>	60 high school student Caring Partners interact with residents of the 705-bed facility.
<i>Target audience:</i>	High school students who reside in the Manhattan's Washington Heights and residents of Isabella.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	For nine months, on 2 and 3-day per week schedules, students spend time with elders. The ratio is 1 to 2 students per 40 residents on a nursing unit.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

Isabella's intergenerational approach to service has a long history, beginning in 1992. According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, the Caring Partners Program meets all ten standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION, SUSTAINABILITY and FOLLOW-UP. Of particular note, this program promotes a new paradigm in the skilled nursing environment, that of Person-Centered care. This directly enhances residents' lives and the workday of staff, and expands high school students' vision of the future.

Social Issues Addressed

When families are struggling to make ends meet they often do not have the resources to support their children's aspirations. High school students need experience that expands their horizons and gives them a sense of accomplishment. They benefit from role models that help them build self-esteem and demonstrate the importance of education. When these supports are in place they have a better chance of completing school and achieving satisfying careers. A large well-guided institution, especially one with an elder cohort, can embrace the youth and their aspirations, and help them to build bridges from difficult circumstances toward fulfilling adult lives.

Objectives

- To provide elderly and frail residents with more personal attention;
- To give students the opportunity to develop intergenerational relationships;
- To expose students to the expectations of the work place;
- To provide an opportunity for students to explore health careers;
- To reward students with a much-needed stipend;
- To offer a safe haven for students during weekday evenings and weekend mornings;
- To offer students the constructive experience of engaging with their community.

(Caring Partners–Workscope FY 2007 & Caring Partner Program Project Description, n.d.)

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Caring Partners work on the nursing units as part of the team. They take assignments from the Charge Nurse each day. They are expected to maintain an open and active line of communication with the staff. They provide residents with person-to-person attention, helping with the non-personal chores that the Certified Nurse Aides would otherwise need to do for the residents. They are expected to get to know the individuals they are helping. When residents are willing to accept the Caring Partner's attention, the actual job emphasis for the young person becomes developing rapport with the resident.



Figure 3 Caring Partner and Resident

The formal duties of the Caring Partners are to: (1) visit and engage the resident, (2) answer call bells, (3) escort residents off the unit, (4) focus on each resident as an individual and respond to their needs accordingly, (5) assist with meals, (6) administer surveys—Resident Satisfaction, Volunteer Needs, Geriatric Depression Scale, (7) perform light housekeeping for the residents—straighten rooms, sort, check labels and fold laundry, etc., (8) make unoccupied beds, (9) run errands as requested, (10) conduct small group activities—discuss current events and play cards and board games (*Assignment Description*, n.d.).

Students work after school from four to seven, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays--or on weekend mornings--Saturdays and Sundays from nine to one-thirty. Both Weekday and Weekend Caring Partners work nine hours a week, from October through June. Before being assigned to the unit for the first time they attend two days of orientation and basic training. They continue with training classes, once on the job. Then they are assigned to nursing units individually or in pairs. The Intergenerational Coordinator within the Volunteer Department manages the Caring Partners. She is available at all times to support and supervise the students. The Volunteer Department

manages, trains, supervises, supports and monitors the Caring Partners, in coordination with the Nursing Department.

Insider Perspectives

H.N. at Isabella

“I’m in 10th grade. I want to be a doctor. This place – I thought it looked like a hospital. My friend told me about working here. It’s close to my house. I’ve been coming here for 5 months, now. I’ve built good relationships with the residents. They feel like we are their family and it gives them a little bit of hope. They notice a lot when you are missing. It makes me feel proud that I make a difference in their lives. And -- they actually care about me. I see them smile. They know my name. It’s weird for old people to remember my name; I make a difference. If you really get to know them, they are human just like us. I see myself in them. At first I didn’t want to get too close because they are going to die. It shocked me when this lady died. I talked to my family about it. My mom told me, ‘Don’t get too close.’

“ ‘Old’ means an experienced person you can learn from. A person can’t be completely old, it’s parts of a person that are old; one part of a person remains innocent.

“One lady, on my first day, said, ‘I don’t talk to strangers – get out of my room.’ It was like she was a child who had been told, ‘Don’t talk to strangers.’ That really surprised me. I tried to explain I wasn’t a stranger; it was my job to visit her. I went back later.

“One lady didn’t want to see me, one day. She insulted me. That really hurt. But I act the same. And, I’ve become really close to some. My confidence has grown. They’re my family, now. I actually miss them, and they miss me too. I talk to them – ask, ‘How is your day?’ They tell me personal stories. I help them with their rooms – like fix their tables, take them to the garden. This has made me more open-minded. I used to be afraid of ‘old’. Now I don’t mind. It’s helped me to be around people. I speak to the nurses about careers. And residents tell me to study hard. It’s good advice.”

K.B. at Isabella

“I’m in 12th grade, downtown. I started here in the Summer Youth Program four years ago. I didn’t know any old people. My uncle’s pretty old – he’s 57. But he speaks Spanish so I don’t really talk to him. I had no idea what Isabella was. I started it because of the money.

“What I do is – talking. I have some very interesting conversations. Even with the dementia residents. Sometimes they know things, but it’s random. I say, ‘Oh, I didn’t know that.’ I do other things—dance with them, do the balloon exercise, fix their portfolios, feed them, talk about music, go to the garden with a group, take them to other floors. Their smiles make me feel good.

“I’ve learned a lot from the residents. They have a lot to share. They have experience and useful advice about living. This one guy – he was talking about school. I was about to drop out of school. He said I should stop wasting time. It hit me pretty hard because he is very educated. It’s why I stayed in school.

“One time a resident punched me in the back and was saying in Spanish, ‘Get out of my house, get out!’ She’s actually one of my favorites. We were close. Then she attacked me. It was a shock and I was embarrassed. But it got a lot better because it

wasn't personal. You learn not to take it personally. They forget. It's foolish to keep a grudge.

"One man talks philosophy with me – about Karl Marx. I actually like to come here and talk with people. They are friends, just old. I listen to their music. I'm bad on their music. But music is really remade from the old artist's music. I used to think that 'old' meant 'old and cranky'. But a lot are really happy and enjoying life. Before, I was scared to die, but now I'm not.

"I brought a friend in. He was nervous and scared--said, 'Let's get away from here.' It was because the old guy's legs were amputated. I said, 'No way.' He was ignorant. I have fun – joke around and make the people laugh. I come in, they relax. I have more understanding now. I'm more open-minded and alert. I have in the back of my mind to work here [after graduation]."

Impact

The program broadens the lives of both residents and youth, according to supervisors and the students' written work. Ms. Sessler, former Director of Volunteer Services, reported that students develop empathy and sensitivity to disabilities. Students feel that they are making a difference. They feel needed and the acknowledgment they receive is very important to them. Based on surveys taken by the three cohorts involved (staff, student and resident cohorts):

- Staff is "less stressed because they can rely on additional help from the students;"
- Residents feel their weekend mornings and weekday evenings are enriched with the students' visits at a time when the staff presence is lower;
- Youth have learned to "respect the unique individuality of the residents, regardless of their confusion or frailty;"
- Youth feel "bonded with the institution and have gained a sense of responsibility and self-worth;"
- The program provides a "safe haven and constructive opportunities" for the young participants;
- Students learn about the nursing profession and the importance of empathy.

(Caring Partner Program, 2004 & Caring Partner Program, n.d.).

Evaluation

Isabella is working to develop an evaluation tool. The first step was to send graduate students to a training offered by Department for the Aging so that they could design a qualitative data set for outcome measurement. The information needs to be packaged in a way that can be electronically transmitted, to satisfy funders. Fifteen new Caring Partners were given a pre-test this year. Prior to this development, mostly qualitative and anecdotal data was gathered (Sessler, 2005).

Isabella was awarded "Best Work Site" by Alianza Dominica, Inc., which is involved with Caring Partners by recruiting students and providing stipends for the Summer Youth Program at Isabella.



Figure 4 Valued Relationships

PREPARATION

Recruitment

As reported in an OST (Out of School Time) grant proposal prepared at Isabella for the Caring Partners Program, “Isabella serves 100 economically disadvantaged youth in its Summer Youth Employment Program and it is from this cadre of high school students (most of whom live in Washington Heights or the Bronx) that we recruit the 60 youngsters who will become Caring Partners” (Caring Partners–Workscope FY 2007, 2006, p. 2).

The Program uses a pre-screening protocol for eligibility. Young people must have served in the Summer Youth Employment Program or performed community service in which they demonstrated personal responsibility and interest in working with the elderly. They must be income-eligible and have working papers (Youth opportunities, n. d.). Participating students range in age from 14 to 21.

Students are recruited not only through Alianza Dominicana, Inc., but also through the Children’s Arts and Sciences Workshops, the hospital workers’ Local 1199, and through Isabella’s own employees who are parents of Caring Partners (Summer Jobs Program offers two-way benefits, 2004).

Training

The program includes many hours of training in workshops off the nursing units. The workshops are held more than once in the sequence so that all students have a chance to attend. They go over institutional policies and procedures and general work expectations. They learn practical skills such as bed making, wheel-chair safety, communication, how to answer call bells, and infection control. There is a special course on assisting the frail and elderly with meals. Other subjects are: helping residents to retrieve memories, relating to people with dementia, end-of-life issues and palliative care, and how to administer the Geriatric Depression Scale. They learn about residents' rights, preserving dignity and being tolerant (*Caring Partners Workbook*, n.d.).

Rema Sessler, Director of Volunteers for many years, retired in the spring of 2006, developed the extensive, 61-page training workbook. The students use this workbook throughout the nine months. It is intended to be both a reference and a tool for active learning. The training is not didactic; it is presented so that the students become involved in the learning process.

The training includes discussions about how Isabella embraces the philosophy of *Culture Change*, making this formal care setting as homelike as possible. (Sessler, 2006). According to Ms. Sessler (2006) there has been a shift in the training over the last two years and it now emphasizes the changing culture of long-term care. She explained that what is expected of the students is not so focused on task-based assistance as on developing intergenerational relationships. Students are taught that they are uniquely positioned to contribute to the quality of residents' lives—bringing a level of personalized attention and the opportunity for friendly rapport. They are taught that residents' individual preferences are important, and that they can discover and support these preferences. At the same time, the students have their own support team—the care staff and the Inter-generational Coordinator.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

Collaboration occurs interdepartmentally for training and supervision. Students and staff from the adjacent high school (now converted into four small schools) are actively involved. Youth organizations such as Alianza Dominica and the Children's Arts and Science Workshops routinely channel students toward the program.

Budget

In fiscal year 2006 the budget was \$151,956.00, covering students' stipends, plus the salary for a part-time (18-hour per week) Program Coordinator. Isabella's CEO is very committed to the program and covers much of the cost. Isabella was awarded the OST grant from the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, amounting to \$32,400.00, to be paid out over 3 years. It has been partially funded by the New York City Department for the Aging, the New York Community Trust, Chase Manhattan Bank, the W.T. Grant Foundation, Columbia-Presbyterian Neighborhood Fund, the Borough President's Office and Councilman Miguel Martinez's 10th District Office (Sessler, 2006).

Program Context

Forerunner to the Caring Partner Program: Health Career Partnership

In 1992 Isabella's Director of Government and Community Services, Leslie Foster, developed a program called the Health Career Partnership. Aware of the increasing need to generate future health care workers and also aware that young people of immigrant families in the neighborhood could benefit from contact with working professionals, she led a collaborative effort to develop and produce the health career partnership. The purpose was to boost the morale of present workers and to cultivate the interest of local young people in geriatric health care. With this, the lives of residents at Isabella would be enhanced. Ms. Foster led a team of teachers from George Washington Heights High School (next door) and staff from the nursing home to develop the Partnership. It was a comprehensive 3-year program for high school students starting with 10th graders, continuing with them through high school graduation. It included an array of workshops to introduce them to health careers and the world of work. Academic tutoring, ESL instruction, and preparation for Scholastic Aptitude Tests were offered to the students. As well as that, each was matched with a mentor from Isabella and a college student accompanied each high school student to visit residents. The program was designed to manage, monitor and support the progress of 150 students (50 from each grade level) over the course of the 3-year program. It was an ambitious program designed to supplement public education and respond to the needs of the student population in the neighborhood at that time. A 100-page replication manual was prepared that has "information and tools for replicating all or parts of the program, with practical forms, evaluations, and workshop guides" (*A Program Guidebook: Isabella Geriatric Center's Health Careers Partnership*, n.d.).

The Caring Partner Program

This program grew from the Health Career Partnership program. The new program began in October of 2001 and was, in part, a response to changed demographics and to the increased requirements of public education today.

Next door to Isabella is George Washington High School, now no longer one large school. It is composed of four academies, each with a few hundred students. These academies are more closely involved with the students than was possible in the larger school, and tutoring is available at school. Isabella no longer needs to provide ESL, tutoring or SAT preparation. The academic day is longer and so it is more difficult to recruit students. The formal and professional mentoring process of the other program is no longer possible. It shifted from a day program to an afternoon-evening and weekend program. All of this required a re-tooling of Isabella's workforce development program.

Around this time the *Culture Change* paradigm was being introduced to Isabella. It became apparent that its emphasis on person-centered care fit hand-in-glove with the intergenerational, relationship-building, personalized approach now emphasized with Caring Partners (Sessler, 2006 & *Caring Partners Workbook*, n.d.).

Provider History

Isabella Geriatric Center is a not-for-profit organization that includes a 705-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility, a 70-unit independent-living apartment house for seniors, an Adult Day Health Care Center, long term home health care for 500 seniors, a Child Care Center within the skilled nursing facility (see Isabella Project NOISEE) and other programs and services. The campus is located just north of the Washington Bridge.

Isabella Geriatric Center began in 1875 as Isabella Home for the Aged with 25 beds for women only, located in Astoria, Queens. Fourteen years later a grand new home was built to replace it, located in Washington Heights. Anna Ottendorfer (1815-1884), founded the home to honor her daughter who lived only 27 years (Renner, 2003). In 1969 the four-story Washington Heights structure was torn down to make way for a new and much larger building. The Isabella campus was expanded to its present size in 1993 (Renner, 2003).

A New Model of Long Term Care

The Caring Partner Program adds a unique and important dimension to a new methodology in long-term care. In the 1990's, professionals and advocates were rethinking the environment of traditional nursing homes. As this national dialogue grew, practitioners created a network to promote the development of the new care methodology, calling it *Culture Change* (Pioneer Network, Our History, n.d.). In 1999 Isabella began to explore and adopt this approach. It is about remodeling the physical environment to be more home-like, but also, it involves humanizing the care provided. It shifts the emphasis from getting a task done to recognizing individuality, affirming life and building relationships. For success, it needs to be not only resident-centered, but also supportive of staff. The Caring Partner Program with its trained volunteer staff of young people is positioned to apply the values of relationship building in the course of helping with instrumental activities and tasks. The collaboration of Culture Change and Caring Partners promotes both immediate and long-term results: It supports a present workforce committed to quality of life and care, and supports the development of a future workforce interested in the field of geriatrics.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Rema Sessler, former Director of Volunteers

Observation/Interview Dates

November 10 & 16, 2005 & June 22, 2006

Contact

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Intergenerational Work Study Program / IWSP

www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/volunteering/workstudy.shtml

UPDATED 08.26.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA)
<i>Goals:</i>	The goal of the IWSP is to provide high school students with a meaningful pre-career work experience in services for the aged. Youth and elders mutually benefit from serving each other – youth assisting with tasks, and elders sharing their social capital of life experience, communication skills and interest in the well-being and success of young people. Originally the goal was student dropout prevention, but it has expanded to address the interests of a wide spectrum of academic achievers.
<i>Classification:</i>	YOUTH SERVING ELDERS & ELDERS SERVING YOUTH
<i>Interaction:</i>	SERVICE-LEARNING and CAREER EXPLORATION in AGING, in which young people assist staff in carrying out a variety of services delivered to elders at senior centers and nursing homes. Friendly relationships between students and elders are regarded as the core currency of service that is delivered at these sites. Elders at senior centers and skilled nursing facilities mentor and tutor the IWSP students. This dimension of the exchange is integrated into the course of the day.
<i>Location:</i>	SENIOR CENTERS, NURSING HOMES and SERVICE AGENCIES throughout Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.
<i>Participants:</i>	2005: Approximately 400 high school students (variable, each year), from 25 high schools, working with approximately 7,000 elders at 40 senior centers or skilled nursing facility worksites. 2010: Approximately 300 high school students, from 20 high schools, are working with approximately 6,000 elders at 25 senior centers or skilled nursing facility worksites.
<i>Target audience:</i>	(1) High school students whose schools support service learning and have a strong commitment to the IWSP objectives. (2) Older adults who feel strongly that they have something to offer the young.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Students work onsite with elders and staff for 12 to 15 hours per week.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

This program has clearly identified goals and rationale and is produced through a collaborative network of public schools, community organizations and health facilities. This collaboration effectively recruits and supports students, provides sensitivity training and produces planned intergenerational activities. There is training for the professionals. Training for the students is provided through the collaborative efforts of professionals at the worksites, schools and Department for the Aging Intergenerational Unit.

Social Issues Addressed

In the New York City Department for the Aging publication, *Between Friends*, which describes the IWSP, Kevin Brabazon, then DFTA Intergenerational Unit Director, wrote, “In today’s transient and fractured society, close personal relationships between young people and older adults often do not occur in the context of family, and they are, for the most part, absent from social programs for youth. Yet such intergenerational bonds often impart essential skills for surviving in a tumultuous world. Psychological and social maturity and the capacity to adapt to circumstances may be as crucial to achieving self-sufficiency in adulthood as reading and math skills” (1990, p. ii).

Objectives

- Encourage students at risk of dropping out of school to improve their attendance and make progress toward graduation,
- Prepare students for the world of work and related responsibilities,
- Provide enhanced services for older adults at senior centers and nursing homes,
- Foster awareness and understanding between young and old persons to reduce their respective prejudices and fears.

(*IWSP Policies and Procedures*, 2005, p.1).

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Students

Students work twelve or fifteen hours per week at assigned worksites. They work during or after school, depending on the plan created by their school-based Intergenerational Coordinator. Some students go to their worksites on weekends. They are given a variety of assignments at the skilled nursing facility. They may assist with group recreational activities such as Bingo, exercise class or cooking. They may provide direct services such as escorting, letter writing, reading to visually impaired residents, or giving nail salon sessions. At senior centers they may provide telephone reassurance, or make calls to seniors who are absent. Sometimes they work with the site’s administration, helping with office tasks, helping with meal service, setting up for events and decorating for holidays.



Figure 5 Mutual Appreciation Enriches Daily Life

Elders

The Intergenerational Unit staff at DFTA encourage the work site supervisors to seek out elders who are interested in nurturing the youth and benefiting the young with their life experience. The site supervisors make every effort to encourage intergenerational relationships that are reciprocal and have mutual benefit to both elders and youth. In conjunction with the students' service, elders are given the opportunity to develop a natural role and rapport with the students, acting as friend, mentor, counselor and even tutor—and the nature of these hours is duly documented.

Work Sites

Usually each worksite receives a cluster of students from one school in the neighborhood. The coordinators at the school and worksite collaborate to oversee the students' participation and to "provide a well structured closely supervised positive work experience" (*IWSP Policies and Procedures*, p.3, 2005). The worksite coordinator gives the students an orientation and on-the-job training, introduces them to staff with whom they will be working, keeps daily records of attendance, provides periodic evaluations of each student, meets with parties to discuss any problems that arise and holds weekly meetings with the students to "discuss issues of working and aging, and strengthening student motivation to attend high school daily, pass classes and graduate" (2005).

Schools

There are different arrangements schools make to incorporate IWSP into the curriculum. Students may officially enroll in IWSP as a service-learning elective instead of gym or art. Through a Department of Education program called LEARN qualified students receive a stipend. Project LEARN students would otherwise need to find outside employment and could not participate in the IWSP. Project LEARN operates through the Department of Education's Career and Technical Education (CTE) division. In this program students complete a high school core curriculum while learning on-the-job workforce skills, earning credit toward graduation (NYSED-Approved CTE Program, 2005).

The IWSP students meet as a group at school once a week with their Intergenerational Coordinator. They discuss their service learning experiences and talk about working with the elderly. They discuss how the work impacts their academic lives in the present and how it might relate to their future interests. The youth bring to the table, whether they intend to or not, a wide range of complexities having to do with family circumstances, adolescent aspirations and vulnerabilities. Because closer supervision and attention to students is required by the IWSP, the school coordinator often becomes more involved with students' issues and interests. Sometimes coordinators find it critical to develop individualized teachable moments that encourage students "to think critically about their connections to the world and their identity within it" (Rhodes, p. 36, 2002). Coordinators also arrange field trips and seminars for the students pertaining to health careers and higher education.

DFTA

DFTA's Intergenerational Unit is in charge of the IWSP Program. IWSP Field Director, Theresa Knox, initiates and cultivates connections between the schools and worksites. "DFTA staff provides citywide coordination, monitoring and supervision for participating schools and senior service agencies" (Intergenerational Work Study Program, n.d.). Critical to the success of this program, Ms. Knox meets with each cluster of students at their school or worksite monthly to learn about their experiences. Over the semester, she builds a relationship with each young person in the group. Her message is that she requires and expects them to be responsible—and with her consistent attention, they grow to understand what that means.

Twenty-five of the 400 students participate in a gerontology career exploration produced by the Department, called the **Young Gerontologists Career Program**. Students explore attitudes and issues of aging through interactive discussions, they interview older adults to fulfill an assignment in oral history, they learn about higher education and health care from guest speakers and they are taken on field trips to see for themselves an array of health care settings with a geriatric focus. The seminar series extends for two semesters.

Toward the end of each academic year the DFTA Intergenerational Unit puts in motion the annual selection process to determine which student will receive a substantial scholarship toward their college education. This is called the Michael J. Scarfia Jr. Scholarship, given in memory of a former IWSP student, by his family. This is awarded at the Annual Recognition and Awards Ceremony, held at the end of spring semester. The ceremony honors all of the participants for their involvement during the year. Selected participants are awarded for their outstanding contributions that year. Arrangements are made for some of the older adults to join the celebration and it gives the students an experience of attending a formal and elegant luncheon given for them—a most unusual event in their young lives.

Summer Months

The IWSP runs through the full calendar year, from September to September. During semesters, students must juggle schoolwork with their internships. In the summer, high performing students are offered positions within the IWSP network, usually at a new site, and they receive paychecks through a special City of New York provision for student summer jobs.

Insider Perspectives

“This program expands and compliments the school curriculum. I see this in the monthly reflection sessions that I lead the students in,” says Field Director, Theresa Knox.

On the day of this interview, the mother of one of the IWSP students called to request an expedited change of assignment for her son. It is unusual that parents contact the director. The mother reported that her son was having trouble with the site supervisor and said that he needed a change. He had started in the program younger than most – in his freshman year of high school. He had been in the program, working at the same location for two school years and two summers. Ms. Knox knew the young man and the setting well. She agreed with the mother that the young man had matured and expanded his interpersonal skills over the last two years—and she knew that, academically, he was a high achiever. Rather than investigate or mediate the issue, Ms. Knox concurred that a change of venue would be good for him. The director reported that the mother said ‘I thank God for this program,’ and then went on to explain why. She said that each of her parents had come to live with the family. The father had Alzheimer’s disease. Because of the training her son received at the facility he knew how to maneuver the wheelchair, transfer the father and feed him. In an emergency her son was able to contact the right help and follow instructions to administer CPR to the grandfather. The grandmother also lived at home with the family until she died. He knew how to take care of her, too. The manner in which he did this was so respectful; he was different because of his work experience. Ms. Knox quoted the mother saying, ‘His being in this program is a tremendous help, and it has an impact on the whole family.’

“The students reveal how much the program means to them in many different ways,” reported Ms. Knox. Once a group of IWSP students went on a field trip to see a college—and during the trip they behaved badly. She and the teacher discussed consequences and decided that to achieve maximum impact, rather than dismiss the

students, they would be given the opportunity to amend their record. They were to be assigned extra hours of service as a condition for staying in the program. A meeting was held with the students, at which they were to be told the consequences of their misbehavior. “One student was crying, anticipating admonishment and dismissal,” she said. This student appealed to her, saying that by being in this program her grades had improved—and she was afraid that being dismissed would jeopardize her on-time graduation. “This program allowed her to meet requirements for credits toward graduation by doing service-learning--so that her focus was not scattered among too many assignments, and it allowed her to concentrate on her core curriculum. Once put on notice, the students were quick to mend their ways,” said Ms. Knox (2005).



Figure 6 Connection at Clove Lakes

Impact

Anecdotal information comes through continuous conversation between the collaborating schools, worksites and the Department and by written testimonials and reports. All report that the program is significant. Teachers and site supervisors write about each student--and students write about their experiences. Its widely acclaimed early success led to the replication guide, *Between Friends*, prepared in 1990 (New York City Department For the Aging, 1990, p. ii).

Evaluation

Approximately two years after the program was launched as a dropout prevention program, an independent evaluation was conducted by the public policy research organization INTERFACE. It found that “60% of students markedly improved their

school attendance, 80% improved their accumulation of credits toward graduation...85% went on to graduate high school...50% who have graduated have ...been accepted by colleges and vocational training programs,” (New York City Department For The Aging, p. 6, 1990). In the *Child and Youth Services Journal* Mr. Brabazon describes a statistical study of IWSP, which investigated whether or not structured intergenerational relationships affected school attendance or the drop out rate for students at academic risk (1999). Research showed that these relationships did correlate with increased school attendance, credit accumulation and graduation in a timely manner.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Students

There are three very different groups of students selected for the program. Some students are targeted who are at risk academically. They are chosen because it seems likely they will benefit from the extra support and supervision that teachers and other adults provide. They cannot participate if they are in trouble with drugs or violence. Conversely, some students are on a track of higher education--and are invited to enroll if they want to explore professional career paths. The third group of students is on a GED track. Generally the three groups of students are not mixed, due in part to the fact that each school tailors its outreach to one or another group of students. The students are usually assigned to their worksite as part of a school cluster.

Schools and Personnel

DFTA cultivates communication with school principals and school-based Intergenerational Coordinators. These professionals are key to making the program work. The principals must choose a staff member—a teacher, guidance counselor or assistant principal who is willing to give the extra time needed to help students debrief, integrate the service learning, and sometimes, provide counseling or disciplinary action.

Work Sites and Personnel

DFTA recruits service sites and builds working relationships with site administration and staff. Here, again, staff must be willing to provide extra attention to the students and make time for documentation. Students need orientation, training and supervision, and facility staff must plan students’ work schedules and place them advantageously for all.

Training

Documentation is critical to the program’s sustainability. Because there is a notable turnover due to retirements, job changes, and transfers to other schools, DFTA provides coordinators with an orientation at the start of every semester. Although record keeping is the focus, these orientations also provide an opportunity for networking.

The training for students helps to foster friendly intergenerational relationships. Students are trained in professional conduct and in communication with persons having hearing and visual deficits. They also learn about issues in aging, which supports their developing sensitivity. Students meet monthly with the IWSP Field Director for ongoing supportive supervision.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

Key to the success of this program is the commitment of collaborating partners and the individuals who carry out the daily work of supervising and supporting the students. Roles of the collaborators pertain to training students, monitoring them and providing documentation. The Department of Education and school principals, the Aging Network of senior centers and skilled nursing facilities, are all integral players in this large program. The New York Consortium of Geriatric Education Centers and Hunter College School of Nursing support the Young Gerontologist Career Program, to carry out their commitment to geriatric workforce development.

Budget

There is not a discrete budget allotted to the Intergenerational Unit for the community-based IWSP. It is sponsored and staffed by the DFTA Intergenerational Unit, with help from private foundations. The Director of the Unit provides part time oversight. This program requires a fulltime Field Director, a Community Coordinator, and the part-time work of a secretary and staff support person. Incidental expenses, such as snacks for IWSP students at meetings, are reimbursed. When funding sources allow, and this has been the case for most years of operation, there is an annual recognition and awards luncheon, to which all participants are invited.

Program Context

The IWSP began in 1987. It was developed by then Commissioner of Aging Janet Sainer, with the first Director of Intergenerational Programs Sonia Fliegel together with Board of Education President Robert Wagner Jr. The catalyst for this was a private donor who wanted to establish a legacy of programming that would be of mutual benefit for the old and young. At inception, it was designed to offer a work-study opportunity for students from low-income families so that they would not need to quit school to support their families. Through the program, they could earn a small income and continue their education. The program designers were able to extend the model so that students at risk of dropping out of school due to low academic performance could have an opportunity to reinvent their academic careers going forward. The program is intentionally designed to enrich the lives of old and young people, both interpersonally and in terms of contribution to society. In the process, students gain confidence and job-readiness skills and elders have a hand in shaping the future.

Provider History

The New York City Department for the Aging is a municipal arm of the government, funded largely by the City, with additional state and federal funds. In 1968, New York City Mayor Abraham Beame established the Mayor's Office on Aging (Downey, 1990), appointing Fordham professor Alice Brophy to be Commissioner. In 1978 Mayor Edward Koch appointed Janet Sainer to be the new Commissioner of Department for the Aging. She served for 12 years, through his three mayoral terms, and greatly expanded programming, services and benefits for older New Yorkers. Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli serves under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, to oversee the Department, which is the nation's largest Area Agency on Aging (7th Annual Jarvie Colloquium, 2002). The

Department collaborates with a network of community-based service organizations, disburses benefits to older New Yorkers, retrain and hires older workers and is an important source of information (Achievements, 2007). Area Agencies on Aging are located throughout the United States as the administrative entity through which federal policy, funding and demonstration programs help people age sixty and above. Programmatic priorities are outlined every five years through reauthorization of the Older Americans Act of 1965. New York City priorities are developed annually, in part through “public hearings held in all five boroughs to obtain recommendations and comments on its proposed plans...” (New York City Department for the Aging, 2006). The hearings are open to any and all interested parties, and people are invited to make suggestions through oral and written testimony.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

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Interview Date

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STACK / Students Teach Adults Computer Knowledge

www.jewishcouncil.info

UPDATED 07.29.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	JCY/Jewish Council of Yonkers-Westchester Community Partners
<i>Goal:</i>	The goal of STACK is to connect seniors with today's digital society.
<i>Classification:</i>	YOUTH SERVING ELDERS
<i>Interaction:</i>	COMPUTER LITERACY for retirees provided by high school student tutors.
<i>Location:</i>	2006: SCHOOL CLASSROOM/COMPUTER LAB at all 5 high schools in Yonkers and one in White Plains. 2010: SCHOOL CLASSROOM/COMPUTER LAB at 2 high schools in Yonkers and 1 in White Plains.
<i>Participants:</i>	2006: Approximately 140 retirees and 140 high school students. 2010: Approximately 70 seniors and 70 students.
<i>Target audience:</i>	Any adults over 55 who want to gain computer skills; students with verbal, social and computer skills.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	6-week courses, meeting once per week. Re-enrollment is welcome, subject to availability.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

This initiative is long running, since 1996, and has developed a basic computer literacy curriculum with an intergenerational theme. According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, The Stack Program meets all ten standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION, SUSTAINABILITY and FOLLOW-UP.

Social Issues Addressed

Many older adults want to access information and communicate using the computer, but feel at a disadvantage because the technology is outside their experience. It is hard to access hands-on help and gain the experience necessary to navigate the surprises that are so frequent with computer usage. Young people with three competencies--computer skills, communication skills and patience—can provide the older generation with invaluable assistance.

Objectives

- Provide older adults with basic computer skills;
- Help those who need to re-enter the work force with computer skills;
- Foster intergenerational rapport across the technology gap;
- Provide high school students the chance to contribute their expertise.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

In the Classroom

The teen tutors (called mentors) and adult learners sit in pairs at computer consoles in the school computer lab. A program instructor leads them through the daily agenda and is there to help with questions that arise while working on the lessons. The assignments lead participants into intergenerational topics of conversation, such as comparing home chores growing up, and living through historic events. For example, in learning how to use MS Word, learners are instructed to write letters to their mentors, following a template, telling what it was like when they were young. Their mentors are sitting next to them, guiding them through the computer controls and clicks, as needed. The adults come in with a range of computer experience and if they are more proficient, alternate lessons are immediately provided. Within these dyads there is usually a feeling of shared effort and exploration. The instructor monitors the process and wraps up each session.



Figure 7 Working the Mouse

The 6-week course utilizes a standardized curriculum. Some basic how-to topics in the curriculum are: Getting familiar with Windows; How to save on disc; How to use the Internet; and Word for Windows basics. High school students also take the role of expert lecturer, presenting on such topics as “Anti-virus Protectors, Firewalls and other precautions when surfing the net.”

Administrative Duties

The STACK program director must cultivate relationships with school administrators because many arrangements must be made to allow access to this non-school entity. Once the administrators are sold on the program, class schedules must be prearranged to guarantee computer labs and available teachers (who monitor this after-school activity taking place in the lab for which they are responsible). The program director recruits and schedules instructors, teaches one of the labs and monitors the other classes when she is not teaching. Phone contact with the attendees is also a big part of her job. She calls people who have expressed an interest in re-enrolling to let them know the new schedule; she calls people who have signed up but don’t show or skip class; and she calls to remind people when class will not be in session because of a school holiday. In the words of Director Kanowitz, “I *am* the phone tree.”

Sometimes students will drop out because they want to study for Advanced Placement or for the SAT—or because of their sports commitments. Sometimes the adults feel overwhelmed by the technology or find that transportation is too difficult—and they drop out. If the adult wants to learn about the Internet—and the school has barred access to

the Internet—which happens in a way that is not always predictable, this can be a reason for not staying through the course.

Insider Perspectives

Irene Kanowitz, Director of STACK

“One woman came in having a brand new computer at home. She wanted to know, ‘How can I take these pictures [emailed to her] somewhere else?’ ‘What’s an internet?’ She wanted something tangible to hold or touch. She couldn’t get that it’s just all this *information*. But by the end of class she walked away with hotel reservations for a vacation with her husband--she found out about the Internet!”

S.M., Adult Learner at Roosevelt High School, White Plains

“I read about this in the paper—the Journal maybe. I signed up because I have a computer at home and I wanted to learn about it. My five-year-old grandchild can run the computer. Years ago I had a computer in my business, but I found I could do the math faster manually so I got rid of it. That was 15 years ago. My buddy said there are a lot of things you can do on the computer, like get golf clubs for a reasonable price, find places to go play golf--you can make reservations. To a certain extent I can do more because of this class. But the typing—I mean, I actually *typed* about 50 years ago. In actuality, I have to practice. It’s all about practicing at home. But I have more confidence to get on the computer now. The class gave me a way to learn the basic things. Sometimes, in class I would do a double take because it’s a challenge, certain things are just hard to comprehend. Sometimes you feel a little backwards. But, it’s not a problem having the young people show me what to do. Sometimes it was the same person, sometimes a different person. They adapt very easily to it because their mind is quicker. My daughter was so excited when they got computers in school—she’s 40 years old now... This class is a way of getting involved. It lets you in the front door. I’d come next year except I’m trying to sell my house. But I’d recommend the class. If you’re interested, it could definitely help.”

L., Adult Learner in the Computer Class at Roosevelt High

“The reason some [adults] don’t come back is because they are overwhelmed but don’t want to admit it.”

S.T., Mentor / High School Student

“In 10th grade Mr. Manley talked about this program. I was taking computer class. But I wasn’t ready to get involved then. This year he asked if I’d like to share my knowledge so I said yes. [Her first language is French, but she is now fluent in English.] I’m not in contact with any senior citizens except my grandmother. Sometimes we’ve had creepy information about senior citizens and I wanted to experience for myself what it’s like to be involved [with seniors]. It helps me with my job--I’m a cashier at Stew Leonard’s. Before, I would just sort of ignore what they said, turn away. I felt strange about the difference in age... but all you have to do is listen. I say, ‘Yeah--okay’ – nicely, in a polite way. Sometimes people just want to talk. I know what to do now; I’m more open than before. I got that from this class.”

S.T., Mentor / High School Student

“I want to do pharmacy and I’ll have something [from this class], because senior citizens use the pharmacy a lot. I learned how to be patient. I told them to write down their questions when they’re at home so they can remember what they want to ask...they do bring their questions. Sometimes we go over it again. But younger people sometimes can’t remember things from class. I like the schedule we follow. It tells us what to next and you want that...the little steps to follow...when you’re working with seniors” The only thing is it’s kind of short. It would be better if it was twice a week.”

S.H., Mentor / High School Student

“I’m doing this because I like to volunteer. Also it’s good for college. I wanted to teach adults. It doesn’t go with the age. If you want to do it, you can. I say, ‘Don’t suppose that adults can’t do it and only students can. No. It’s the same thing for everybody. You are intelligent. You can do it.’ Older people are very sensitive. They want to catch it too – what’s going on in the world. I like that they speak softly -- and they are kindly. Sometimes they are getting trouble to hold the mouse, but no, I don’t feel any different about them. They feel so much, like young children. I like both. I’m getting to experience real work with them – how to talk with them. I want to be a doctor.”

J.N., Mentor / High School Student

“My friend told me about this and my teacher. I like to help people use the computer. I’m good at it. I give them the skill and we can talk, share with each other – on skills – and what they’ve been through. They don’t have to stay home, and I feel helpful and that I’m good at something. They feel they can’t do it as well as us, but they need to take more time. I want someone to help me when I’m old.”

Impact

School principals like the program because it is a good service opportunity for students; and it is good public relations for the community. Said Director Irene Kanowitz, “Once we’re there, we’re there. It’s a win-win for everybody. Recently a principal visited class and the very next session there was a film crew there to put it on Educational TV.”

Evidence of the program’s impact is noted by its popularity, reenrollment and longevity. Seniors and students often participate in this program more than once, re-enrolling over the span of two years or more. The JCY has plans to expand STACK to other schools.

Evaluation

Seniors fill out an evaluation at the end of the course and the curriculum is adjusted according to the feedback on the evaluation. In 2004 the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging honored JCY for its STACK Program with an “Award of Excellence.”



Figure 8 Much More than Typing

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Learners

Adult students are recruited by posting notices at local libraries, churches, synagogues, and local businesses, by word of mouth, by notices placed in the monthly Westchester Jewish Chronicle, and by public service announcements on the radio. The Director also mails out approximately 200 announcements per semester.

Mentors

Usually the school's computer teacher recommends students whose work and behavior suggests that they will be reliable and helpful computer mentors. According to Henry Manley, Computer Skills Teacher at Roosevelt High School in Yonkers, the students he recommends are already acting as tutors to their peers--and they're among the brightest in the school. If a mentor is present for all six of the classes they receive a stipend of \$25 from JCY.

Training

The program director and instructors conduct 2-session trainings with high school students to assess language and communication skills--and computer knowledge. They prepare the teens to work with older adults by leading them through exercises on ageist stereotypes and attitudes and by giving them key points on communication with older adults. The teens also preview the curriculum. In this way, the young people assess their own interest while they are being assessed.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

Funding for STACK comes from Verizon, The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, and from JCY. Individual public school administrators make classroom sites available.

Budget

The budget covers the \$25 stipends given to the students when they attend every session, and \$100 honorariums for teachers who must put in uncompensated overtime to monitor the lab's use by an outside group—per requirement of the school board. There are administrative costs, such as printing of announcements, postal expenses and costs for newspaper advertising. The budget also provides a small stipend for the STACK Director, who donates many program hours.

Program Context

Janice Lubin Kirschner, Executive Director of JCY and Gail O'Rourke, the computer teacher at Gorton High School in Yonkers, New York created STACK in 1996. Around that time JCY volunteers tutoring high school students in reading looked with interest at a computer lab going up at the high school. They, too, wanted to improve their literacy, meaning their proficiency with computers. So, in response, Ms. Kirschner and Ms. O'Rourke designed STACK.

At first the computer classes were scheduled during school hours. This was a problem for the retirees because they drove and needed convenient parking near the classroom. It was a significant enough issue that special arrangements were made to keep the school open after school—and required negotiations with the janitor's union. This arrangement became the model for subsequent program scheduling.

Provider History

JCY is a multi-program not-for-profit organization dedicated to strengthening community by reaching out to seniors, improving children's education and improving relations between the diverse ethnic, racial and religious groups of greater Westchester. The Jewish Council of Yonkers is a secular organization that originally focused its efforts on the residents of Yonkers, NY. It is known in Yonkers public schools and other school districts in Westchester for its intergenerational programs. For more information on this provider, see the entry in this compendium for the SMART Program.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

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VISIONS Intergenerational Volunteer Program

www.VISIONSvcb.org

UPDATED 07.08.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
<i>Goals:</i>	The goals of VISIONS Intergenerational Volunteer Program are to decrease the loneliness and isolation of blind and vision impaired seniors and increase their use of community resources, while youth gain awareness and sensitivity about the needs of seniors and people with vision loss (VISIONS' Intergenerational Volunteer Program, n.d.).
<i>Classification:</i>	YOUTH SERVING ELDERS & ELDERS SERVING YOUTH
<i>Interaction:</i>	HOME VISITS. Youth provide social service visits weekly to blind or vision impaired older adults living independently. The young people, called VISIONS Service Assistants (VSAs) help with selected tasks and spend time visiting.
<i>Location:</i>	HOME VISITS in the community, throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens, and at VISIONS at Selis Manor, in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan.
<i>Participants:</i>	2007: Approximately 35 to 48 teens are enrolled annually--with a larger number enrolled during summer months. Up to 100 elder clients are served, depending on the time of year. 2010: Approximately 50 youth are enrolled this year and 165 elder clients are served, depending on the time of year.
<i>Target audience:</i>	High performing high school students needing community service credits and interested in interacting with blind and vision impaired older adults. Clients of VISIONS, age 60 plus.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Schedules are based on the school semesters and summer months. Students commit for the school year and/or summer months.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

VISIONS' intergenerational program is long running, since 1987 and it remains unique in concept and practice. According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, it meets all ten standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION, SUSTAINABILITY and FOLLOW-UP.

Of particular note, the teams of VISION Service Assistants/VSAs visit in the clients' homes and also do errands for them and escort them in the neighborhood. All of these activities are coordinated and monitored by VISIONS' staff, who also meets with the VSAs to provide ongoing supervision.

Social Issues Addressed

VISIONS developed the Intergenerational Volunteer Program as a response a client survey revealing what clients said they needed in terms of help at home. According to Elisabeth Lee, case managers were hearing that clients wanted family-like company and a little assistance with things at home—something difficult to find—and often beyond the means of clients. Staff also noted that although youth *could* be a resource, they lacked experience with disabled seniors--and harbored myths and stereotypes. (VISIONS staff).

Objectives

- Recruit, screen and train high school students to become VISIONS Service Assistants;
- Take client requests for in-home visits;
- Match clients and VSAs according to interests, as much as possible;
- Introduce participants, monitor matches and help them with closure at the end of term;
- Supervise students regularly;
- Contact seniors regularly and conduct satisfaction surveys.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Home Visits

Pairs of VSAs visit older adults who are blind or vision impaired in their homes to engage them in conversation and offer assistance with instrumental activities of daily living. The tasks vary, depending on the needs and interests of the client. They generally involve some combination of the following: reading mail and other non-Braille material to the client, organizing papers, helping with the computer, grocery shopping and escorting clients on errands in the neighborhood. Though the students help with specific, important tasks, the emphasis is on building rapport between the old and young. Relationships develop--and seniors offer their advice and life experience, and encourage career exploration.



Figure 9 Intergenerational Dance

On shadowing a VSA pair to a client's apartment, the easy professionalism of the two young men in high school, was striking. They were polite, good humored, observant of details, and clearly enjoyed the wit and wisdom of the elderly gentleman whom they visited. They were also very pleased to help him collect financial data on the computer. Clearly observable among the three, was a heartfelt mentoring relationship and mutual respect. In fact, there was a tinge of sadness as the elder anticipated the coming closure of this term and their friendships—something he experiences at the end of each year. However, he remarked that each year brings new young people, thus expanding his life experience. The students genuinely expressed that they would miss him.

The students are required to keep a journal about what they do and record their thoughts and feelings after every visit. They turn this over to Ms. Lee on a weekly basis--and it provides the context for discussions during supervision. From interviews, it was apparent that they enjoy all of this, considering Ms. Lee to be their own advisor. VSAs work three to five days per week, making one visit per day during the school year, or two visits during the summer. The coordinator schedules the visits, which last an hour and a half. The students begin their workday at the VISIONS office--to sign in and receive instructions before traveling to the first client's home. The majority of students have their own cell phones, which they use to call the office prior to entering each client's home, and on exiting. Checking in and out is strictly enforced. The visits are scheduled geographically to avoid losing time in travel. Before the parties meet for the first time, Ms. Lee provides all with the schedule for visiting as well as basic information for and about the parties who they are to meet. The coordinator maintains frequent contact with all participants by phone. The adults come to depend on these visits, so, if a student is absent, the coordinator arranges for another person or pair to make that home visit.

Senior Speak Out at Selis Manor

On Mondays, all students report to work at the Selis Manor apartment building for sight-impaired individuals, where VISIONS runs a community center and hosts *Senior Speak Out*. This is a dinner and lecture series for VISIONS clients, aged 60 and older. The event was created after feedback from clients just after 9/11, when they expressed a need to step out and connect with friends (Seniors, Speak Out! 2002). Because many of the participants would otherwise be unable to attend, VISIONS provides transportation to and from the center. VISIONS provides the dinner and arranges for a guest to speak on a topic requested by the participants. VSAs escort arriving seniors to tables set for dinner, and they serve the meals and visit with them before the featured presentation. Here, the youth meet their elder friends in a social context among peers of both generations.

Selis Manor was built with HUD funding and opened in 1982. It is a Section 202 subsidized apartment building in Manhattan for blind and disabled persons. VISIONS at Selis Manor was inaugurated in 2001 (VolunteerNYC.org, n.d.). It offers a variety of services: classes in adapted computer programs; recreation adapted for people who are blind, including bowling; rehabilitation training, including mobility and Braille; volunteer readers; fitness programs; a snack bar operated by teens who are blind; social services and support groups (*VISIONS NYC & WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY PROGRAMS*, n.d.).

Insider Perspectives

Interview with elder, Mr. E and VSAs K and R during a home visit:

The client, Mr. E said, "I've been in this program for many years--since the beginning. The young people keep me current with what's going on in the world. They know what's happening. One week I played this Rap Music for K and R because I thought they might be able to explain it to me. Somebody had given it to me a couple of weeks earlier but I just didn't get it. Well, I don't think the boys liked it much, either."

The young men smiled and looked at each other.

"What they do is read the stocks for me. K knows what I'm looking for and how to report it to me so I can prepare a graph about the activity on my Braille typewriter. I keep a record of what's happening this way," said Mr. E.

They then all worked in a very efficient manner to report the stock activity, using an intricate system set up by the client. R watched carefully because this is a new client visit for him. The three men were locked in concentration.

"It will be hard when they graduate high school and have to go," said Mr. E. K nodded his head slowly in agreement. "But it's so interesting to get to meet so many different people that I would otherwise never meet."

"This Monday K and R took me to the grocery. I have a system to go by myself where the store clerks help me find things. But I was amazed at how fast the boys found what I wanted. Much faster than the people who work there! They were great!"

R said, "I heard about this program from STYLE – a job readiness program after school. This is my third week. My friend said old people weren't what you'd expect. When I'm on a bus or train and I'd see an old person act nasty I'd think – that's an old person. But the people I visit are cool. Now I see people are individuals. I read and organize mail, help with shopping. It feels good to help. They have wisdom and offer

advice that might help me in the future. I'm very fond of V now. In the future I want to buy some stocks – maybe change my career to stockbroker. I want to meet different people and see different attitudes and lifestyles. Might be good for my future.”

K said, “I heard about this program from STYLE. I got involved because I was applying to college I thought it would be a unique program and good experience. The people we go to visit – they keep on asking for me. It's fun. An old person has a certain kind of character. One person I've gotten to know used to be a dance champion! Just think, they're old now, but they have a now and a past. I'm guessing my friends only see on the surface. A – he's got wisdom and is good with guidance. V – he's really loose and fun. R – she is really nice – she gives us cookies and something to drink – always. She's really grandmother material. I wrote about the first hug from her. These things – you won't find anywhere else. You learn things. They're individuals. We're closer now. We're friends. Not just somebody I have to visit. I was there for hours with V talking to customer service to help fix a computer problem. I'm there to help. They really need me and want me and now I'd never cancel an appointment unless it was something – an emergency. I wonder how it's going to work – if it's going to be harder for them or me to leave. If you're not there to read the mail then there's so much they wouldn't know. I never thought it could be so fulfilling to volunteer.”

Ms. M (attending VISIONS at Selis Manor Senior Speak Out)

“I heard about the program when I was taking classes here, learning Braille, back in the 80's. I made a phone call and got signed up. The thing about the teenagers is they're younger and quicker. They want to do the job. They've gotten smarter over time, once they get to know me. They aren't coming here for a break or to eat my food. Why, I can hardly get them to take a cold drink! These are very nice kids. They're the ones who don't get talked about. They pick up my medications at Duane Reade, they took me to get my picture taken for Access-a-Ride, they took me to get my watch fixed, they fill out forms for me, go to the bank to get quarters for me and they visit – we talk. One time I needed two girls because I had to put on a dress and pantyhose. Then they waited with me for Access-a-Ride so I didn't have to stand outside in the cold. Once I was late getting home because of Access-a-Ride and the kids who were waiting for me [had to leave]. But I called the office and J came all the way back to visit. We read books – I gave one [VSA] a book and we talk about them. I tell them about the past and we talk about current events. But I hate their music. We laugh about that. With this program I know I'm going to have interesting company and I'm going to get something done. I've recommended it to a lot of my friends. It's a blessing to us.”

N, VSA (attending VISIONS at Selis Manor Senior Speak Out)

“I thought it would be good for my college application and I was curious about blind people. I like being around the people so I keep coming because of the relationships. You get close. I like to talk – it's nice. I'm helping them through the day and I feel needed. They're not afraid to ask questions, so they are role models. I thought they'd be sad because of their blindness and that they'd need help with every little thing. I thought they'd be mean or rude. But I found out they are nice. They are just like us.

“At first I was very nervous – at the beginning I couldn't even talk or read to them. I just listened. I'm a shy person, but I've changed a lot now.

“They can be themselves around everybody – they’re not afraid of anything. They always have something to tell you – they are very caring. They have advice for every problem – I mostly take it. Now I can speak in front of a group and not be too afraid. Now I’m more of a people person. I think about what they say. Now, I’ll think to myself, ‘This doesn’t make any sense.’ It’s like, from them, I have another voice in my head to think about things.”



Figure 10 Gaining Computer Skills

Impact

Students develop interpersonal skills and a sense of increased responsibilities (The Intergenerational Volunteer Program, n.d.). Seniors have “increased social interaction and greater use of community resources and services” (VISIONS’ Intergenerational Volunteer Program, n.d.). Because the coordinator regularly supervises each volunteer she is able to document the short-term impact on students. Student’ attitudes consistently shift to positive regarding adults who are aged and vision impaired. According to Ms. Lee, “They speak and report with clearly opened minds and hearts about the people they have come to know. They indicate that this experience has broadened their perspective on the concerns and issues of age and disability” (2005).

The students also write about the experience in their school papers, on their college applications and in the VISIONS Newsletter. In the late 1980's and into the '90's the students testified at City Council Public Hearings, "which gave life to policy making in New York" (Lee, 2005).

The seniors' feedback is less formal, but no less clear. The program's popularity is indicated by the reenrollment of seniors, and the number of clients only increases. With the systematic communication between coordinator and clients, there are no secrets as to who wants what, when, and delivered by whom, in terms of service. For many of the blind seniors, the opportunity to give back as well as receive is key to their participation (Lee).

Evaluation

Pre- and post-tests are given during volunteer training to evaluate training effectiveness, gauge the students' understanding of their responsibilities and to document shifts in attitude about aging or disability. The Department for the Aging conducts a formal evaluation once a year.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

VISIONS notifies their clients who are 60 years of age and older about the Intergenerational Volunteer Program. Seniors may become aware of the program if they attend the Senior Speak Out events, where the VSAs are making sure the events run smoothly. Clients sign up for the home visits by making a phone call.

College-bound high school students who are meeting their academic goals are eligible to sign up for the program. They learn about this opportunity through their school advisors or after-school program supervisors. Students must be interested in community service and able to make the time commitment.

Training

For students to become VISIONS Service Assistants they must complete a six-day training, lead by expert trainers using a methodology called *The Human Mosaic*. The students learn to be sensitive and competent in working with people who are older and have vision disabilities. The training employs active learning techniques and rapport building exercises to foster self-development and social skills. It utilizes videos, lectures and experiential exercises. It covers stereotypes and information about blindness and elderly people. Students learn practical skills for working with clients in and outside the home. They are trained in sighted guide techniques, safe travel techniques and how to use many assistive devices. There is extensive coverage on what to do in emergencies, reinforced by periodic emergency response drills. The training is completed with rules and expectations.

The importance of sensitivity training and teaching tolerance became obvious at the program's inception. Not only must young people be guided to identify and dispel their

ageist attitudes, they must also be prepared to handle the sometimes-negative attitudes of white elders. Some elders initially were in self-imposed isolation, due to their fears of black youth, which left the youth with too few opportunities to interact. Ms. Lee said, “The youth had bizarre attitudes about the vision disabled; [they were] either Ray Charles, or in a nursing home” (2005). Early on, attitudes were changing, but one person at a time, and they needed a comprehensive approach in training to deal with these issues. So, with a grant from United Way, VISIONS enhanced the curriculum, incorporating principals and strategies of *The Human Mosaic* methodology. Educators in the field of cultural geography developed this as a way to explore cultural differences (The thematic approach of *The Human Mosaic*, n.d.). This new way of thinking “spread over into many areas of life, and infused in all participants the opportunity to teach tolerance,” said Ms. Lee. “Youth became comfortable, saying they were willing to reconsider [making home visits]” (2005).

RESOURCES

Collaboration

Department for the Aging has been a long time major partner, providing funding, technical assistance, monitoring and program assessment. There are approximately fifteen high schools involved, such as High School for Environmental Studies, Eleanor Roosevelt High School and High School for Fashion Design. Through the PASE network (Partners for After School Education), the American Planning Counsel and the YMCA are partners in volunteer recruitment. Ms. Lee says, “We are very connected to the community. We get the community to think of people who are blind--and be inclusive.”

Budget

The VISIONS Intergenerational Program is made possible through support from NYC Department for the Aging, the Blum Foundation, the Kern Foundation and the Stern Foundation. VISIONS contributes space, utilities, and office equipment. For the fiscal year 2006 the annual budget was \$144,340, with DFTA providing \$99,803 of that amount. The budget covers a full time program coordinator, a part-time administrative assistant, stipends for the VSA students, and honorariums and travel expenses for trainers.

Program Context

The Intergenerational Volunteer Program started in 1987. The program seeks to ensure that “Both parties build friendships that bridge the span of years, therefore encouraging intergenerational and multicultural ties [such that] the seniors then become role models and educators to the teens” (VISIONS’ Intergenerational Volunteer Program, n.d.). This was the first friendly visiting program to match young volunteers with older adults who are blind or vision impaired. In its first year of operation the VISIONS Intergenerational Volunteer Program was awarded the “Intergenerational Volunteer Award from NYSIgN/ New York State Intergenerational Network (VISIONS Free Services in Your Home, n.d.).

Provider History

VISIONS is a non-profit social service and vision rehabilitation agency for blind and visually impaired people. It offers free services for clients to help them work and live independently. The mission is: “to develop and implement programs to assist blind and visually impaired people of all ages to lead independent and active lives, and to educate the public to understand the capabilities and needs of people who are blind and visually impaired” (VISIONS, 2006).

The organization began as Vacation Camp in 1923. It was legally incorporated in 1926. It was a vacation camp specifically adapted for blind people, to give respite from city life in the summer. It was started by a small group of philanthropic women, who through community partnerships and volunteer efforts organized the first summer camps in Rye, New York. It soon opened to people of all ages, races and genders; holding separate camps for the men, women and families. The Vacation Camp expanded—serving more people, providing more services and amenities and moving to larger quarters. It is now a “35-acre year-round residential, adapted therapeutic recreation and rehabilitation facility located in Rockland County” (Timeline, n.d.). Meanwhile, the organization developed services in New York City—first by establishing an apartment for blind men who were considered at greatest risk, and then by developing programs to further promote independence in the urban setting.

Highlights (Talking about Philanthropy, 2002)

1964 - Spearheaded access to local senior centers for seniors with vision impairment and including services to help them integrate into daily activities.

1984 – Merged with the Center for Independent Living (CIL), the only provider of in-home services for the blind and with that merger, changing its name to VISIONS.

1987 - Inaugurated the Intergenerational Volunteer Program.

1993 - Received the Program of Distinction Award from the National Rehabilitation Association, NY Chapter.

1997 - Received the NYSIgN Volunteer Program of the Year Award for Youth Serving Elders.

2001 - Launched VISIONS at Selis Manor for residents and all New Yorkers in 2001.

Today, rehabilitation specialists provide individualized instruction at clients’ homes--such as instruction in how to read Braille, strategies in mobilization, navigation, cooking and personal care. The agency assists clients with job searches and pre-employment coaching. There are specialized programs for children, teenagers and elders (Talking about Philanthropy).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

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Dates

November 12, 2005
February 23, 2006
February 27, 2007

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ELDERS SERVING YOUTH PROGRAMS

Retired Faculty School Initiative/ RFI

(1986 – 2007)

<i>Provider:</i>	Columbia University School of Social Work, New York City
<i>Goals:</i>	The Retired Faculty School Mentoring Initiative/ RFI goals were to encourage and enable students to: remain in school, develop commitments to finish school, cultivate their potential for higher education and become productive members of society” (Retired Faculty School Initiative, n.d.).
<i>Classification:</i>	ELDERS SERVING YOUTH
<i>Interaction:</i>	LITERACY AND MENTORING. Retired faculty of universities in New York City volunteer one or two days a week to tutor, counsel and advise students of two middle schools at one location.
<i>Location:</i>	SCHOOL CLASSROOM for 2 middle schools, CIS 303 and CIS 232, located in the Macomb’s Educational Complex, District 8 in the South Bronx (identified on the exterior by its former name, CIS 82 / Community Intermediate School 82).
<i>Participants:</i>	Three categories of participants: (1) 175 to 200 sixth through eighth-graders (aged eleven to sixteen); (2) thirteen retired college faculty; (3) four Columbia School of Social Work graduate students; plus a hoped-for cadre of mentors recruited from local community colleges.
<i>Target audience:</i>	Students with academic and socio-economic disadvantages.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Time together—50-minute sessions, weekly, over the year.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

This program began in 1986 and closed after a twenty-year run, in 2006. It is being presented here because of its model use of retired faculty to mentor academically and otherwise challenged middle school students and the fact that the intergenerational dynamic was a strong factor in the program's success. Students were motivated to do their best, impressed knowing that these elders were professionals donating their time to help them do well.

According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, The Retired Faculty School Mentoring Initiative/ RFI met 5 standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, RECRUITMENT, PUBLICITY and COLLABORATION. SENSITIVITY TRAINING was provided, but it was based on educational goals and was not focused on intergenerational awareness.

Note: Present tense will be used in this report, consistent with the site visit and the perspective of those involved at the time.

Social Issues Addressed

There are numerous, seemingly unsolvable problems within urban public education. The high ratio of students to educators adds to this strain. Since there are no funds to hire the level of expertise needed, there might to be a way to bring in educators who would be sufficiently rewarded in other ways. At the same time, retired teachers often want to be socially engaged--yet their expertise goes untapped. The project responds by linking these interests, creating a mutually beneficial solution. (Retired Faculty School Initiative, n.d.).

Objectives

To support Middle School Students

- Provide one-on-one tutoring using students' strengths to create individualized pathways of learning;
- Provide an environment for moderately troubled students to voice their concerns and become personally invested in their education;
- Provide role models for the youngsters whose families do not know academic success.

To use professionals as volunteers

- Provide a variety of ways for the retired educators to volunteer with the program, tailored as much as possible to individual interests;
- Provide and promote ongoing communication between administrative and volunteer staff.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Everything happens in one big classroom, sometimes simultaneously, five days per week. Educators prepare lessons, talk with students and tutor them one-on-one or in small groups. Interns conduct support groups. The program director is often at her laptop computer in the classroom instead of at her office so that she can monitor the interaction and provide consultation to the volunteers. In the background, school bells are ringing and announcements are frequently made overhead. Nevertheless, the classroom exudes calm and focus—unique in the public school experience.

This initiative is offered as an extra-curricular program during school hours. Students carve out time for the program between their academic classes. They must pre-arrange to switch out from another class they attend, usually gym or art class. They use the program for various reasons: for tutoring in math, reading or writing; for high school entrance exam preparation; for mentoring; or to discuss personal concerns that are getting in the way of schoolwork. The sessions follow the school schedule.

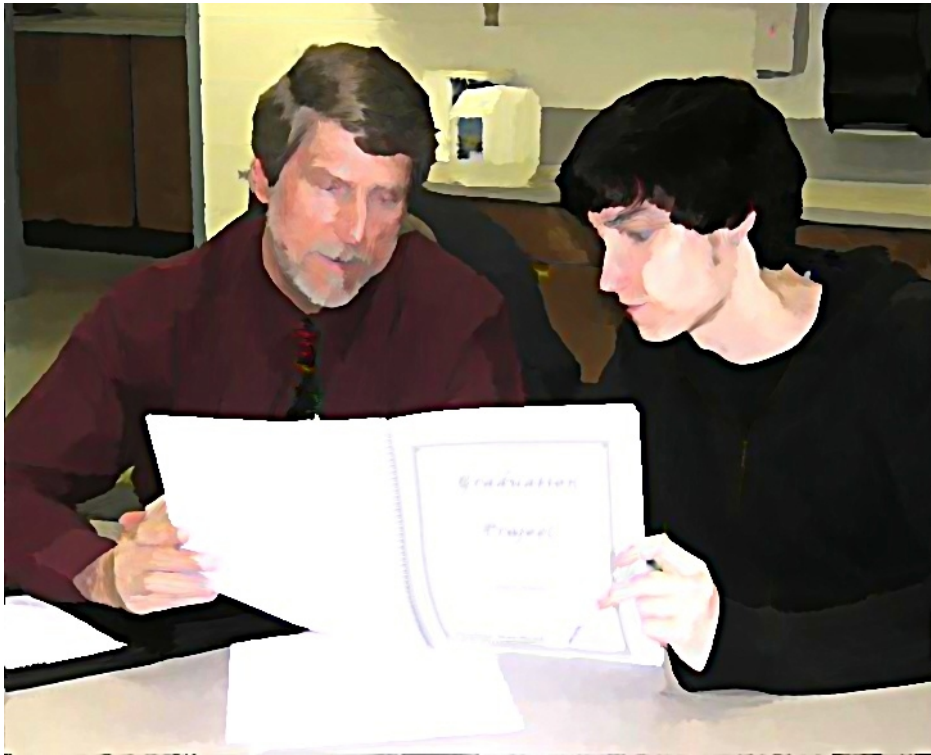


Figure 11 Test Preparation (Source: Bing Photo)

The volunteers bring their educational expertise to this endeavor, but find a different set of students and teaching challenges than in their previous careers. They are guided by the program director into a new educational paradigm, which is a synthesis of Learning

Theory, Literacy Theory and neuroscience, developed by Director Jo Angelina. Here, the educators converse with the students to figure out a teaching strategy that employs the students' own strengths for learning. Students' interests become the touchstone for their academic work. Here, the students are inspired to work hard because of their direct relationships with the mentoring adults.

The interns who run the support groups are graduate students from Columbia School of Social Work who have chosen a public school internship for one of their rotations. The interns recruit, develop and run the support groups and meet weekly with the teachers and guidance counselors to discuss the students' issues. They have developed an efficient checklist to comprehensively focus on individual student concerns.

At the time of the site visit the support group was just being launched. The interns work in pairs to run several groups during the week. According to the interns, the students see this as "a break from formal education." They say, "the purpose of the groups [is] to open up [the students] for relationship." The younger students often see them as "sibling figures" and as "having some authority" (Interview with interns, February 28, 2006).

The two services, tutoring and support groups function independently, but they sometimes run concurrently in the same room. The middle school students enroll in one or both services, as their needs and schedules allow. With this approach the program offers a multigenerational ladder of support for the middle school students. Each provider cohort brings a unique perspective that helps the students become more involved in school.

Insider Perspectives

Retired Faculty Volunteer, R.M.

"I wanted to work with kids in public schools when I retired. I like the students. I'm interested in them and I respect them...the kids work under very difficult conditions. I got involved when I heard about the program from the union newspaper and talked with Jo. I've been in the program for four weeks and I'm impressed with her efficiency, focus and dedication. I'm working with eleven students, who did well on their English exams and might be eligible for 8th-grade next year [early]. I'm discussing strategies with them to help them prepare for the exam to get into specialized high schools."

Retired Faculty Volunteer, A.M.

"I had experience working with young adults in college [Professor of International Relations, CUNY]. So, this would be new – working with younger students – specifically young male students who usually lack a father figure...I've been in the program for 10 years, now. It's a learning process for me. My age group doesn't generally see – doesn't get to know what their [teens'] world is like. I share with them about the adult world. It's mutual learning. Very satisfying; a unique perspective that way. Fascinating. I wondered whether I could make a difference...but I wanted to expand their vision. It's hard. But gratifying when I meet them on the street. They are very happy to have had our contact. Otherwise, there's been no father figure around. You can try to salvage kids. You can influence them to rethink their behavior. I engage

their interest. I try to relate what they do now to their future. I figure out what they like and introduce them to careers related, as a “back up” [to their interests.] They offer a window into the world of the adolescent. I have more understanding now of the strains and stresses they are under. We have made a difference. Kids say I’ve opened their eyes. I care about them and they can feel that. They feel they can open up to me because I’m not going to report them. I give them avuncular, fatherly advice. Some kids will test you; I establish standards. Before I thought abstractly, ‘there is a need for people to involve themselves in education of the youth.’ Now, I see what it’s done.”

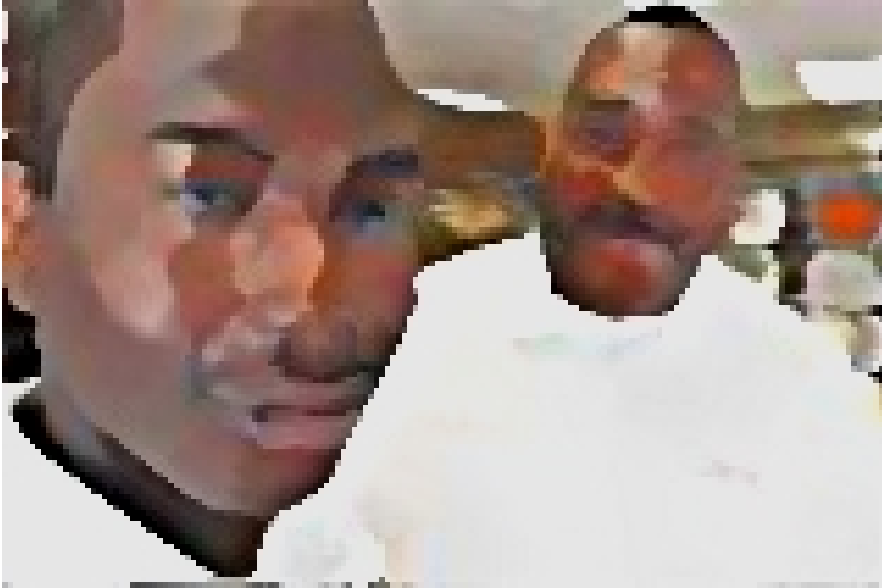


Figure 12 Student and Mentor (Source: Bing Photo)

Impact

The most immediate impact is that truancy rates have decreased. Impact is also indicated by the numbers who attend—175 to 200 students attended in the fall semester of 2005, and the number increased in the spring of 2006, with students recommending it to their friends.

At these two schools under the roof of Macomb’s Educational Complex there are only two guidance counselors for a combined total of 980 students. Through the support groups the students get individualized attention they otherwise would not receive. The interns’ weekly meetings with the two guidance counselors help the counselors recognize the students and respond to them as individuals.

These students’ parents are among the least successful of adults in terms of education and earning power. Generally these parents do not have a concept of advocating for their children or motivating them academically. The students come to the program by referral from teachers, but they continue in it because they see that the older adults care about

them as individuals and want to see them to succeed. The retirees feel rewarded because they see the students apply themselves when they receive this individualized attention.

Evaluation

The Initiative evaluates the program using a number of different tools. Hard data is gathered on students' grade point averages to measure changes over time. The Initiative also receives attendance and disciplinary information for those registered with the program, to gauge problems and changes in behavior. Volunteers fill out satisfaction surveys pertaining to their involvement in the program. In 2006 the Initiative received funds to be involved in a focus group, preliminary to involvement in a professional evaluation.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Volunteers must be education professionals and have the economic means to give of their time. Recruitment requires a third party because the retired faculty divisions of CUNY, Columbia and Barnard closely guard the privacy of their members and do not provide mailing lists. The RFI program supplies a boilerplate letter and invitation that is forwarded by the retirement divisions to prospective volunteers. Also, announcements are made at community board meetings about the RFI and the opportunity to volunteer.

Training

Training for the retired faculty is not formalized. Director Angelina provides a basic, one-on-one orientation to newcomers and advises the volunteers, based on the work they are doing. Additionally, the program's in-house library is a resource for the tutors.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

The New York City Department of Education has partnered with the project. Macombs is pleased to have RFI because the teaching staff sees the program as complimentary to its educational goals. It has provided one large room for RFI's center of onsite operations. The teachers and counselors work closely with the Initiative on behalf of the students.

About the schools

CIS 303 Leadership and Community Service Academy began in 2003. It is an application-only school. 319 Sixth through Eighth-grade students were accepted in 2006. CIS 232 was organized in 2001 as a neighborhood-based, no-application-required school, with two learning communities. In 2006, 788 students were enrolled.

Budget

The total budget [2006] is \$250,000. The budget pays for transportation of volunteers, the director's salary, her computer, the coordinator's salary, his computer, and a volunteer recognition event. Department for the Aging grants \$50,000 and \$200,000

comes from the U.S. Department of Education (DoE). The NYC DoE is the administrator of that money and in 2006 held back \$29,000 of that to pay for a new initiative for professional staff development.

Program Context

The program began when Columbia University's Director of Research started considering his own retirement. He discovered that there was a large cohort of soon-to-retire faculty, and a large cohort of recent retirees. He sent a mailing out to colleagues and found from responses that many wanted to be involved in the community. The professionals particularly wanted to use their expertise in underserved neighborhoods in the Bronx. So, Columbia created a way to do that. The original intent was to enrich the educational experience of children, with retired faculty offering extracurricular school-based activities that related to the educator's specialty. In the first phase, retired professionals went into several schools in the South Bronx, to provide such things as a Drama Club (run by English professors), and extensive counseling (provided by retired faculty of the School of Social Work). Brookdale Foundation funded the first phase of the initiative, in 1986. The RFI moved around so much in the early days, explained Director Angelina because "one of the early challenges was to find a school that would give us space to exist on site and really make that a commitment. That's why we're here – because this complex could give us the space."

Eventually it became evident that the real need was for remedial academic support. There was a drive to improve literacy throughout secondary education. So, the focus changed to meet the emerging needs, and the professors were asked to teach reading and math skills, whatever their professional expertise. The Initiative also knew that the students needed more than academic support or tutoring. Other difficult issues often get in the way of schoolwork for the students. So the component of support groups was added, made possible because Social Work graduate students could do their internships with the program. "The students confide in the interns because [RFI is] a separate program and not under the same institutional mandate for reporting," said Angelina, in 2006.

A mentor component for the program was in development in early 2006. This involved bringing in a third group of adult participants – college students from the local community colleges. The local campuses of Bronx Community College, Hostos and Lehman Colleges have an untapped resource that is of the community. The plan was to expand the RFI such that college students would serve as mentors and role models to the middle school students. The college students would be closer in age than the graduate students, and closer in socio-political-economic status. They would be insiders. With their experience, they would be in a good position to model life management skills to the younger students and give them the impetus to achieve in school. "The Initiative is evolving every minute," said Director Angelina, on March 3, 2006.

Provider History

This project functions under the auspices of Columbia University School of Social Work. The Principal Investigator for this project was Kimberley Heilig.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Jo Angelina, Program Director

Aldwin Murray, Adjunct Professor, College Now; retired CUNY faculty.

Ruth Misheloff, Adjunct Professor, CUNY; formerly retired.

Dates

November 6, 2005 phone interview

February 28, 2006 site visit.

Contacts

None available.

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Open Book Program: RAIA (Reading Aloud is Ageless) / Reach Out and Read

www.jewishcouncil.info

UPDATED 07.22.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	JCY/Jewish Council of Yonkers-Westchester Community Partners
<i>Goal:</i>	The goal of the Open Book Program: RAIA (Reading Aloud is Ageless) is to promote literacy at an early age.
<i>Classification:</i>	ELDERS SERVING YOUTH
<i>Interaction:</i>	LITERACY PROMOTION IN A HEALTH CARE SETTING. Seniors bring a cart filled with new books to children, talk about books and read with the children and parents and give out age appropriate, high quality children's books. This service supplements the pediatric "reading prescription," provided by the medical staff.
<i>Location:</i>	CLINICAL SETTING at Cedarwood Hall of Westchester Medical Center Campus in Valhalla, in the clinic of NY Westchester Institute for Human Development (WIHD). New in 2006: at the Family Health Center Clinic at White Plains Hospital, White Plains, NY and NICU at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital.
<i>Participants:</i>	2006: 25 retirees, approximately 6,000 children per year 2010: 28 retirees, approximately 6,000 children per year.
<i>Target audience:</i>	Children who are early childhood development outpatients. Active, older adults who are able to work in a medical environment.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Based on patient presence in the waiting room. Varying degrees of friendship between volunteers and children and their families build over the months and years of ongoing medical visits.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, the Open Book: Reading Aloud is Ageless Program meets 7 standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, and SUSTAINABILITY.

Of note, this program uses the training material and fundraising models developed by the parent organization, which is concerned with promoting literacy, but adds an intentional intergenerational approach. Open Book specifically recruits retirees for the volunteer cohort—to enhance the effectiveness of the original strategy.

Social Issues Addressed

Reach Out and Read (ROR) was developed to address a major social problem, that “one-third of the children in this country are not ready for school when they enter” (Zuckerman, 2005). “Research shows that reading aloud to pre-school children is the simplest way to help children achieve academic success. Sadly, families who are struggling with medical and financial pressure often do not have the resources to buy books. Their children therefore are at higher risk of delayed language development and reading failure” (The Open Book pamphlet, n.d.). “Parents of children living in poverty may lack the money to buy books, may not have easy access to good children’s books and may not themselves have been read to as children, with the result that millions of children are growing up without books. Reading difficulty contributes to school failure, which increases the risk of absenteeism, school dropout, juvenile delinquency....” (*ROR One Page Program Model*, 2007).

Additionally, retirees want to be involved with service that contributes to society and the health of younger generations. RORA recognizes the value of older adults who want to be involved in promoting individual and societal health through literacy.

Objectives

- To get books into the hands of children;
- To give out as many books as possible;
- To encourage parents to read to their children;
- To help families sign up for public library privileges;
- To get them excited about books and interested in reading.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Volunteer Contact and Setting

The ROR prescription is designed to be part of standard pediatric care for children age 6 months to 5 years. Reading Aloud is Ageless/RAIA provides the special waiting room portion of this approach, which reinforces the well-child exam. The program furnishes what is referred to in the ROR literature as a literacy rich waiting room, but these volunteers use an intergenerational approach, modeling literacy interaction for the parents and reaching out to the patients and older siblings. The fact that the volunteers find books for the older children to take and use for school assignments and for enjoyment sends powerful messages from an elder about the importance of education and the pleasure of books.

In the exam room doctors and nurses measure the child's development using a special set of children's books developed for this purpose. In this interaction the medical staff demonstrate to parents how using a book with the child, at the appropriate level for the child, can promote enjoyment of books, reading pleasure and early literacy. The child is rewarded with the brand new book as a gift from the doctor or nurse. In this way the doctor is prescribing that parents read with the child, sending the message that reading is an essential activity for healthy child development.

The volunteers reinforce the doctors in a seemingly quite simple way. They give their time to read to children in the clinical setting of a waiting room, while these children, accompanied by parents and often siblings, await their pediatric check-ups. The volunteers generally work the room in pairs, reaching out to the children, asking them if they would like to look over the books in the book carts they keep stocked with new and "gently used" children's books. This does take sensitivity because the parents may not be open to strangers and the children might not feel well. The role is ideal for a person who enjoys interacting with children and parents. The volunteers use a variety of techniques to engage a child who does not immediately welcome their attention. Eventually they sit with the children and talk with them about the stories. The volunteers are also book lovers and have become familiar with the books and storylines, over time. They read with the children and discuss the pictures and stories. To the parents, they hand out a packet of material, which includes local library information, a library card application form, poems, finger plays and suggestions of how they can help their child in reading. Volunteers assist parents, filling out the library application, and they send in the library application for them. Volunteers generally work once a week for a half-day, choosing mornings or afternoons. They meet with the program director and their peers at mid-day for lunch in the cafeteria, where many of the families say hello while they are having lunch. Often the volunteers visit with families at the dining tables.

At Cedarwood Hall the volunteers are known as the "Book Ladies" and the "Book Gents" and the children ask the receptionist for them if they do not see them immediately. The older children know there is a big supply of books in the store room and they know that the volunteers will search for the right book to help them with a school project.

Administrative Duties

Of Program Director Liz Kaufman's many responsibilities, she says the Read and Romp fundraiser event takes a lot of planning. She sends out invitations and encourages all the medical staff to attend and bring their children. She schedules the waiting room volunteers makes sure the cart of gently used books they reach for is well stocked. She secures, stocks and keeps the essential Reach Out and Read books for the medical staff to use with their patients. She coordinates book drives and communicates with Barnes and Noble, which runs book drives on behalf of Open Book. She gets help from young people doing Mitzvah and Scout projects. Libraries and school libraries give books, which become part of the gently used collection. She also uses a library expert, who volunteers, to manage the ongoing challenge of the storage room of books and supplies.



Figure 13 Celebration at a New Program Site

Insider Perspectives

Interview with volunteer E.S. at Westchester Medical Center Campus:

"I was retired from teaching, looking for something to do. I've been with the program now for 12–13 years. What we do is mitigate the boredom and horror of sitting and waiting for the doctor. And we give kids free books and the impetus to read. You know what you have to do, how to finesse. It's natural, instinctual. Teachers, 'people-people' love kids. It is a lot of fun reading to the kids."

A boy of about 8 came up to a volunteer with a big smile and asked if he could have a certain book. There was no such book on the cart, so holding hands; they went upstairs to the book room where she searched for that book or one like it. She offered him a couple of books, which he took. He then asked for one for his sister and got one.

Then he saw a collection of stuffed toys and asked for one. They were for a special event—the fundraiser, but she gave him one. Then he had a *big* smile on his face.

“I saw him when he was a baby—I’ve seen him grow into a little boy. It’s great to see the children grow. You develop this special feeling for each of them...It’s a reason to get up and get going in the morning, that, and my buddy—we do this together every Monday. After our shift we have lunch in the cafeteria and talk about it. We see the families there, too. I definitely get back more than I give.”

From a parent (ROR Parent, n.d.):

“Even though my son might not like the immunization shots during his check-ups, he continues to enjoy all the books. He can point to pictures and tries to verbalize the colors and objects. The bilingual children’s book is wonderful because he can listen to both languages as I read to him in Vietnamese and English. At 16 months old, he can say certain words in both languages.”

Impact

Program Director Liz Kaufman says the feedback she and her volunteers get is, “The parents and the kids love it—a free book for your child is exciting.” The volunteers report that being involved with this program gives them a renewed sense of value and a feeling of camaraderie with like-minded peers. The camaraderie was clearly demonstrated, as was a sense of belonging, a comfort with the role, authority on books and reading—and most importantly, they were obviously enjoying interacting with the children.

The impact of Reach Out and Read is well documented. Dr Perri Klass, the Medical Director of the National ROR, who is a pediatrician, medical journalist, award-winning author of books on pediatrics and parenting, faculty member of NYU Department of Journalism and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Boston University School of Medicine, stated:

Pediatricians...report that children come into the exam room demanding their books—instead of the wary inquiry, ‘Are you going to give me a shot today?’ I think that part of what parents appreciate is this: giving a book to a baby or a toddler or a preschooler is a gesture of belief in that child’s potential as a reader and a learner. When that book is handed over, it carries a message of faith and possibility...It is vital that parents believe that their children can learn and succeed, and believe that they themselves have the knowledge and the tools to help (2002).

The national web site lists examples of impact, such as: changing parent’s attitudes about reading aloud; making reading aloud a favorite activity for more children; increasing young children’s access to picture books; and making bedtime stories a regular part of more children’s lives (*Research*, 2006).

Evaluation

There is no formal evaluation of the intergenerational dimension of the program. However, there are many peer-reviewed articles that report the efficacy of the national model, Reach Out and Read. Evaluation is referenced in speeches (Klass) and on the national web page for research. Findings are “remarkably consistent...parents who have received the Reach Out and Read intervention are significantly more likely to read to their children and have more children’s books in the home. Most importantly, studies...found...statistically significant improvements in preschool language scores, a good predictor of later literacy success” (*Research*, 2006). The site also lists recent research showing that the intervention improves: children’s ability to express themselves verbally; increases their listening vocabularies; and reduces the number of children with language delays that can prevent them from succeeding in school (*Research*).

PREPARATION

Recruitment

The program is especially for children whose families are financially strained and further burdened with medical complications, and are at risk of having few or no books to read at home. The children’s families are stressed to the point that reading to children and buying books is not a priority and is thought of as an unnecessary luxury.

The JCY/Westchester Community Partners’ long established volunteer recruitment network and volunteer savvy gives a strong base to the program. Volunteer recruitment is an ongoing effort because the waiting room is open daily, and there are many hours to provide coverage. And, as the Program Director, Liz Kaufman found, many active volunteers like to travel and maintain residences outside New York. There are about 25 volunteers at Cedarwood Hall. Eight of them make up the core group and have been contributing for eight years or more. Ms. Kaufman, who recruits by posting notices at libraries, churches, synagogues and advertising in the *Westchester Jewish Chronicle*, says some people are concerned about being exposed to illnesses. She advises them to check with their doctors if infection is a concern; the work is in a hospital setting. JCY puts on a volunteer recognition luncheon for the Open Book volunteers twice a year. They feature guest speakers who are experts in the field of reading.

Training

Volunteers attend formal training twice a year, which is provided by the Greater New York Coalition of ROR. If they miss training because they are newly signed on, they partner and learn from experienced volunteers--and take the next training offered. The volunteers are provided with an extensive reference manual about how to interact with the patients and families—provided by the Reach Out and Read National Center. But as one volunteer said, “It’s intuitive for those who love children.”

RESOURCES

Collaboration

There are three major areas of collaboration: training (covered above), funding and program location. Funders are: the New York State Office for Aging, the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, the Westchester Public/Private Partnership Membership Fund, Commerce Bank, the Mount Pleasant Rotary, Mahopac National Bank, Allstate Insurance and Barnes and Nobel, UJA Federation of New York and the US Department of Health and Human Services.



Figure 14 Fun at the Fundraiser

The national ROR organization establishes a contractual agreement with all medical sites that run ROR programs. The newest ROR site is at White Plains Hospital Family Health Center--so JCY initiated an Open Book partnership with that clinic.

The first site, at Cedarwood Hall, is on the Westchester Medical Center Campus in Valhalla, NY. Cedarwood Hall is provided by the Westchester Institute for Human Development (WIHD). WIHD is part of the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and associated with New York Medical College, Schools of Medicine, Public Health and Basic Medical Sciences.

Budget

The budget is small and the program depends on fundraising and private and corporate book donations. The annual fundraiser follows a template supplied by the national network and the theme, not surprisingly, is children enjoying books. Much must be done at the local level to make it happen. The fundraiser is called *Read and Romp*, and features music, entertainment, raffle prizes, face painting, and children's games. There are storybook-related play stations, with the authors, their books, and life-size characters to interact with the children.

Program Context

Open Book Reading Aloud is Ageless was initiated c.1997 under the supervision of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services/DSPS. The DSPS introduced the feature of using older adult volunteers to promote literacy, well aware that mature volunteers would infuse the environment with child-centered social atmosphere, using books and reading. The DSPS administered the program for five years before the JCY assumed stewardship in 2002.

The core model of Reach Out and Read was developed in Boston in 1989 by a group of pediatricians and early childhood educators at Boston City Hospital/Boston Medical Center. They developed an intervention to address reading difficulties, learning and behavioral problems that they were increasingly asked to assess, treat and even medicate. Knowing that "these early years are crucial, and that the exposure and practice and repetition of spoken and written language makes a tremendous difference to the developing brain" and that "children coming out of low-literacy environments, children who have never been read to...are at a tremendous disadvantage" (Klass, 2002), they collaborated to develop an intervention, to "prescribe" a language-rich environment, especially for children at risk.

Working with Scholastic, Inc. a large publisher and distributor of children's books, the group developed a catalogue and set of books to be used by ROR physicians and nurses in the exam room. Through Scholastic, and with public and private support, this set of books has become the standard tool set for assessing children's developmental stage and for teaching age-appropriate literacy techniques to parents (*Reach Out and Read*, n.d.). This measure is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Provider History

JCY is a multi-service not-for-profit organization dedicated to strengthening community by means of improving children's education, reaching out to seniors and improving relations between the diverse ethnic, racial and religious groups of greater Westchester. The Jewish Council of Yonkers is a secular organization that originally focused its efforts on the residents of Yonkers, NY. It is known for its intergenerational literacy program called SMART, now in all Yonkers high schools and several schools beyond Yonkers.

JCY began in 1919 as the Jewish Federation of Yonkers, changing its name to the Jewish Council of Yonkers in the 70's. Because of the large decline in the Jewish population of Yonkers going back to the 1950s it gradually refocused and now embraces the larger community and geography of Westchester—and to reflect that fact, has expanded its name to JCY/Westchester Community Partners.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

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March 8, 2006

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Prejudice Reduction Program/PRP

(1990 – 2008)

UPDATED 09.12.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	CSS (Community Service Society of New York) www.cssny.org
<i>Goals:</i>	The goal of the Prejudice Reduction Program: to eliminate prejudice by changing children's views about racial, ethnic, gender and age differences, nurturing sensitivity about others' feelings and differences and fostering mutual respect among participants.
<i>Classification:</i>	ELDERS SERVING YOUTH
<i>Interaction:</i>	TRAINING TO FIGHT PREJUDICE workshops in the classroom. <i>Respecting Our Differences</i> – Volunteers in the classroom lead students in grades 3-5 in workshops. The curriculum prepares students to confront prejudice and act as role models to their peers in solving bias related problems in their community. <i>The Oral History Program</i> is a variation on this strategy—with volunteers and students preparing a history project based on the lived experiences of growing up in the segregated South; participating in the Civil Rights Movement; or surviving the Holocaust. <i>Reading Towards Respect Read-Aloud Program</i> – Volunteers lead students in 2 nd grade through a series of 8 workshops--reading books and doing activities highlighting themes of prejudice and self-esteem. <i>Learning to Get Along</i> – Volunteers lead the children in grades K-2 in 5 sessions of small-group activities, putting on puppet shows, telling stories and reading poetry out loud.
<i>Location:</i>	CLASSROOMS: at schools K-5 in Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island.
<i>Participants:</i>	Approximately 100 Retired Senior Volunteers, ages 55-84 and 2,400 children, grades K-5, per year.
<i>Target audience:</i>	Active seniors and elementary school children.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Respecting Our Differences: 45-minute sessions /12 weeks; Reading Towards Respect Read-Aloud: 45-minutes /8 weeks; Learning to Get Along: 45-minute sessions /5 weeks.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

This program started in Staten Island as a pilot program in 1990 as a direct response to heightened racial and ethnic tensions resulting from an influx of immigrants to this island borough. The program tackled issues of race and other biases that appeared in school settings. It had a long and successful run for 18 years, eventually closing due to challenges of recruitment and budget in 2008. It remains important as a model, demonstrating nine standards of Good Practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION and FOLLOW-UP.

Of particular note, volunteers had extensive annual training and became valued partners in refining the PRP curricula over time. This was a unique and important strategy because volunteers brought knowledge gained from the classroom about what works in the classroom--and because tapping the volunteers as advisors honored their expertise and contributions.

NOTE: In keeping with the reviewer's observation of this program in 2006, much of this chapter reads in present tense.

Social Issues Addressed

With an influx of new people on Staten Island in the 1990's the neighborhoods began to look and feel different. What had been settled and stable for generations was changing. The influx of people bringing new cultures was dramatic and diverse. Tensions between the old and the new were of growing concern on the island.

Objectives

- Position older adults in elementary classrooms to cultivate understanding and respect for human differences;
- Teach children what prejudice is, how to recognize it and what to do when they see it. (*It's what's inside that counts*, p.1, n.d.)

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Overview

Volunteers are assigned in teams to visit a designated school where they conduct a workshop series that is very direct and experiential, in which diverse children and older adults sit down together to explore attitudes. To be able to transform the biases of children into new feelings of active interest, tolerance and genuine appreciation requires personal stamina and creativity on the part of the adults as well as a strong curriculum. A very experienced volunteer is assigned the role of "Team Leader" to facilitate the class groups and activities. A staff person is always present to assist the Team Leader, help with paperwork, conduct the pretest (and later, the post-test) and monitor the activities. The volunteers who sit with the students are called "Group Leaders." They use the day's

lesson plan to explore thoughts and issues--and get to know each other. Before and after each day of classes the whole team meets to prepare and debrief about the evolving process. The volunteers work with three to four classes each day they are on campus—visiting once weekly—for five to twelve sessions.

Onsite visit

At the sound of the school bell the team enters the designated classroom where students are expecting them. The teacher remains with the class to monitor the students and be in a position to integrate the topics of the session into subsequent lessons over the week. For a class of 30 students, each of five group leaders takes a set of six students, with whom they will stay for the series. This continuity promotes intergenerational bonding. Each session starts with a five-minute group warm-up. New volunteers are sometimes nervous about how to open this segment of the workshop, but they quickly find that the children are responsive. They say they learn a lot about the individual students, feel honored by this and develop a strong rapport. The students are provided with workbooks, which they keep and use for the duration of the series. Exercises are designed to engage students individually, in small clusters and as an entire class. Drawing, videos, quizzes and educational games using game boards are among the teaching tools. The Team Leader leads and oversees the classroom activity, keeping the groups' work on schedule. Questions are used to develop friendly rapport among participants, break down biases and foster appreciation of age and other differences. Ms. Tami DiConstanzo, Project Director in 2006, said that this intergenerational component is most valuable.

For the curriculum, *Respecting Our Differences*, the sessions are: 1 - What is Prejudice; 2 - Respect for Differences / Intro to Stereotypes; 3 - Respect for Age Differences; 4 - Respect for Gender Differences; 5 - Respect for Differently Abled; 6 - Respect for People's Feelings; 7 - How Teasing Affects Self-Esteem; 8 - Understanding Differences; 9 - Understanding Prejudice and How It Leads To Discrimination; 10 - The Role Models In Our Lives; 11 - The Road To Becoming a Prejudice Fighter; and 12 - You Will Make A Difference. At the end of twelve weeks students become Certified Prejudice Fighters and receive a wallet-size card to this effect. Ms. DiConstanzo said, and the volunteers agreed, that severing bonds developed over the series can be quite emotional for the children. So, closure takes place as an empowerment ceremony, and the students seem very proud of the badges they earn. For the older students these sessions take the place of a social studies, civics or literacy lesson.

Insider Perspectives

Five volunteers discussed their experience following a session in Staten Island:

T.D. said, "Even if there is not an overt bias issue detected by school administrators, we uncover surprising attitudes among students. For example, one 3rd grader said 'I'm a white middle class tax paying American. And the job of a female is to be home cooking.' In response to an exercise dealing with race and stereotyping, a child responded, saying '...because God made you different, that's why.' We hear that 'Girls should not play basketball'. Overweight kids are ridiculed...the children frequently express fear of older adults."

J.R. said, “I found out about this class in the local paper. What the world needs is to get rid of prejudice – we have to get to them while they’re young. I’ve been doing this for 12-13 years now – but I wasn’t always the facilitator. The biggest problem is keeping the kids quiet. They get very excited. Or, sometimes we have a child with a disability who is ridiculed. But today there were several and they just blended in – they had insight...besides the lesson that we teach, we like to make the children feel that we love them--we care about them. Also, it’s a break from their regular class experience. The teachers say they are amazed at how attentive the kids are. I do it because I enjoy it – it’s a lot of fun. I feel led to do it, it’s kind of like a ministry – we don’t talk about God, but we teach the kids good values, how to live correctly. Also, we share this interest among ourselves.”



Figure 15 Serious Conversation

J.G. said, “I read about this in Parent’s Magazine. There was an ad for RSVP and the Prejudice Reduction Program. I’ve been in the program under a year, but what I like about it is the self-awareness that happens...it opens up your eyes.”

L.L. said, “One of the things we do is tell stories about how times have changed. The children are very interested in this. We’re sharing our life experience with them – we’re not sitting in a rocking chair. There’s no age barrier. They are sharing, too. They share so much of themselves. You get to know them. Sometimes the children develop strong attachments – and it can be difficult when they realize they’re not going to see us anymore. Once a child was devastated...that was very hard. Now we do a lot about closure. The children get certificates and Prejudice Fighter identification cards. They love it...and other children look up to them.”

C.H. said, “In PRP they know that ‘multicultural’ is not ‘anti-bias.’ I saw right away that they call a spade a spade. We deal with tough issues in a passionate, caring way. There are so few black people. One little girl didn’t want me to be the group leader. She said ‘This is not your table.’ I knew I had to reach her - I complimented her, and formed a bond with her. At the end of the class she gave me a big hug. In training they tell us not to hug the kids, but we don’t want to reject them, either. In training they prepare us for this --we discuss it.”

Impact

Seventy percent of the teachers surveyed reported a decrease in biased behavior by the students. Teachers also reported that the students’ interaction with senior volunteers was beneficial. PRP has evidence that 50% of the students have, “become advocates for a tolerant and peaceful school community by speaking up when they see or experience something hateful.” (*It’s what inside that counts*). “The children benefit from the life experience of older adults, especially when they are missing older adults in their families” (DiConstanzo, 2005).

Evaluation

The evaluation of pre and post-tests across the five boroughs, for the academic year 2002-2003 showed that “90% of the students scored higher in the post-test...[students take] pre and post-tests to measure their knowledge of prejudice and attitudes toward people who are different from them” (*It’s what inside that counts*, p.7, n.d.). About six weeks after the workshop is completed a PRP staff person returns to give the students the post-test. Teachers are also asked to take surveys designed to measure the “level of prejudice, stereotyping and bias-related problems in the classroom” (*It’s what inside that counts*, n.d.). In addition to these quantitative measures, students and teachers are asked to write testimonials about what the workshop has meant to them personally, and volunteers are asked to write reports about their group of students at the end of each workshop and give oral reports about their students. All this data is taken into account at year’s end when the curriculum is reevaluated.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Students

Outreach efforts involve contacting school principals because they know their students and issues of contention that might be showing up in their schools. A principal might select a particular class for intervention if they know a group of them gets into trouble, as in fighting in the lunchroom, or bullying another group. Sometimes principals want the program as an educational opportunity without a specific problem, seeing this as a way for students to build skills and awareness as they prepare to advance from 5th grade to junior high school.

Volunteer Recruitment

Securing a cohort of volunteers is always a challenge—and the PRP was doubly challenged because the work required not only a solid commitment of time over weeks and months; it also depended on having a cohort of volunteers with good interpersonal

skills. Of necessity, recruitment challenges lead to innovative thinking. Ms. DiConstanzo said, “There is a significant resource of older adults--it is the nature of our organization—it was created for older adults.” She was, of course, speaking of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program/RSVP, created under the auspices of Community Service Society--with its expertise, resources and recruitment avenues.

One strategy for recruitment has been to encourage the children who participate in the workshops to talk about their experience with family and friends—letting it be known that volunteers were always needed. Older adults interested in the workshops were allowed to visit the classroom to observe it in action. In this way grandparents, family friends and friends of volunteers could appreciate the work of the program--and be recruited. Volunteers interviewed agreed that people connect with the program for two main reasons: because of their interest in children, or for “the cause.” Sometimes their own experience of having been singled out, teased or taunted, and the chance to mitigate that pain by helping influence young hearts and minds, draws them to the program.

Action was taken to retain and accommodate volunteers. Through focus groups and surveys, staff learned what motivated the volunteers and what they needed. Some findings and responses:

- Volunteers wanted to voice their opinions--and know their opinions mattered. Consequently, volunteers were invited to participate in the annual summer meetings for curriculum revision. Ms. DiConstanzo said, “The volunteers are very vested in the curriculum design” (2005).
- Volunteers did not always want to negotiate a staircase to reach classrooms, so arrangements were made with schools to utilize a first floor classroom.
- Volunteers wanted to serve for more than one semester; but not at the expense of curtailing their winter lives in Florida. This spurred the development of a shorter, “lighter” workshop, thus expanding the program’s reach to younger children, for whom a 5-day series would work well.
- The PRP Ambassador Program was developed to recognize and utilize those volunteers who wished to represent the program at health fairs. The project director said, “They bring a lot more credibility because they speak to older adults out of their own experience--and they are very successful at bringing in new people to train.”

Even with these creative strategies, the difficulty of replenishing the ranks of those who ‘gave it their all’ proved to reach an end point. After 18 years, it was time to roll the wisdom gained and the energy into other volunteer-powered services developed by RSVP.

Training

The PRP required new volunteers to attend an eight-day training. PRP provided a training manual and “tons” of reading material. Some topics included: curriculum design, diversity and cultural awareness, group management and “What’s hot and what’s not” according to K through 5th graders. Staff conducted the training and also brought in specialists for some topics. Guest speakers included: (1) the Multicultural Coordinator from the Department of Education--a specialist on small group management on how to manage taboo topics brought up by students; (2) a professional mediator from the local

mediation center on how to strengthen groups composed of children; (3) the NYC Commissioner for Human Rights, about basic rights, jobs and gender issues in the neighborhood; (4) a representative on disability awareness training and (5) a panel of presenters with stories about children with disabilities.



Figure 16 Working on Exercises Together

RESOURCES

Collaboration

In addition to the parties mentioned above as trainers, schools principals were key collaborators--opening their doors and classes to this community-based initiative.

Budget

In 2006 the annual budget was \$400,000. This supported 3 full time staff and paid a \$6.00 per day stipend to volunteers. This also covered a stipend for the Team Leader at \$128 a month for part-time and \$256 a month for full-time. It also covered program materials, student workbooks, and the volunteer training manuals. PRP's volunteer recognition event was held jointly with another intergenerational RSVP initiative that has become a national program--Experience Corps. Experience Corp also uses senior volunteers--as mentors in schools. See www.cssny.org/services/experience_corps/ for program and contact information. New York City Department for the Aging, New York State Office of the Aging and federal funds supported PRP for many years.

Program Context

The Prejudice Reduction Program was a response to a United Way “request for proposal” to deal with racial tensions on Staten Island. Long established neighborhoods of European and African Americans were impacted by the arrival of Mexican, Russian, Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants--and new groups of Italian and Irish Americans. The Multicultural Coordinator for the Staten Island Department of Education collaborated with the RSVP Director at the time to develop the PRP initiative, to help reduce these tensions. After seven years the program expanded to two more boroughs.

Provider History

The Community Service Society (CSS) was founded over 160 years ago in New York City to combat urban poverty. Out of four major strategies (research, advocacy, direct service and volunteerism) CSS has developed model programs—some of which have become essential to the national network of volunteerism---Experience Corps and RSVP. Janet Sainer, New York City Commissioner on Aging from 1978-1989, was a senior staff member at CSS in 1966 when she developed the demonstration project called SERVE/Serve and Enrich Retirement through Volunteer Experience--recruiting members of local senior centers on Staten Island to work with residents at a state school for the developmentally disabled (Downey, 1990 & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2002). Ms. Sainer’s SERVE program and her testimony before Congress resulted in an amendment to the Older Americans Act, creating a funding stream through the Administration On Aging to encourage the recruitment and placement of volunteers in service organizations nationwide (History of RSVP, n.d.). SERVE was renamed RSVP/Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and eventually became part of Senior Corps within the Corporation for National and Community Service. Now that RSVP is part of this formal national network, CSS is the local sponsoring organization. CSS in New York manages the largest corps of volunteers in the country (RSVP, n.d.).

The many programs of CSS are concerned with such issues as affordable housing, health care, the labor market, public benefits, and “properly financed public education” (About CSS). An important new program initiated in 2008 called MentorCHIP, is featured at www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/newsletters/newsletter-feb08.htm#spotlight.

Other historic highlights: helping to spawn Columbia University School of Social Work; developing a model tenement house and the City’s first tenement housing laws; setting the groundwork for New York State’s Old Age Assistance Act of 1930 (before federal law enacted the Social Security Act of 1935); piloting the first free school lunch program—and aiding disaster victims—from the 1912 Titanic disaster to the 9/11 terrorist attack (*History of The Community Service Society, n.d.*).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Deirdre Ryan-Spirakis, Former Project Director
Tami DiConstanzo, Former Project Director

Dates

November 21, 2005

March 29, 2006

Contact

Note: This program is an important historical model. To contact the organization, see <http://www.cssny.org/>

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SMART/Students and Mature Adults Read Together

<http://www.jcy-wcp.com/>

UPDATED 08.30.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	JCY/Jewish Council of Yonkers-Westchester Community Partners
<i>Goal:</i>	The goal of SMART is to improve the literacy skills of students in elementary, middle and high school.
<i>Classification:</i>	ELDERS SERVING YOUTH
<i>Interaction:</i>	LITERACY. Provides students with extra time to work on reading and writing skills in the one-to-one company of a caring adult mentor. A reading skills specialist takes the adults through the assignment of the day prior to the students' arrival in the classroom. Sessions last for approximately 45 minutes, on a weekly basis throughout the semester.
<i>Location:</i>	2006: SCHOOL CLASSROOM. 33 Westchester Public Schools including Elementary, Middle and Senior High. 2010: SCHOOL CLASSROOM. 30 Westchester Public Schools including Elementary, Middle and Senior High.
<i>Participants:</i>	2006: 168 older adult volunteer mentors and 275 students 2010: 213 older adult mentors and 479 students.
<i>Target audience:</i>	Active seniors who want to give back to the community, who can make a specific time commitment. Students who have scored below the 25 th percentile on a standardized test.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	At least one semester.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

The SMART Program is long running—it was introduced in 1996. According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, the program meets nine standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION, SUSTAINABILITY and FOLLOW-UP. It provides training in literacy strategies, rather than SENSITIVITY TRAINING.

Of particular note, the program has a proven track record improving the reading scores of participating students--and the volunteer retention rate is strong.

Social Issues Addressed

The JCY is concerned about public education—especially where the student body has greater academic and social needs than can be effectively provided by the school’s district resources (Youth and Education and Civic Awareness, n.d.).

Objectives

- To prepare students to read, comprehend and write well and prepare them for testing;
- To nurture students who have little parental support in academic endeavors;
- To encourage bonding between Mentor and Mentee--to support learning.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Active seniors of all ages volunteer as reading and writing mentors for students in public schools in grades K-12. This review covers the program model in high schools because it was observed in action—and it will describe a process that has proved effective for achieving greater skills in reading. However, students of all ages in this program benefit from the liaison of a Reading Specialist aware of each student’s needs who communicates these needs to the mentors. The reading specialist also communicates with SMART Program staff. Depending on the particular school arrangement, the Reading specialist may be on staff of the school or may be hired for this role by JCY.

Students are matched with the same mentor for the semester, to encourage the friendships that seem to facilitate learning. SMART sessions occur at the same time and place at each school and this often works out to be the lunch period for students, so JCY provides lunch for all participants. The mentor-student dyads work together seated at long tables, shared with other dyads. Mentors have their own styles of approach to the lesson of the day. Some lead the students into the lesson; some approach with an attitude of mutual learning. When class is in session, the atmosphere is one of quiet, respectful dialogue and friendliness.

On the high school level, these sessions' help students prepare for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test by using similar kinds of reading exercises as those found on the test. The daily lesson generally includes a six hundred-word essay, an eight-word vocabulary list, short-answer questions and two essay questions. The reading specialist demonstrates strategies for the mentors to use, which is important because the strategy does not seem intuitive to adult readers. What is being taught is a set of reading skills that is not dependent on having references and prior knowledge of the subject being read.

However, some mentors/tutors take a different approach altogether. Gene Plotnik reported in *SMART Talk*, (2005), that the mentors at Roosevelt High School in Yonkers decided, based on their years of experience in the program, to approach their tutoring using a more "individualized format" (2005). They found that allowing the students to choose among selected reading material resulted in students feeling more motivated and more involved in the process—so that they come to the session regularly and even read from the material at home. This initiative has resulted in greater involvement all around at Roosevelt High. When the mentors meet prior to each session they discuss their experiences and the results they see in students' learning. An unexpected extension of their initiative was that they created a reading club, for which they conveniently meet monthly at the school.

The cultivation of relationships is of primary importance. The friendliness promotes reading enjoyment. When a mature older adult is in the position of caring, nurturing and valuing a student, it awakens a confidence in the young person and stimulates their motivation to develop reading skills and a love of reading.

Flexibility is also an important value within the program. A challenge for the program is dealing with absences—both of tutors and students. Flexibility is necessary in order to provide reading partnerships for those present and accommodate the unexpected. For example, once a student arrived without the usual protocol because he suddenly saw it as a way to "save face" and avoid the taunting he would otherwise encounter from students in the lunchroom. Coincidentally, one new and quite nurturing volunteer was awaiting her student, who had not arrived. Thus, a new partnership was launched.

Insider Perspectives

J.G. at White Plains High School:

"What makes it interesting for me? Both the child, she wants to be a nurse, so that's a nice connection--and the volunteers. I'm learning a skill--teaching reading. These steps are a totally different approach to reading. I've always been a reader. I read hundreds of books a year. I've always wanted to help out in a literacy program, for adults. But my friend told me about this so I decided to do it—this is my fourth time."

L. at White Plains High School:

"This is one of the best things I've done! It's hard."

U. at White Plains High School:

“I taught my grandchildren to read. It was a natural, gradual process. I know them. It was easy. This is totally different--the idea here is to be very goal oriented. At first it seemed awkward--I couldn’t quite visualize the process... Part of the reason for this is to prepare them for the Regents and SATs. Reading is so basic--you have to know how to read.”



Figure 17 Reading Together

M. at White Plains High School:

“It’s my fourth time here--I learned about this from my friend. *(Points across the table)* I’m here because I like children. *(Big smile)* The first day I got to know the student. I asked her if she’d like to read or preferred that I read. We took turns reading. This material from the reading specialist is based on students’ need to pass the New York State 8th grade English test... I’ll meet with her over the rest of the semester. What I like about it is that we’re both learning--the student and myself. Also, I’m helping her to better herself. Helping her is rewarding.”

Impact

The impact for students is revealed in pre and post-tests on reading scores. But not only reading improves. Students make better overall progress in school as a result of being in the SMART Program. For both the students and the mentors, the experience is socially

rewarding. Students have a place to go during school hours where they receive friendly, encouraging, individualized attention geared to engage them-- where their own interests are used to motivate intellectual development. Mentors take on this important and needed role where teachers cannot. The volunteers experience a sense of purpose, of being valued, and are committed to the students. They enjoy camaraderie with peers, sharing a social mission. They are in the middle of contemporary life and connected to the future.

Evaluation

At year's end all volunteers prepare an evaluation. Secondary students are also asked to complete evaluations. These focus on the mentoring relationship--while assessing reading skills. In 2002 the Yonkers Public Schools conducted an evaluation of program effectiveness for high school students by looking at their reading scores before and after being in the SMART program. They found that students' reading had improved and found a correlation between program attendance and elevated reading scores. In 2003 Yonkers Public Schools evaluated reading skills for English Language Learners (ELL students). Their participation in the SMART program correlated with greatly improved reading comprehension.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Students in this program are educationally disadvantaged or have limited reading and writing proficiency because English is their second language. Such students are already enrolled in a reading strategies course instead of the standard English class in order to advance in English and pass the 8th grade English test. Often, the school reading specialist recommends the SMART Program to students. Teachers refer students who they think will be motivated by some additional attention from caring older adults.

Volunteers are recruited through RSVP, the *Westchester Jewish Chronicle*, flyers in libraries, churches and synagogues, and apartments that have "large retiree components" (Bookman, 2003). JCY also sends staff out to present at gatherings, coordinated and cosponsored with the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, called SOS Programs (Senior Outreach to Seniors).

Much is put into gaining commitment and retaining the volunteers. In the volunteer screening process, JCY staff place an emphasis on the importance of trust in the volunteer role. They are asked to seriously consider whether or not they can make a semester-long commitment to the position, because every effort must be made to support the student's trust throughout the semester. The SMART Coordinator, Claudia Barbieri, makes phone calls to volunteers regularly to support their involvement and strengthen their sense of connection to the community-based literacy effort. JCY, with contributions from its volunteer corps, produces a newsletter called *SMART Talk*. It features news, stories and editorials about the work that volunteers are doing through the JCY. The JCY also holds a large volunteer recognition luncheon every year.

Training

Reading specialists train volunteer mentors in rigorous reading strategies that go beyond the traditional methods of word recognition. In this alternate paradigm, complex factors, including psycho-dynamic circumstances, impact the development of reading competency.



Figure 18 At the School Library

Training in Active Reading Skills

Fluent readers comprehend reading by word recognition, which in the field of literacy is called decoding. Standard reading methods have long depended on decoding, which relies on memorizing vocabulary and using phonetics. The persistent myth is that children learn to read in grades K through 3 and from then on they simply use basic skills to learn more. It was believed that comprehension was just based on intelligence, and could not be taught (Robb, n.d.). But according to Columbia Teachers College Reading Specialist Master of Arts Program, there is growing recognition that reading is a very complex learning process, involving psychological, linguistic, ethnic and culturally diverse factors. Patricia Carrell (1998) says that reading strategies can be taught, and when learned, they become skills. When a reader can use and choose among a collection of skills--this is *active* reading--which enhances understanding and problem solving. In

the SMART program the students go through their reading lessons in partnership with their mentors, and share a challenging learning project.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

In general, the Westchester County School Districts are in favor of the program. But the Program Director is responsible for cultivating partnerships with the individual schools and principals, because financial support and a good working space must be guaranteed. The director also networks with and hires the reading specialists.

SMART is a collaborative effort with many agencies serving youth and seniors. This includes: Hadassah Read*Write*Now!, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), Westchester County Department of Seniors Programs and Services, Westchester Jewish Community Services, Yonkers Public Library, Yonkers Public Schools-Department of Funded Programs-Title 1 Services, and Yonkers Office for the Aging, Mount Vernon Public Library, Mount Vernon Public Schools, Elmsford Schools, Tuckahoe Schools, Bedford Public Schools.

The parent organization—JCY—intends to build community, and as such, except for its intergenerational literacy programs, SMART, STACK and the Open Book Program, it does not provide direct services. Instead, it coordinates with government agencies and officials, with schools and religious groups, and with other organizations and agencies serving youth and elderly to provide a variety of community programs.

Budget

SMART is funded from a variety of sources including but not limited to: United Way of Westchester & Putnam, Helen A. Benedict Foundation, UJA-Federation, the Elmsford, Yonkers and Mount Vernon Public Schools, the City of Yonkers, Louis R. Cappelli Foundation, The Frog Rock Foundation, JP Morgan Chase, Junior League of Bronxville, MBIA, the State of New York, Rotary Club of Yonkers, St. Faith's House Foundation and Verizon. The budget covers staff time, SMART trainers and consultants, supplies, workbooks, refreshments, and other items.

JCY's statement:

“The Yonkers Public School system has historically been riddled with difficult battles over race, desegregation and the difficult challenges of serving a student body in which student need is greater than district resources. The JCY has responded to the educational and social needs of students through a variety of programs and has been involved in the on-going process to improve and strengthen public education in Yonkers, to remove barriers of learning and to improve communication among the various institutions that serve the youth of Yonkers.”

Program Context

This program began in 1996 as the brainchild of Murray Gunner, then Executive Director of the Jewish Council of Yonkers (Schwager, 2005) and Janice Lubin Kirschner, then Director of SOS with Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services. At that time, the JCY took on some portions of the SOS program--and thus began their collaboration. Ms. Lubin Kirschner was experienced in community outreach to bring activities to people in senior housing and Mr. Gunner was concerned about “narrowing the achievement gap” (Berger, 1996) in Yonkers schools. This gap was a subject of national attention and long litigation against the City of Yonkers and the Board of Education—with hot button issues of segregation, housing and school funding. Gary Orfield, Harvard Professor and expert witness, famously testified that, “there are a number of reading and tutoring programs... that have been shown to make a difference in raising student achievement” (Berger), in arguments against the efforts trying to derail state funding.

“We thought it was a ‘natural’ to bring seniors and students together,” stated Ms. Kirschner (2007). She subsequently developed and implemented the program, starting at Gorton High School in 1996. Some of the original reading mentors are still involved with Gorton High’s SMART Program. According to Barbara Greenberg, Foundation Advisor to the Helen A. Benedict Foundation, the SMART program was the first to receive Foundation dollars to promote intergenerational thinking as a strategy for social change in Yonkers and Westchester (2007).

Provider History

JCY is a non-denominational organization whose purpose is to serve Yonkers and the county of Westchester in the capacity of community building. It started in 1919 as the Jewish Federation of Yonkers (Garcia, 2005), later changing its name to the Jewish Council of Yonkers. With a decline in the Jewish population of Yonkers the mission was refocused, broadened and diversified over time—now serving many across the county. With its non-denominational and broad view—the name is now JCY-Westchester Community Partners.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Janice Lubin Kirschner, Executive Director of JCY

Janice Kohn, former Director of JCY Intergenerational Programs and SMART

Dates

February 24, 2006 – Janice Lubin Kirschner

February 29, 2006 – Janice Lubin Kirschner

March 9, 2006 – Janice Kohn, the reading specialist and volunteers

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SHARED PROGRAMS

ComNETSM at Beacons (2004 – 2007)

UPDATED 08.20.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	Fund for the City of New York with Cypress Hills East New York Beacon
<i>Goals:</i>	The goal of ComNET SM at Beacons (Computerized Neighborhood Environment Tracking) is to promote civic engagement and responsive government in a partnership effort between youth and elders to improve the neighborhood.
<i>Classification:</i>	JOINT / SHARED PROGRAM
<i>Interaction:</i>	COMMUNITY SERVICE. Provides a specific methodology for youth and elders to work together to improve local street level conditions. They identify and document safety hazards and other concerns, report them to the proper government offices and track government response.
<i>Location:</i>	COMMUNITY CENTER. Cypress Hills East New York Beacon at Intermediate School 302.
<i>Participants:</i>	2004-2007: 18 youth, 20-30 seniors
<i>Target audience:</i>	Youth, age 11-19 and local seniors.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Summer program, 5 days a week.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, ComNET at Beacons met eight standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION. This program was funded for 3 years, from 2004 to 2007.

Of particular note, this program brought together the expertise of two important initiatives developed by the Fund for the City of New York to create something new--and situated this initiative in an already well knit intergenerational Beacon Center, active now for 19 years.

ComNET is a methodology that links people to their neighborhoods by means of a customized technology designed to track street level urban issues, that empowers citizens to advocate for a clean environment by providing pertinent details to municipal service agencies. This system was developed under the auspices of the Fund for the City of New York. It is now utilized by neighborhood organizations across the country—and its use continues to grow.

NOTE: In keeping with the reviewer's observation of this program in 2006, much of this chapter reads in present tense.

Social Issues Addressed

Elders have an intimate knowledge of what makes their communities safe and comfortable, but their concerns too often are not heard, or are overlooked and go nowhere. Youth often have untapped energy that is not channeled in a way that they or others feel is productive and positive. Urban neighbors can see each other as problem-makers rather than problem-solvers, and this fosters alienation.

Objectives

- To improve the neighborhood and make it safer;
- To provide youth with opportunities for civic engagement;
- To build skills for successful interaction with government;
- To give seniors and youth the opportunity to work together.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

The project takes place primarily in the summer months when the students are out of school and can devote more time to community work. It becomes the major focus in summer for the year-round Intergenerational Program of the Cypress Hills East New York Beacon. For this project, the elders are transported by van from their homes to the

center five days a week. The youth are trained to use hand-held electronic devices programmed to document street level conditions. The software maps out local city blocks and survey routes. It has an extensive catalogue of urban blight problems found on urban streets and has a system to document problems by category and location. Functions enable typed in descriptions and photo documentation. After training, Community Center staff escort student teams on neighborhood rounds to identify street problems. They look for problems such as graffiti, potholes, broken streetlights, dead trees, overflowing wastebaskets and various other hazards. Meanwhile, seniors at the community center are ready to discuss the students' findings and take the next step together toward resolving the issues.



Figure 19 On the Beat

The next step is to upload the problems documented on the handhelds to the office computer at the Community Center (in the Beacon administrative office), and send it on to *ComNET Connection*, the web-enabled database. This is managed by and located at the Fund for the City of New York in Manhattan, where ComNET was developed. This database processes the information into “consistent, verifiable reports, [with] digital images and maps” (How ComNET helps local government, 2005). Reports generated from *ComNET Connection* help government to prioritize their action and “allocate and direct their resources more efficiently” (Using PDAS to fill potholes, 2005).

After uploading their findings the youth and seniors discuss the neighborhood survey. The seniors talk about what is important to them concerning street safety and conditions. They learn about and discuss what government agencies are responsible for addressing particular problems. They discuss possible direct actions regarding the issues.

They may decide to conduct a letter writing campaign or contact local officials. They continue to monitor the conditions and response, or lack of it, and revisit options for follow-up action. This exercise provides experience in dealing with real-life civics—made rich for the youth by their involvement with the elders who have seen the community change over time.

Insider Perspectives

Three young people, one elder--and Intergenerational Services Director, Eric James, explain their program at East NY Beacon:

“I really like when we go out and look for problems – like this big pothole – we took pictures,” said C.

“I say [to friends], ‘I’m going to IGS (Intergenerational Services). It’s about seniors and youth--*You’re* going to get old one day.’ I’m glad I’m doing the program – I was on a bad track – I’m straight now,” said K.

“Yeah, it keeps you out of trouble. I’ve matured some. I put myself in their shoes. I like the service runs – going to clean houses,” said C.

“When I came it was an excuse to go out of the house. I wasn’t interested in old people. But I love my grandmother. Now, I talk to my friends about it. I like everything,” said B.

“I know how to answer the phone, now,” said K.

“I have a big yard. All year round they come to do things in the yard for me - clean the yard, take out the garbage, shovel the snow. They check for broken streets. They cleaned out a vacant lot that was full of weeds. They help me with laundry, go to Pathmark. With ComNET we pick a site to make a phone call about. I call 311 -- and make follow-up calls. The Cypress Hills newspaper wrote about us. They call us the ‘Graffiti Busters’,” said A.

“The kids look forward to doing things. They like the face-to-face with seniors. We have rap sessions; discuss things to look for. We talk about civic engagement – and knowing the community first. This helps the kids with the actual survey. The seniors know the community. We’re smashing stereotypes. Wipe that out. M. tells them war stories. They love it. You’ve got to see the interaction, feel the vibe. We were on Eyewitness News. They showed us using the handhelds; we’re looking for street problems. We have 60 youth and 75 seniors [in the full intergenerational program, of which ComNET is a part],” reported Mr. James.

Impact

Eighteen ComNET youth participants, ranging in age from 11 to 16, from three different Beacons, responded to a nine-question written survey during a meeting at the Fund for the City of New York in August of 2006. Participants’ time in the program varied from two months to two years.

Sample Survey Questions

Are there other skills you have improved upon, or things you have learned about from ComNET?

- Yes, I've learned that the smallest problem in your community can have the greatest effect on people. Female, 15
- Communication skills, working with teams, working with technology. Male, 17

What are key problems you have identified through ComNET?

- The leaning poles and the missing caps on the fire hydrants. Female, 12
- Weeds in the sidewalks and broken curbs. Female, 16
- Trip hazards, cracks and uneven pavement. Female, 15

How can ComNET work better to help communities?

- ComNET can work better to help communities by identifying problems and fixing them. Male, 14
- If ComNET could be taken more seriously things would improve in the community. Female, 15
- It can work because somebody might take notice and fix it up. Female, 12

With ComNET, have you learned anything that will help you in school?

- I learned teamwork. Female, 11
- Working with others. Female, 15
- How to read big words and learn how to do a speech in front of people. Female, 16

Evaluation

Key findings from the survey showed that youth learned: about working in teams (83%); how to identify neighborhood problems (66%); how to use a handheld computer (61%); how to understand charts and graphs (50%); and how to speak effectively to an audience (50%). Only 39% reported that they learned a lot about working with government to fix those problems. Ninety-four percent of the young people surveyed reported that they notice problems in the street more than they did in the past.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Recruitment occurs by word of mouth, by presentations at Senior Centers and local schools, flyers posted in the neighborhood and by notices in the local community paper produced by the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation.



Figure 20 Street Documentation

Training

After Mr. James attended a train-the-trainer workshop about this system, he trained the youth to identify and collect information on the computers. As to intergenerational sensitivity training—this is a rigorous but informal part of the program. He leads ongoing rap sessions that are clearly effective. Indeed, the diverse group of participants relate to each other readily. There is a palpable feeling of cooperation, warmth and having fun. They are very vocal and bring each other into conversation.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

Many layers of collaboration make this program possible. From micro to macro, it extends from the school grounds to the neighborhood corporation to the City foundation to City government. This program is housed at Public Intermediate School, 302, which hosts the Beacon Community Center, which directs the ComNET at Beacons Program and is managed by the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC). The Fund for the City of New York advises the Beacon, in part because the Beacon concept was developed collaboratively by the Fund and New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), and the Fund also developed the ComNET system and runs the central data management system for all ComNET across the county.

Beacons design requires local civic involvement. So the New York City Department of Education, the local NYPD 75th Precinct, the neighborhood's NY Junior Tennis League, and the neighborhood advisory council all have a stake in the Beacon's success (Mates & Rice, 2002 and Cypress Hills ENY Beacon brochure, 2005).

Budget

In 2005, the New York City Department of Youth & Community Development was the lead supporter of the Cypress Hills East New York Beacon. Every Beacon, at that time, received core support in the amount of \$400,000 annually from the Mayor's budget, as approved by the City Council. Each school that provided space for a Beacon received an additional \$50,000 (Mates & Rice, 2002). Other sources of support for The Cypress Hills Beacon include New York City Department for the Aging, the Human Resources Administration, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York State Office of Family and Children Services and the New York Community Trust (Cypress Hills ENY Beacon brochure, 2005).

Program Context

Services at the Center

The East New York Beacon provides family counseling; computer learning for youth; a Beacon After-school program providing homework help, arts and crafts and recreational activities for children age 6-12; ESL (English as a Second Language) classes; fitness and recreation programs on weekday evenings for teens, adults and families; youth leadership programs and an intergenerational program that includes youth helping seniors and joint recreational activities and outings. On Saturdays there are various sports and arts programs. Services are provided year-round. In interviews with several of the young people in the program, many said their favorite activities have to do with taking care of the older people. They like to shovel snow, do yard clean up and help with inside clean up for the elders. These are concrete tasks that they know are appreciated, in part because the elders express this in their own ways—sharing snacks and conversation. The young people also escort the seniors shopping and to appointments. They make phone calls and deliver notices. They make friendly visits. The young people have a sense of

shared responsibility, and through this experience, they come to develop appreciation for the individuals they serve. The elders are no longer alien to them. The old no longer see the young as a threat. The involvement fosters a mutual sense of respect and civic contribution.

How Beacons got started

The Beacon model was implemented in New York in 1991. The Fund for the City of New York created an institute called the Youth Development Institute (YDI), which today is recognized as a national authority on practice-based youth development initiatives. They did this because the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) selected them to develop a model of services for children and youth left alone while parents were at work. The YDI constructed its model based on ideas of community building that would support the healthy development of young people—while revitalizing neighborhoods. Certain principles that are based on youth development theory and urban sociology frame the Beacon strategies.

Young people need to have

- close relationships with adults,
- high expectations,
- engaging activities,
- opportunities for contribution and
- continuity of support from adults over time.

(Strengthening Youth Development, 2003).

Enter ComNET

The Fund's Center on Municipal Government Performance, with its ComNET system has influenced youth programs, community improvement programs and business and government operations throughout the country. In 2006 there were 36 groups throughout New York using the ComNET system. In 2010, 96 are listed on the ComNET website.

Provider History

East New York Cypress Hills

The Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) was organized in 1983 for the purpose of revitalizing the Cypress Hills community by boosting economic development, preserving homes and helping families. It supports an impressive array programs and projects. Its free local newspaper, produced quarterly, called *Neighbors & Merchants Vecinos Y Comerciantes*.

FCNY Centers and Institutes

The Fund for the City of New York is a private foundation whose mission is to enhance the civic life of New Yorkers by developing ways for bureaucracies to be more responsive to the constituency. The Fund partners with government agencies and

nonprofit organizations to produce initiatives and programs. The Fund provides an overarching umbrella structure to support a wide range of initiatives, programs, centers and core departments.

The Center on Municipal Government Performance has been heralded for its pioneering and original work in introducing the voices of the public into government performance measurement and reporting. It has been recognized by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* as one of the first nonprofits to develop a program using handheld computers.

The Youth Development Institute has been acknowledged as one of the leading “thinking and doing” organizations in its field in the country. The Youth Development Institute (YDI) works in New York City and nationally to build policies, programs and practices of youth development within communities to support young people and families. YDI seeks to bring together family, school and community in order to create coherent and supportive environments for young people (YDI homepage, n.d.).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Eric James, Intergenerational Services Director at Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation East New York Beacon

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Generating Community, Elders Share the Arts

www.elderssharethearts.org

UPDATED 07.30.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	Elders Share the Arts / ESTA
<i>Goal:</i>	The program goal for Generating Community is to create and sustain connections between generations and across cultures, using oral history as a basis for artistic expression that “brings healing not only for the individual, but for society as a whole” (Perlstein & Bliss, 1994, p.5).
<i>Classification:</i>	JOINT / SHARED PROGRAM
<i>Interaction:</i>	ORAL HISTORY / JOINT CREATIVE ARTS Brings young people together with older adults in a series of interactive workshops. The young and old begin in separate groups, to better recognize their preconceptions and biases about “the other.” They then come together to discover life stories and solutions to conflict. Oral histories are gathered and recast in the format of a traditional arts medium. The work is then formally presented to the community.
<i>Location:</i>	SCHOOLS, SENIOR CENTERS
<i>Participants:</i>	Per site: 10-15 older adults, 15-30 young people
<i>Target audience:</i>	Youth and elders living in underserved, transitional and diverse neighborhoods
<i>Time intensity:</i>	20 - 30 sessions per year.

OVERVIEW

Selection Criteria

According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, Generating Community meets all ten standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION, SUSTAINABILITY and FOLLOW-UP.

Of particular note, the methodology guiding Generating Community is an important contribution to the emerging field of Arts and Aging--as it employs the principal of life-long learning. In this paradigm older age is regarded as presenting change rather than deficits--and with change comes the potential for creativity. Also, older adults are recognized as needing to be able to contribute to the well being of others. The methodology of Living History Arts sees elders as a resource in building multi-generational communities and Generating Community brings this theory into practice.

Social Issues Addressed

A Response To Generational Conflicts

During the course of community arts workshops for older adults in the South Bronx participants expressed distrust and fear of local youth. The character of their neighborhood had changed during the nineteen-seventies, and this caused them to feel estranged, and unsafe. It became clear to the community arts specialists that “there was a pressing need to reinvent family and community connections” (Perlstein & Bliss p. 8). The question they posed was: What intervention will bring together disparate members of the community in a way that builds bridges and fosters meaningful connections between old and young? Ms. Perlstein and Jeff Bliss, then Intergenerational Coordinator for ESTA wrote, “Our communities face many challenges today. Seniors encounter ageism; youth are adrift; neighborhoods are fragmented. People often keep to their own kind. We have found that Generating Community creates solutions to these problems” (*Generating Community: Intergenerational Partnerships through the Expressive Arts*, p. 9. 1994).

Objectives

The overall project objectives, summarized:

- To create a place where people can talk;
- To explore and identify conflicts between the generations;
- To find common ground, through conversation among participants;
- To discover and launch specific creative solutions for the problems;
- To design a cultural piece from this work and present it to the community (Perlstein & Bliss, p. 8).

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Living History Arts is a group process methodology that produces oral history in which the lived experience of participants is shared and honored as a kind of special knowledge.

Originally developed for community senior centers, the structured creative process lends itself well to intergenerational groups. Youth gain a sense of the past and their own connection to it. Equally important, they gain a nurturing connection to the storytellers with whom they share the process of “mining the stories.” Marsha Gildin, Director of Programs says, “All of our programs are about ways to find the story, and replicate it. We’re mining the experiences, illuminating them, and finding the common theme. In this, we care about establishing relationship” (2007). Key to this process is the role of teaching artists who are especially trained by staff of Elders Share the Arts to be group facilitators. The teaching artists use a relationship-based group dynamic that fosters openness, curiosity, discovery and fun, which stimulates creativity. The workshop content has five parts: ***Orientation, Discovery, Development, Rehearsal*** and ***Performance***.

During ***Orientation*** the participants become accustomed to the interactive nature of the sessions. They also begin to bond within their respective cohorts. They do a variety of physical movement and conscious breathing exercises. They join in with social icebreaker games using sound, movement, and role-playing of emotions. The teaching artist/ facilitator then leads them into more risky exchanges such as pre-storytelling and attitudinal exploration. The young and the old, in their separate groups, talk about their feelings and assumptions about the other. The exercises are designed to encourage a certain transparency, ease, respect and dignity; and they set the stage for communicating this way when the cohorts come together. (Perlstein & Bliss, pp. 27 – 30). In these exercises “the young people and seniors develop an expressive vocabulary...with a field of information each [cohort] has explored” (p. 30).

One such ice-breaker is called SHOUT OUT, where people shout out word associations to describe the *other*. ESTA Teaching Artist Lee Brozgol explains, “I had kids who had the nastiest things to say about elders. When I asked if they could say anything nice about old people—they said ‘NO’. But later, after they’d worked with the elders, when I asked them if they agreed with their earlier descriptions of old people, they said, ‘NO--they’re all different.’ The elders started by saying about youth, ‘They rob, hurt, push down.’ ” (2007). Director Gildin says, “Exploring the stereotypes and fears is important—to see what the layers are. By shedding light on them, they can transform” (2007).

The ***Discovery*** phase brings the two groups together using interactive exercises. Ms. Perlstein writes, “Instead of letting the groups face off against each other, in Generating Community we turn everybody’s head to face in the same direction, toward a common goal. Creating this turnaround is crucial; it’s also tremendously exciting” (p.8). They explore points of view, interests and issues. They begin to use a storytelling format outlined in their interactive games (Three hats interview, p. 38). The facilitators observe the participants’ responses in the activities and look for emerging topics that might be developed into a Living History Arts medium, such as a performance or other type of cultural presentation.

During ***Development*** participants gather in small groups, usually one elder and about six young people. The students learn how to ask questions and take oral histories—and they

practice writing. Once the students begin to grasp the lived experience of their elder friends, they collectively translate the content into a traditional arts format such as dramatic presentation or a ceramic mural that they will present to the community. The challenge for the facilitators is to guide the participants through a creative process, which naturally brings up many feelings, especially when the participants are unused to working in a creative mode. Quite often, both the young and old feel that they lack talent or knowledge or experience or “valid ideas” (p. 43) and think that their concerns are not “real material for ‘art’ ” (p. 44). So, the facilitators train participants to “lead with what they enjoy...and give reasons for their opinions” (p. 44). The facilitators give much attention to helping participants acknowledge feelings, articulate them, negotiate through misunderstandings and differences, listen to others, and problem solve. During this phase the participants learn about the nuts and bolts of drama or other another art medium that they will use to present their work to the community. They apply relevant creative arts guidelines to their story gathering / oral history work to develop the piece they will present. Ms. Gildin says that it is through working together that intergenerational relationships develop. (2007).



Figure 21 Practice

The next task is *Rehearsal*. Everyone helps during rehearsals. Participants see their interactive exploration, work and creativity coming into real form. The experience is carried forward as the legacy of elders and nourishment for youth.

Finally, the unified but diverse group gives the **Performance**. Closure is important for this yearlong process and it comes with the performance and reception that follows, in which each person has a role.

New York City Public Schools have used this methodology. Some are:

- The Millennium Art Academy in the Bronx uses Generating Community for its own Millennium Pearl Initiative, described in this compendium;
- Elementary Public School 24 in Flushing, Queens produced a Living History Arts Theatre for twelve years;
- Sun Yat Sen Middle School No. 131 in Manhattan collaborated with the Asian American Art Center to create “Stories of Chinatown” using ceramic tiles to depict immigration stories;
- Brooklyn Transitional Center, P373K, a special education school for students age 15 to 21 creates Living History Theatre with ESTA’s urban storytellers, the Pearls of Wisdom;-
- Brooklyn International High School engaged an ESTA teaching artist using the medium of photography for its Generating Community program.

Insider Perspectives

Gildin and Perlstein (2004) cite a youth services coordinator as reporting:

“The seniors loved the program. They said it gave them something to look forward to each week. They felt less isolated and had more community support—for them it was like getting fresh air. And I saw the kids change and grow. Now, when they walk down the street, they’re a lot more considerate and compassionate to seniors they pass by than before. They feel important, that they’re doing something that is good for their lives and for the seniors lives...This was a real change from the beginning of the program, when there was a lot of mistrust and misconceptions between the teens and seniors.”

Impact

The program fosters friendships between generations. It opens the hearts and minds of those involved. The old feel invigorated. The young experience life from a deeper, broader, and kinder point of view. Participants of all ages learn a new way to negotiate.

Elders have reported that they feel safer in the neighborhood. They discover that they matter to the younger people. They find that they have something to give them. These experiences of connection dispel feelings of isolation.

The youth become adept with a portfolio of new social skills and creative expression. The young people also feel that they matter. “They get to play out roles that give them a deeper understanding of the stages of life” (Perlstein & Bliss, p. 10). Parents have commented that their child’s behavior becomes more responsible.

Evaluation

Generating Community uses a variety of measures to gauge the effectiveness of the program. The criterion to be measured depends on the needs of the partner organizations. The service organization for seniors, together with ESTA, develops an evaluation for that group of participants (p. 57). Pre- and post-tests are used. Youth are asked to write a poem about seniors before they meet them and again, at the end of the year (p. 9). Evaluation is ongoing among the co-facilitators, after sessions, during planning meetings and at the end of the year.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Teachers recruit students and senior center personnel invite local constituents. Word of mouth among friends is a very effective way that a program, once established, gains future participants. Recruitment may involve giving a tour of the workshop site, showing a video of sessions or demonstrating experiential exercises that might be used in sessions. Consideration must be given to transportation and schedules so that participants will sign up and attend on a regular basis (Perlstein & Bliss).

Training

ESTA prepares teaching artists for this work through its own Living History Arts training. As explained by Elana Bell, teaching artist for the Millennium Pearl Initiative, the field of Teaching Arts is a specialized one that incorporates much from the skill set of professional facilitators. The ESTA teaching artists are practicing artists. They are photographers, ceramic artists, actors, dancers and visual artists. Some also have backgrounds in social work, counseling, computer technology, or education. All of them “love to teach and have a propensity to establish rapport” with learners (Gildin, 2007).

In the book, *Generating Community: Intergenerational Partnerships through the Expressive Arts*, Perlstein and Bliss explain that the program is fundamentally about experiential learning. But before that begins at each new site, the people who will be facilitating this process – teachers, artists, other staff, meet with the lead teaching artist to discuss and prepare the approach they will take in working with the participants. They discuss goals, program needs and time frames. This background process of learning, collaboration and planning continues throughout the program, in order to tailor it to the creative expression emerging from participants. The staff meet with the teaching artist before and after each session. After the final production, they meet to evaluate the performance or presentation, and to plan for the next year.

The Generating Community model directs trainers and teachers to address five specific domains in the course of this project. They must be concerned with cognitive, multicultural, social, affective and artistic goals. To accomplish this, 26 objectives are listed for teachers and trainers. Five of these objectives are:

- Use activities that “integrate critical thinking skills” and creative expression;
- Promote multicultural awareness;
- Provide activities and discussion about the many levels of social dynamics;
- Allow for feelings that emerge and show how to use them constructively in the sessions;
- Foster the awareness that art can be used as a tool.

(Perlstein & Bliss, pp. 60-61)

Preparation for participants in separate cohorts of old and young encourages the individuals to become comfortable with group process and self-expression and start to open and take the risks involved in participating. The entire process may look and feel very natural, but that is because there has been much thought, preparation and ongoing evaluation of what is happening. There are five sets of goals for the participants, discussed in 34 points (p. 60). They are multi-dimensional.

- Strengthen communication skills using methods of critical thinking, while becoming sensitive to feelings and their importance;
- Develop sensitivity to the importance of culture, diversity and “shared commonalities;”
- Develop social awareness and skills at all levels – from personal to group to society;
- Develop an appreciation for the emotional dimension of life – personally and socially;
- Develop an esthetic awareness and develop creative arts skills.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

The entire structure of Generating Community is based on partnership. It is designed to assist service providers who want to provide creative arts programming that builds strong intergenerational bonds. An initial partnership may consist of these entities: a lead organization such as ESTA, with experience leading group-process workshops; the staff and members of a senior center; and teachers and students of a school near the senior center. Entities that might use this model are: Nursing homes; libraries; churches; adult-day care facilities; community youth groups; and community artists’ organizations (Perlstein & Bliss, 1994, pp. 9, 14).

Budget

The organization receives financial support from a host of private foundations and public agencies, listed at its website (ESTA, n.d.). ESTA sends out requests for funding to national, state and private sources, accompanied by letters of interest written by directors of senior centers and school principals who are potential partners for a Generating Community program (p. 8). The participating organizations must be prepared to cover costs for staff time, supplies, and the consulting artist fee (p. 16) throughout the life of the program.

Program Context

After extensive research into different kinds of intergenerational programs, Perlstein and ESTA staff introduced a program built on reciprocal creative activities. Participants address and respond to issues that emerge during the workshop and find a way to common ground and creative expression.



Figure 22 Performance for the Community

Perlstein began to develop the practice now called Living History Arts with a background in theatre arts and an interest in older adults as the source of oral histories. The methodology is a synthesis of ideas in gerontology, theatre arts, and oral history. Key ideas: (1) reminiscence and storytelling is a normal and healthy aspect of aging, which helps older adults to pass along their personal legacies; (2) this natural communication process can be transformed into a creative medium and made accessible to a wide audience through a variety of arts presentations, including theatre, dance, poetry and visual art; (3) public presentation of such work is a practical way to connect diverse people in a community that would otherwise be disconnected (Perlstein & Bliss, 1994, pp. 5, 8-10 and Zablotny 2000).

The methodology in the South Bronx was so successful in the first year that a festival was organized so that the emerging art groups from the several senior centers could perform for the community (Zablotny, 2000). A new way of building community, using elders as the natural resource, had emerged. In 1999, the program was cited for excellence by the U.S. Committee for the Observance of the United Nations International Year of Older Persons, recognizing intergenerational, culturally diverse community programs and best practices across the country (Zablotny).

Provider History

Elders Share the Arts (ESTA) is a private non-profit community arts organization in New York City founded in 1979 by Susan Perlstein. The organization has developed a large menu of programs and workshops for elders and for intergenerational participants.

Generating Community is one of three core workshop programs. ***Story Circle*** is held at libraries across Brooklyn in collaboration with senior centers, in which elders share their life stories around a common theme and the facilitating teaching artists anthologize the stories into a book for them to share at a public reading. In ***Art Making from Life Experience*** elders employ visual or literary arts to express life themes and stories. ESTA's signature ***Pearls of Wisdom*** ensemble consists of narrative storytellers who have been cultivated from ESTA's other programs. They perform individually or as a group, for a wide range of audiences.

To expand the knowledge of professionals who are developing programs in arts and aging, Ms. Perlstein founded the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) in 2001. The center offers training, education, resources and networking to professionals. It also provides a means of advocacy for increased national recognition and support for creative arts for older people. It publishes training guides that explain how to produce such programs and sends out an e-newsletter called *Creative Aging*. The NCCA was instrumental in bringing the emerging field of Arts and Aging to the national agenda through the White House Conference on Aging of 2005. In July 2007, the NCCA relocated to George Washington University in Washington DC to join forces with the Center on Aging, Health and Humanities (CAHH), founded by Dr. Gene Cohen. ESTA put on the first annual ***Bel Kaufman Flamekeeper Award*** on June 7, 2007 to celebrate the passing along of creativity. Both Ms. Kaufman and Ms. Perlstein were honored. In *Creative Aging* #23, Ms. Perlstein announced the new NCCA & CAHH partnership, saying that it will serve to "inform how we think and teach about aging, extending our impact to the national and global communities in the years to come" (2007).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Susan Perlstein, Director of Education and Training, National Center for Creative Aging and Former Executive Director of Elders Share The Arts

Marsha Gildin, Director of Programs, Elders Share The Arts

Date

June 12, 2006

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Harriet Tubman Senior Food & Intergenerational Program (1991 - 2006)

<i>Provider:</i>	FoodChange (formerly, the Community Food Resource Center)
<i>Goals:</i>	The goals of the Harriet Tubman Senior Food and Intergenerational Program was to make nutritious and wholesome food a daily reality for older adults in a shared environment infused with the energy of children, while giving high school students job experience in the field of multigenerational social work.
<i>Classification:</i>	<i>JOINT / SHARED PROGRAM</i>
<i>Interaction:</i>	JOINT ACTIVITIES. This is a late afternoon meal site for local seniors where children study and play in their after-school program. High school students help with intergenerational activities that are planned and spontaneous.
<i>Location:</i>	SCHOOL CAFETERIA of P.S 154 Harriet Tubman School in central Harlem
<i>Participants:</i>	350 older adults up to 98 years in age, and 40 to 50 young people, age 8 to 18.
<i>Target audience:</i>	Elders who visit nutrition centers. Teens who want employment in social service and children in the after-school program at Harriet Tubman School.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

This shared space lasted for 15 years, beginning in 1991. According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, the Harriet Tubman Senior Food and Intergenerational Program met six standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION.

Of particular note, this combined programming is a unique example of maximizing limited resources and intentionally guiding separate age groups away from passive co-existence to active interest and engagement. Connection and community was nurtured while respecting and serving the separate needs of the two cohorts.

Note: The program is described in present tense, in keeping with the interviews done while the program was in operation.

Social Issues Addressed

The issue of nutrition for older adults living alone, the need for after school supervision for children and the need for teen mentoring all present social challenges and competition for social dollars. The shared setting breaks down isolation and alienation, unfortunately too common, when generational barriers and biases are not challenged.

Objectives

- Provide nutritious early evening meals for seniors on weekdays;
- Provide a supportive social setting for children and older adults that fosters intergenerational interaction.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

Meal Program

The senior food program and the after school program for children PK to 5th grade both occur in the large cafeteria of Harriet Tubman Public School from 3:30 to 5:30. Dinner is served to older adults between 3:30 and 5:00. The children are present from 2:00 to 5:00—many come directly from school in the same building. Adults check in, greet the Program Coordinator, and discuss the day's agenda and their preference for activities and entertainment. They generally sit at tables established by custom to be theirs, joining familiar faces. High school students, called Teen Tutors greet the seniors and serve them meals. The teens circulate among the adults, dividing their time as evenly as possible in order to sit with everyone who has indicated a willingness to join in conversation with them. If an adult seems wary of the company, the teens are advised that courteous and respectful behavior will likely win the elder's confidence, over time. The teens have been coached on ways to begin conversation on appropriate topics (such as current events), but to expect conversations to take their own natural courses. The teens are instructed "not to play favorites" among the adults, but to reach out to each person.

Afterschool Program

The children are gathered at tables of their own a short distance across the large room. They do their homework and study for tests Tuesday through Thursday. On Fridays they are allowed to play at their study tables, which are adjacent to large windows overlooking the school grounds. The Teen Tutors oversee the children's activities and help with homework problems, when needed—going back and forth between the adults and the children through the course of the afternoon. If a special activity is not planned for the day, some of the children and seniors will initiate a shared activity, such as playing chess, or going over math homework.



Figure 23 Afterschool Gathering (Source: Bing Photo)

Planned Activities

Each day is planned in advance, with selected music, topics for conversation and activities. Many planned events bring the two groups together. There are shared birthday parties each month, and every holiday brings a theme for activities and topic for conversation. High school students use prepared talking points on the holiday theme to stimulate conversation with the seniors. “Veterans Day and Black History month always get a lot of interest” (Baker, 2006). Sometimes these occasions include oral history presentations by participants about life before and during the Civil Rights Movement, or about experience in the military. Sometimes the two groups share arts and crafts. The staff collects and transports a variety of equipment, decorations, props and other supplies to the work sites on a daily basis because they are making use of the school the cafeteria.

The Program also includes a weekly excursion to the library. The program includes growing vegetables from seeds, in the schoolyard, right beyond the cafeteria. Throughout the year “extracurricular” multigenerational activities are arranged for all who wish to attend – excursions to the movies, bowling, museums, and other events. As these are weekend events, parents get involved.

The spirit of community was in action on the site visit day in March of 2006. Program Coordinator, Timi Baker, and her staff, were friendly and outgoing—talking with participants, discussing matters with the teen tutors present that day, keeping activity going, watching groups, being mindful of program timing. There were no planned intergenerational activities that day—the atmosphere was low-key and comfortable. Children and elders were mostly among themselves, but some adults had joined the children—invited because the children knew that they liked to play certain games.

Insider Perspectives

Teen Tutor, J.

“I’m here five days a week. Different seniors will come every day. I have a bond with the seniors – I have a strong bond with my elderly grandmother and grandfather and aunts... I live in the neighborhood. I see the seniors from the program and say hello. If my mother is with me I’ll introduce them. I’ve been doing this for one and a half years. Seniors sign a paper that it’s all right to talk with the teens. They maybe hold back a little at first. One time I had a situation – a negative attitude from a senior. So I was polite and left him and the next day he was friendly – turned out he liked talking to me. There is a lot they actually know – the veterans know politics. We need to appreciate them – they built our country. We need to do something about health coverage. In the future we can do more to appreciate them. I might become a teacher but I like graphic arts and I’m interested in stocks. Here, I’m a Teen Tutor. The kids are the future – they teach me. Someone here might grow up to be president. At first there was a barrier because the kids are not exposed to talking with seniors. I tell the new kids the rules. I tell them to interact with the seniors at meal sharing. They learn it’s easy to be not shy –and they go up and say, “Hello, my name is *M.* and I’m eight.” In a couple of days they relax. Sometimes the seniors will help them with something - figure out a math problem. There’s a guy who will play chess with the kids.”

Senior Participant, P.D.

“I was a counselor, and then I worked at a mental institution. Next, I worked in Narcotics and next I worked at a prison. I’m on the Human Relations Committee and I bring friends here. I drive. (Somebody walks out using a cane and acknowledges him.) I donated 10 canes to senior citizen sites. She has one. A free cane! I’m at the Salvation Army at 12 noon. I take seniors to therapy sessions till one. Then I’m on the street talking to them. Then I come here. At 5:30 I’m a security guard and I close up the place. Ask me about my health. I am Diabetic for 27 years and have Congestive Heart failure. Seven years ago I lost my kidneys and was on dialysis for 4 years. Then my niece donated one of her kidneys to me. I talk to the young people – I’m a mentor to J. One time he told me – ‘I told my mother I loved her and she said, You in trouble?’ He said, ‘No – Mr. D. told us that some people never got to tell their parents they love them because they never came home from the World Trade Center.’ I get the kids to listen to me.”

Impact

According to Program Director Antoinette Emers, older adults come to the program because of its unique socialization. It's not a quiet senior setting and they claim this adds years to their lives. About the teens, she said, "The youth develop aspirations here, social aspirations, under the influence of the staff" (2005).

This is the only place in Harlem where congregate dining for seniors provides early dinner, so people, who would otherwise not have a balanced evening meal, come to the site, pay what they can, and dine in an upbeat environment where there are children. The children learn that elders are not to be feared and that they are interesting.

The teen tutors gain important work experience and earn a paycheck. The children see the teen tutors as role models who are interested in their success. They get their homework done, with the unmeasured advantage of feeling motivated by the interest of older friends. There is intergenerational enrichment for three age groups – elders, youth and children.



Figure 24 Early Dinner (Source: Bing Photo)

Evaluation

It is difficult to measure the effects of this program. What is not difficult to measure is the long waiting list of would-be participants.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

The Senior Food Program is open to older adults living in Community Boards 9, 10 and 11 who are in need of daily nutritious meals served in late afternoon. The teens and children reside in the immediate neighborhood and know about the program by word of mouth.

Training

Newly enrolled older adults receive an orientation from staff about the program and discuss the option of being involved with the younger people. The teens are trained in effective communication with the seniors and in being good role models for the children. They receive ongoing guidance and supervision.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

The Department for the Aging supported the program for many years, until FY 2006. The Harriet Tubman School provides in-kind support, making available its kitchen and cafeteria. There are relationships with Community Based Organizations, the Department of Education, and several high schools attended by the teen tutors. There are collaborations within Food Change departments of Nutrition, Education and Food Services.

Budget

Not available

Program Context

The Harriet Tubman School Senior Dinner Program began in 1986 and the Intergenerational Program there started in 1990. Its founder named the Intergenerational Program “My Pueblo,” which suggests a place of belonging, a village where all the generations are gathered, perhaps a place where people observe a shared history and tradition, a place of safety, nurture and inclusion. The food service for elders is provided weekdays except when schools are closed for holidays--and in summer. The meals are planned, managed and prepared under the supervision of Food Change.

It would be interesting to see the “My Pueblo” concept carried even further, into a collaboration linking high school students studying culinary arts and graduate students in gerontology with an organization helping seniors, to create a vibrant multigenerational community.

Provider History

The mission of Food Change is to improve lives through nutrition, education and financial empowerment (About us, n.d.). The organization was founded in 1980 with a \$6,000 grant to advocate for schools to provide breakfasts for children in need. The organization expanded, acting on the awareness that nutrition and income were related factors. It grew to help people with income matters and to educate people about nutrition and food preparation. Some program interventions are to: educate on filling out tax

returns to get available tax credits; assist with Food Stamp application; educate on nutrition and cooking; and provide nutrition/meal service sites. The organization has many satellite locations. Originally called the Community Food Resource Center, it changed its name to Food Change in 2005 (History, n.d.).

From its inception dedicated to improving nutrition for all New Yorkers, it is now the lead community based organization for two small high schools organized in 2004, (part of New York City's and the nation's small school movement to improve education) located at the former Park West High School at 50th St. and 9th Avenue in Manhattan. The schools have classes that prepare students for post-secondary education and also correlate real world experience with academic subjects. The schools are the High School of Hospitality Management and the Food and Finance High School. "The Food and Finance High School is the first New York City high school dedicated to the food industry" (Severson, 2007). It is in the process of renovating the defunct culinary vocational school kitchens at Park West, replacing them with new professional workstations. There are plans to build a glassed-in demonstration kitchen.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Antoinette Emers, then Director of Senior and Intergenerational Programs
Timi Baker, Intergenerational Program Coordinator

Dates

November 8, 2005 & March 6, 2006

Contact

None available

See www.foodchange.org/food/senior.html for information about programs in 2010.

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Project NOISEE (Naturally Occurring Interaction in a Shared Environment Everyday) www.isabella.org/childcare/childcare.htm UPDATED 08.31.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	Isabella Geriatric Center
<i>Goals:</i>	The goals of Project NOISEE are to facilitate daily natural interaction between residents and children, provide weekly structured activities and utilize the entire Isabella campus as the children's classroom, thus infusing the whole environment with the energy of children and creating expectations and experiences of well-being for residents, children and staff (Ellefsen & Listokin, n.d.).
<i>Classification:</i>	JOINT / SHARED PROGRAM
<i>Interaction:</i>	CHILDREN INTERACT WITH RESIDENTS. Childcare workers carefully guide intergenerational activities and informal group visits and babies are in carriages are brought to visit residents on the units and in the arts and crafts rooms. With help from childcare assistants, residents are allowed to hold the babies. Subtle cleanliness measures and gentle guidance regarding appropriate touch are constant.
<i>Location:</i>	SKILLED NURSING FACILITY: throughout the entire Isabella Geriatric Center
<i>Participants:</i>	39 children, 3 months to 5 years of age and residents of the 705-bed facility
<i>Target audience:</i>	Children are from Washington Heights, New Jersey, the City of Yonkers and Rockland County.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Timeframes are based on the school year and summer.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

This program began in 2003 and continues in 2010. According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, Project NOISEE meets all ten standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, BUDGET, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION, SUSTAINABILITY and FOLLOW-UP.

Of particular note, this unique and carefully planned program has infused the nursing home with an intergenerational vitality--and sparks an upbeat outlook. Individuals are pleased and a positive culture is nurtured.

Social Issues Addressed

Washington Heights has a diverse population, a high birth rate and a high percentage of people over 65 years of age (CALME, n.d.). Clearly there is a need to provide a multigenerational array of care and services for people in the community—from children, to working parents, to family whose loved ones need long term care.

Objectives

- To provide day care for children;
- To utilize the entire Isabella campus as the children's classroom;
- To facilitate daily “natural” [supervised] interaction between children in day care and Isabella residents;
- To create an environment that fosters feelings of well-being for residents, staff, family and children;
- To give the children a formative experience, in which they do not fear people with disabilities, and instead, recognize our common humanity.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

As Child Day Care Director, Karen Ellefsen explains, “Children become a natural part of the rhythm of the nursing home. Even if they are on a [nursing] unit for twenty minutes once a week to hear a story read to them, or to play Lego's, if it's on a regular basis, the atmosphere on the unit changes. The nurses feel they're improving the life of the residents by having the children. They feel empowered. There's much more demand for the children than we can actually meet.”

The Director of Recreation, Janet Listokin, and co-creator of Project NOISEE, says, “It changes the entire environment when the children visit. A staffer in the cafeteria complained at first that it was ‘too noisy’ with the children—but now she wants to know when the children are coming.”

The Child Day Care Center is located on the ground floor of the skilled nursing and rehabilitation building. This is where parents deliver and pick up the children daily. It is

the children's base—where they have lunch and snacks, take naps and have time in their child-centered environment. The preschoolers, toddlers, and older infants are gathered here, and depending on what is scheduled for each age group, they will remain in the Center for the morning, or they will be readied for an activity or group visit elsewhere. To start the day, before anyone goes anywhere, one of the children steps up as facility-wide Announcer, greeting everyone through the overhead speaker system, saying something like “Good Morning! Today it is sunny and warm!” On some units, the whole population responds in kind, and this reverberates throughout the floor. “Some of the Announcers always say it is sunny and warm—even when there is a blizzard”, says Ms. Ellefsen. The groups of children then move to their morning destination, and later, after lunch and nap, some go to an afternoon activity on a unit with their teachers.

Ms. Ellefsen says, “NOISEE is very carefully orchestrated. We are trying to get them together any way possible. We are constantly training the children and residents. It's very intensive. Residents have the opportunity to nurture. The children become disability blind—it's of no consequence to them. And the children give the high-pressured staff a moment of happiness.”

Activities on General Units

Sing-along is a frequent activity on the nursing units. It takes about 6 staffers and assistants to help guide the activity. About ten children, ages 2 and 3, are gathered with their teachers into a circle in the unit's Day Room. Residents join the circle or sit nearby. Many more gather just beyond the room, in the hall by the nurse's station, to hear the goings on and see the kids as they come and go. When leaving the unit, the toddlers walk up to the residents to say hello and goodbye. They are coached as to appropriate touch in their greeting. Giving and receiving appropriate touch is encouraged and guided by the teachers and assistants, with expert sensitivity. Severely disabled residents, who indicate interest, are helped to hold a baby. (Babies also are strolled onto the units.) They experience being nurturers, even while a staff person is actually holding the infant. The staff also discretely wipes hands for sanitation precautions.

For Special Residential Units

- Ventilator Dependent Unit: The children sing into the loudspeaker on the unit. For residents in isolation, the older children painted ceiling tiles that were placed over the residents' beds. “This gave residents and the staff a lift,” said Ms. Ellefsen. “In fact, nurses from other units want the same for their residents.”
- Dementia Unit: A resident was very confused and upset when the children were leaving the unit, until she was asked to push a baby carriage along with the group returning to the nursery. “They bring me back to life, she said. When it was time for her to go back to her unit, she said, Thank you for letting me come. She was heard to say, They *even* let me come down to the nursery.” This became part of her week. When she became too ill to leave the unit, the children went to her to sing. (Ellefsen).

Other Locations

- The infants go to needlepoint where residents are working on projects and listening to or joining in songs.

- On every unit there are writing boards where anyone, including the children may draw a picture, or place a message.
- On the rehabilitation unit there is a “grocery store,” a computer for children and a wicker table and chairs for anyone. It serves as an occupational therapy location and is an inviting place where people gravitate for rest or play.
- Children may be escorted to any of these sites to meet residents for an activity.
- Spontaneous Playtime: Children play in the gym where mobile residents go for a change of scene. They become involved in spontaneous playtime.



Figure 25 Nice Surprise

Themed Events

- Bathing Suit Parade: Children wear their bathing suits and swim gear and parade through the units before going out to swim in the wading pools set up for hot summer days. NOISEE teachers also wear beach clothes to help lead children “in the parade.”
- Halloween Parade: Children go trick-or-treating through the facility in costumes.
- KaNoodle Noodle Soup Voyage: This is a scavenger hunt for soup ingredients, leading to an intergenerational lunch. Real soup ingredients are hidden with willing residents and staff on nine floors. Children follow clues searching for ingredients. They request the ingredients by singing a special song to each holder of an ingredient; pointing to a picture of the item they want. Residents join the search party. When all ingredients are found they take them to a location near the kitchen, where a “magic

spell is cast,” turning the collection into soup. All are immediately served. Initially, planning and preparation took three hours—for a two and a half hour event.

- Zany Hat Hunt: The children went through the building looking for funny hats they acquired through various interactions with staff and residents. They then donned the hats--to visit the King. The King is very community minded and supports the NOISEE project. He received the children, wearing “his crown” and discussed matters with them, over cookies and milk.

New Initiatives

- The Neighborhood Transformers (TNT): Children over 5 years of age.
- NOISEE Announces Super Adventures (NASA): Staffers’ children during school break.
- The Leaders: High School Interns take the children from the Day Care Center to visit residents, from 4 to 6 PM.

Insider Perspective

House 4—Observations 2006

Ten children aged 2 and 3 years old lined up and with five adults, walked down the hall to the elevator and rode up to 4th Floor. They were on their way to one of three units that Isabella has shifted from a traditional, task-based, nursing unit into a *Culture Change*, neighborhood-style unit, where the goal is to transform every aspect of care and life on the unit into a family-like home environment. On this particular unit the residents were physically and cognitively impaired. The Day Room was redesigned to be less institutional, with a parlor and deep seated, upholstered chairs and window draperies. The room was filled with natural lighting, giving an airy, cozy, bright feeling. Three residents were sitting in this room with a Recreation Assistant, waiting for the children. The children arrived and formed a circle with residents and staff and soon everyone was clapping hands and singing, “If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands!” The three residents were smiling and clearly liked joining in with the little ones. Other residents began to gather around to watch. The singing continued for about 15 minutes. Then the children walked back into the hallway where several residents were sitting in chairs or wheelchairs. They walked around, moved easily among the adults, spending a few minutes to say hello. It was remarkable to see children, who at this age are typically shy, behaving with gentleness, care and ease. Some of the older adults watched silently with smiling eyes.

Babies Visit Needlepoint—Observations 2006

Eleven women regularly attend a needlepoint class in one of the craft rooms. They were sitting at long tables. Some were using yarn and thread, with supplies piled up around them. Some were paying more attention to the young man talking and singing to them, sometimes speaking in German. Day Care Workers had transported babies in carriages to the room, and were holding them in their arms, standing next to seated residents. The venue was a well equipped workshop for needlepoint that drew ladies who wanted to work with their hands—and who wanted to be part of a rich, multigenerational social setting. One resident of Isabella’s independent living apartments attends regularly. She said that she comes to help out, to hold a baby. She said, “I do this for myself--I get so much from being with the babies.” Another resident, German-speaking Ms. E., said she

came to Isabella after a stroke because she had no friends or family. She likes to be around the babies during needlepoint and sings to them in German. She also enjoys speaking to the German exchange student in her first language.



Figure 26 Mutual Interest

Mr. D. in the Gymnasium

Mr. D. likes to go to the auditorium / gymnasium. From here he can see people coming and going, and he knows that the children will come to play. He likes to design activities for them. The children know he does not play the games, but that he designs games for them. At the end of their playtime they line up to shake his hand and say thank you.

Impact

The immediate impact of NOISEE can be seen on the faces of residents and in the behavior of the children. The demand for NOISEE children throughout the facility--by residents, nurses and the recreation staff--is greater than the supply.

In the field, professionals warn of risks when the very young come together in shared programs with older adults who are impaired. Of particular concern is the all too frequent tendency to infantilize adults who require assistance and care. This tendency is so prevalent that family caregivers often characterize their care giving relationship as a *role reversal*. In this assumption, ageist affronts are wordlessly communicated of life experience as irrelevant, self-determination forfeited, and dignity disregarded. But studies suggest that even those with dementia may be able to recognize indignities—so that the infantilizing of an adult is never justified (Salari, 2002).

Based on observation and conversation with the co-creators of Project NOISEE there is awareness and intention that all interactions enhance and promote dignity, and be age- and ability-appropriate for both residents and children. The common good is enhanced because, from elders to infants, everyone is seen to have a potential or actual role in the community.

Evaluation

The National Therapeutic Recreation Society awarded Project NOISEE with the Jean Tague Innovative Programming Award in November 2004. The program is in demand; parents want their children to be in this type of day care program—as indicated by the long waiting list. Evaluation is informal and anecdotal.

Research on programs for children and older adults in care settings does indicate important benefits. Some findings are listed below.

Children Benefit from Intergenerational Day Care

- Advanced social development, by almost a year (Rosebrook);
 - Skilled in courteous behavior (Rosebrook);
 - Greater self-esteem (U of Missouri);
 - Improved family relations (U of Missouri)
- (Brink 2005).

Older Adults Benefit From A Shared Environment

- They have a renewed interest in others (Foster);
 - Even in dementia--there is a lasting positive affect (Jarrott & Bruno);
 - Adults enjoy children's playfulness and affection, feeling happy, interested, loved, younger and needed (Jarrott & Bruno)
- (Steinig, 2006).

In 2001 Kuehne and Kaplan reported successful intergenerational programming, and some points are presented below with *italics added*. NOISEE demonstrates an understanding of all these points.

- Foster provides anecdotal evidence that the effect of a shared site program for older adults is a nursing home is to make the “atmosphere... ‘family-like’... [promoting] social enrichment and a renewed *interest in others*,”
- Rosenberg writes, “all children reportedly demonstrated *positive behaviors* toward the older adults and the program in general;”
- Travis and Stremmel found that administration and staff had misconceptions about infection control that “can often be addressed effectively with *appropriate training*,”
- Jarrott and Bruno found that “administrative and line staff *‘buy-in’* to the intergenerational program idea” was a top priority.

Janet Listokin conveys important points about this particular program in the textbook *Therapeutic Recreation, Leadership and Programming*, by Robin Kunstler and Frances Stavola Daly. The information is titled “Project NOISEE, Naturally Occurring Interaction in a Shared Environment Everyday”, on page 284. Human Kinetics, in Champagne Illinois, published this book in 2010.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

The program is known by word of mouth. There is no advertising whatsoever. There are handouts and the Isabella website describes the program. It is also listed in the neighborhood Resource Directory for Washington Heights and Inwood Online. Parents choose this program because they want their children to be part of a multi-generational environment.

Training

There is in-service training for all Isabella staff about Project NOISEE. Child Day Care workers (1) attend sensitivity training; (2) learn communication skills to work with children and older adults together; (3) are trained in thorough and subtle hygiene techniques beyond the usual infection control precautions. Additionally, four times a year the facility runs a Child Abduction Drill. “Code Pink” is announced; the entire facility gets locked down; the “missing” child’s name and picture is flashed on computer screens--and the child is quickly located.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

Program planning and staffing requires collaboration. There is a unique partnership for activity planning, which is discussed under Program Context. Because the program is hands-on intensive, the worker-to-child ratio must be high, and this is accomplished through interdepartmental cooperation. There are eighteen teachers—four are certified and fourteen have two to four years of secondary education. Therapeutic recreation staff

assists with children's excursions to the units. Graduate students of the Lehman College School of Therapeutic Recreation are part of the team. High School students with experience working at Isabella are hired for the summer. Volunteers are assigned to NOISEE. But, with the current space and staff, the program is at its maximum, with 39 children. Update: in 2008 and continuing in 2010, the Program Directors collaborate with a nearby high school—targeting 9th-graders, who help with NOISEE during school hours. “The 9th graders love this,” said Ellefsen.

Budget

In 2006 the overall annual budget was \$176,000. Isabella covered most of the cost. The charge for Day Care in 2006 was \$233.00 to \$314.00, depending on the age of the child. The program was also supported by a grant from Department for the Aging from June 2007-2010. In the fall of 2010 parents are rallying together to raise money through grant writing. Their goal is to raise \$50,000—to restore children's activities on the units—which have been necessarily curtailed. They want the opportunity for rapport and bonding between children and aged residents to be restored and sustained.

Program Context

Directors Ellefsen and Listokin work together to promote a multigenerational family-like environment through NOISEE. Their professional backgrounds encompass the first and final stages of human development and each has a natural focus on her respective constituency--which makes for a dynamic creative process. They clearly enjoy the challenges of their mutual goal, which boosts the morale of residents and workers, alike. It challenges the traditional assumptions that “children are not appropriate” where the environment is supposed to be peaceful, quiet, clinical and controlled. Children do bring noise and a physical presence that might be disruptive or unpredictable. But because the program is so comprehensively planned and managed the nursing staff embraces the NOISEE children, and the organization is proud of it.

Provider History

Isabella Geriatric Center's mission is “to provide quality care through diverse programs designed to promote health and independence within and beyond our walls” (*Isabella Geriatric Center: Our Family of Services, n.d.*). In addition to the skilled nursing facility and senior apartments, Isabella provides home care, operates an Adult Day Care program with medical and rehabilitation services, and provides Meals on Wheels. Isabella also delivers several educational and wellness programs for older adults in the community through its Institute for Older Adults (Isabella Geriatric Center, n.d.).

More historical information on Isabella can be found in this compendium under the chapter, Isabella Caring Partners.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Karen Ellefsen, Director of Child Day Care
Janet Listokin, Director of Therapeutic Recreation

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Millennium Pearl Initiative / MPI

www.bxmaa.org

UPDATED 09.16.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	Millennium Art Academy (MAA); a New Century High School in the Bronx
<i>Goal:</i>	The mission of the Bronx Millennium Art Academy High School is “to use visual art and intergenerational experiences as catalysts for preparing students for the world of college, work and community”(2004-2005 Annual School Report, n.d.). The goal of the Millennium Pearl Initiative at MAA is “to improve urban education and bring diametrically opposed people together for the betterment of urban life” (Nodel interview, June 20, 2006).
<i>Classification:</i>	JOINT / SHARED PROGRAM
<i>Interaction:</i>	ORAL HISTORY & CREATIVE LEARNING. Over the course of a year, students and older adults meet in a large classroom once a week for two hours to develop an oral history project, which culminates in an intergenerational presentation shared with the larger community. The students learn to interview and take oral histories, using a particular theme each year. In the process, barriers dissolve, relationships develop and the students become engaged in learning.
<i>Location:</i>	CLASSROOM
<i>Participants:</i>	Approximately 25 to 30 tenth or eleventh graders and 9 older adults
<i>Target audience:</i>	Students who are reading below grade level; at risk for truancy; at risk of not being promoted and students in special education.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	The oral history project is based on the academic year. Participants meet for two and a half hours once per week.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

This program began in 2003 and continues in 2010. According to the Good Practices Criteria listed in this compendium, the Millennium Pearl Initiative meets eight standards of good practice: GOALS, PLANNED ACTIVITIES, RECRUITMENT, SENSITIVITY TRAINING, PUBLICITY, COLLABORATION, EVALUATION and SUSTAINABILITY.

Of particular note, evidence consistently bears out that the key ingredients to students' academic success is their social engagement and contact with the elders through sharing, storytelling and bonding activities—whereby TRUST is established. The process of developing relationships is of critical importance.

Social Issues Addressed

The challenge bearing on this and many academic institutions is how to engage young people in the pursuit of education when it seems very far from relevant to their everyday lives and to the future they see modeled when struggle and poverty dominate. Students may feel pressed to “make the grade,” “get ahead” and essentially leave the community behind. At home there is often an opposing pressure to help out with family matters. These attitudes toward education set up a serious disconnect and a kind of compound alienation for the students. This curriculum is strength-based, using cooperative learning that nurtures students' experience of success. Bringing older adults into the classroom as co-participants energizes the classroom and creates the experience of community.

Objectives

- To eradicate social stereotypes;
- To form [intergenerational] life-long bonds;
- To obtain oral histories as a way to engage students in learning;
- To stimulate in students a recognition of the universal human condition.

(*Special Programs*, n.d.)

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

The Millennium Pearl Initiative (MPI) fits into the curriculum as an extension of US History class. Every Tuesday, older adults come to school and join the students for two hours in a classroom large enough to handle a dynamic large group that forms into many small groups working together. Interaction is lead by a professional teaching artist from the community-arts organization, Elders Share The Arts. The teaching artist is a skilled facilitator and good at energizing the group. The workshops begin with social exercises that begin to break down the barriers of fear based on preconceived notions of age and race (Nodel presentation, 2007). Participants talk about stereotypes and explore their preconceived notions about age. One of the warm-up exercises is to form an *Age Circle*, standing in order of age, from youngest to oldest. Another is to *Shout Out* significant

events that have shaped the decades. All of this is preparation for the actual project they will do together--interviewing and writing the oral histories.

Each small group of five students and one elder stay together for the whole year. Their work together is oriented around an oral history theme and begins with interviewing and the sharing of stories. Eight to ten groups are working in the big classroom at the same time. The students learn to ask questions, to listen, reflect back and clarify. Sometimes students will *freeze-frame* about certain events and memories and ask questions of the narrator. This leads to reflection for the elders and deeper learning for the students. The students learn to take notes and write. They work as a team so that the “strong can pull up the weak” (Nodel, 2007). Teachers and the professional artist circulate among participants, coaching them through the various tasks, guiding them through the entire process. The work is rigorous for all involved.



Figure 27 Warm-up Game

In the first years of this program, students’ work was transformed into a book published at the end of each year, complete with an ISBN/International Standard Book Number. The students read from their book at Columbia Teachers College and at a nearby Barnes and Noble. These books with CD, whose titles all start with “Back in the Day” are available for purchase by contacting the Student Press Initiative at www.publishspi.org. In 2010 students will learn about broadcasting, with a goal of making several broadcasts on nationally syndicated, AMcK *Initiative Radio*, with Producer Angela McKenzie in Manhattan.

Insider Perspectives

The radio style recording made to accompany the earlier publications indicates how the program has enriched the lives of the participants, revealing deeply felt and powerful

impressions. The Elders express pleasure in going to school and being involved with young people. They are surprised and delighted about the students' courtesy and interest in their lives. They feel pride in the students' accomplishments--and personal satisfaction with conveying their stories and extending their influence to this generation. The young people express being stunned, shocked, amazed, and inspired about the elders' life experiences, hardships and knowledge. They appreciate the elders' unique humor, points of view and their personal histories.

On a site visit to the school, participants shared the following:

Older Adults at Millennium Art Academy

"I was afraid of the unknown—"We have to go in there?" "

"I'd read a lot of negative stuff about the school [Adlai Stevenson], so I was concerned for my safety. But after the first 20 minutes I felt safe."

"I recruited friends to be in the class."

"We come from 2 different Senior Centers in the Bronx."

Students at Millennium Art Academy

"It's not a part of history class – it's to give us a new experience to help us with people."

"They tell us about their day and themselves and that's not something that's in history books—it's about what they went through."

"It's different than other classes. Other classes are to boost your intellectual skill and this it to boost your people skills."

"When they talk, you learn things you should and shouldn't do, like mistakes they made so you learn not to do it anymore..."

"They have a whole different impression of wars and the Great Depression—we hear their experience first hand."

"I didn't know what this class was – I didn't know we were going to write a book – we can write an essay any day – but a Book, oh..."

"It's like a living history book."

"A surprise was how well we'd look on seniors. Some of us don't really be around seniors very much so it was kind of a different transition."

"Kids our age have negative perceptions of seniors, when it's not really the way seniors are--as negative as people think they are. There are different sides--there's more to them. They've been through so many things in their life like if you look back--they've been through races, two wars, so much stuff happened, they went to Woodstock..."

"I used to look at those as Cranky People that wanted to be left alone or something. But they are friendly here; they want to have conversation with us and get to like each other."

"I wasn't really making any assumptions, so I came to this class to learn new things."

"Every school should have it [MPI class]. It makes it fun for kids so they come to school more."

"I thought we wouldn't be able to be ourselves because I thought, around elderly we'd have to be real polite."

“I came in with a good attitude, actually. It was fun and I left with a good attitude.”

“I thought it was fun at first but after that I saw it gives me an advantage to go to a certain college—so it looks good to be in this class.”

“They full of life, and stuff --always excited about everything. I thought they’d be like people in the nursing home but they wasn’t.”



Figure 28 Freeze-frame Game

Impact

The Millennium Pearl Initiative improves attendance, academic achievement, behavior and timely progress through school. The school has a very high attendance rate—92.8% daily. Principal Maxine Nodel is certain this figure is high due to students’ excitement about their connections with the elders. The students are advancing and passing their regents tests, rather than falling behind in school. In 2007 the projected graduation rate for students was 85—92%, much higher than the 59% graduation rate in New York City. It is important to know that these students are considered “at risk”, meaning that 92% of them are from families at or below the poverty line, and that 90% of them arrive reading at an elementary school level (Nodel presentation, 2007).

Journalist Anne Silverstein credits Ms. Nodel, saying, “The program helps the students with how they think—it forces them to slow down and spend time with a piece of writing,

with how to develop an idea, and with editing one's own work. Working with these seniors helps 'intone a sense of civility into students ... they're able to see the big picture of life', through listening to older people" (2005).

Ms. Nodel explains that the students are moved by the struggles that their elder friends have endured. They are touched by the fact that the elders join them at school. Through this carefully guided process, the students "internalize the human experience". It happens over and over again. Stereotypes vanish. The children come to school and get involved in learning because they have an immediate need to engage with the elders and create something together.

Evaluation

The school keeps rigorous documentation on the students' academic involvement, achievements and behavior.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Students are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. For its first two years Millennium Art Academy accepted only 9th and 10th graders, with plans to expand the student body gradually. By Spring 2007, there were students in all grades and the graduates had progressed through all grades at Millennium. Recruitment for elders takes place by word of mouth among participants, friends and peers at Senior Centers. Retention of volunteers is high because they enjoy the experience.

Training

Training and collaboration is an integral, ongoing part of the process at all levels. The professionals involved meet weekly before and after each session to prepare and discuss outcomes of the classroom experience. They make adjustments to the overall plan as the project unfolds. Participants are immersed in exercises designed to challenge their thinking. This model cultivates evolving points of view through the medium of relationship. It is through the development of relationships that the 'magic' happens.

Quarterly assemblies in the ninth grade foster students' awareness of elders. They hear from an ensemble of storytellers from Elders Share the Arts called the Pearls of Wisdom. These urban folk artists challenge students to look at how they may typecast old people. Several of these artists also participate in the Millennium Pearl Initiative.

Students are involved in other activities that nurture interest and sensitivity toward older adults. Some of the students do a ninth-grade gerontology internship at a nearby nursing home, arranged through the New York City Department of Aging Intergenerational Work Study Program. Some students attend a literacy group at the nursing home where youth join elders to develop reading skills.

RESOURCES

Collaboration, Partnerships

A group of colleagues with collective knowledge about academic education, arts education and creativity and intergenerational programming helped to develop this program. Ms. Nodel brought together her staff, Elders Share the Arts with Marsha Gildin, and the Department for the Aging with Mary Ann Zimmermann McKinney, Director of the Intergenerational Unit and Theresa Knox, Field Director of the Intergenerational Work Study Program.

Current Program Partners

- Elders Share the Arts provides the volunteers for the MPI classroom and the teaching artist who leads the oral history process.
- AMcK *Initiative Radio*, New York, with Angela McKenzie, Producer, will help students produce a series of nationally syndicated radio programs.

School Partners

- El Museo del Barrio, New York;
- NYC Department for the Aging, Intergenerational Unit (DFTA IWSP), which provides administrative link between schools and worksites, and periodically counsels the students during their work-study experiences in the nursing homes;
- Skilled Nursing Facilities in the Bronx: Jewish Home and Hospital, Morningside Nursing Home and Beth Abraham Nursing and Rehabilitation.

For Ms. Nodel's collaborative development of the school and its subsequent success, she was invited in 2006 by Columbia University Teachers College to join the Cahn Fellows of Distinguished New York City Principals (*Teachers College News*, 2006).

Budget

The Millennium Art Academy is a public school under authority of the New York City Department of Education. It opened as a New Century High School, as part of a special initiative in educational reform spearheaded by New Visions for Public High Schools. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation helped to launch these new schools. The school now operates solely on the DOE budget, supplemented by grant opportunities.

Program Context

The Millennium Pearl Initiative happens in the context of a school-wide interdisciplinary theme that embraces creativity and a broad concept of humanity. The approach to education includes active learning, creative expression, intergenerational partnership and communication (Gootman, 2005). It was long the dream of Principal Nodel to create a school where the integral theme would be our common humanity (Nodel interview, 2006). She has done that. Now her dream is to bring this methodology to every borough in New York City, and to develop a high school that is physically connected to a nursing facility.

Provider History

Principal Nodel brought to the school's founding an understanding of creativity, experiential learning, and the power of intergenerational relationships. This was gained from her innovations at one Alternative High School in Queens. Further back in her direct experience, as a teenager, she had observed that even institutionalized seniors had the need to connect with others. She saw them benefiting from the art class her father taught at a nearby nursing home. In teaching troubled teenagers in Queens (truants, gang members and over-aged, undereducated students) she witnessed the power of intergenerational relationships. The students showed a significant improvement in behavior and class attendance. The elders gained respect and value for their contributions of caring, and sharing their stories of surviving the Holocaust. Ms. Nodel noticed something about the intentional bridge between generations and cultures that invites a fresh attention, and a new way of being present that distills the best of humanity.

The Millennium Art Academy started in 2003 with 67 students in Grade Nine in the large Herbert Lehman High School in the Bronx (Insideschools.org, n.d.). The school became an official school in 2004 (*Guide to NYC Small High Schools*, n.d.). In its first year as a New Century School it received the Robert F. Wagner Jr. Award for Excellence from Commissioner Edwin Méndez-Santiago of New York City Department for the Aging, in recognition of the students' work with older adults (NYC Dept of Ed. High School Directory, n.d.). The Department of Education then decided the school must move across the Bronx, from Lehman High campus to Adlai Stevenson High School campus. Stevenson was being phased out as a large high school, and several small schools were assigned to occupy the large building. At the time of this move the location was regarded as one of the most dangerous of public high school settings.

Now, to enter any of the schools on campus, everyone must pass through metal detectors. But, once inside the Academy, the atmosphere is far from impersonal, cold and scary. The faces and the energy seen here speak of an active and vocal school community, where the halls are vibrant with students' photography and artwork, much of which documents the intergenerational activities.

New Century High Schools

The opportunity to develop the MAA came about because of the school reform movement across the nation, which spans the country and goes back to the 1970's. The Millennium Art Academy was created in a later phase of thinking spearheaded by an organization in New York City called **New Visions for Public Schools**. New Visions invited new players to join educators at the design table, including community organizations, teachers unions and private stakeholders. They rolled out forty New Visions Schools (Tewksbury & Scher, 1998 & New Visions, n.d.). The subsequent **New Century High Schools Initiative** had two purposes: to redesign large-scale troubled high schools and to work with people in under-served communities. The Millennium Art Academy was one of about eighty-three small schools launched in recent years. Ms. Nodel says that students often choose the Millennium Art Academy for its art focus, but the intergenerational social engagement is what keeps their interest and drives their success in school.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

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Marsha Gildin, Director of Arts in Education, Elders Share the Arts
Theresa Knox, Director of Intergenerational Work Study Program, DFTA
Elana Bell, Teaching Artist, Elders Share The Arts

Dates

June 20, 2006, site visit
March 29, 2007, site visit

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COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

The Intergenerational Initiative of the Andrus Benedict Foundation and United Way of Westchester and Putnam

www.uwwp.org

UPDATED 08.24.2010

Providers: Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation and United Way of Westchester and Putnam, guided by the *Communities for All Ages* strategy.

Goals: The Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation strives to create aging-friendly neighborhoods that engage older people as active participants in the life of their communities, primarily in Westchester County, New York. The United Way of Westchester and Putnam advances the common good by focusing on the building blocks for a good quality of life – education, income and health. The *Communities for All Ages* strategy is designed to foster regional development of an age-integrated society that promotes the well being of all...harnesses the assets of people of all ages and creates an interdependent, interactive social environment (Bressler, Henkin & Adler, 2005, p. 228).

Classification: FUNDING STRATEGY for COMMUNITY FOR ALL AGES

Interaction: To benefit an entire region, the Benedict Foundation established a partnership with the United Way of Westchester and Putnam, such that a Benedict Foundation grant leverages an annual funding stream to the United Way. The United Way matches this funding and initiates and manages grant making to local non-profit organizations. This fund is called the Intergenerational Initiative. The Benedict Foundation also provides support to bring in trainers from The Intergenerational Center at Temple University to provide workshops and technical support to help the organizations / partners move toward and implement the Community for All Ages (CFAA) approach.

Location: WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK

Participants: The Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation--directed by members of the John E. Andrus family, United Way of Westchester and Putnam--directed by its Board of Directors, and local non-profit organizations, partnering with educational institutions, local government, neighborhood associations, the faith-based community, small businesses and local community members and volunteers.

Target audience: Community leaders and their constituents of all ages, who want to create, remake or enhance a locality by producing an intergenerational social environment.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

This strategy was launched in Westchester County in 2001—and continues in 2010. It encourages innovative and collaborative thinking, while requiring clearly specified and measurable goals and activities. The training supports an ongoing effort to infuse the region with opportunities for intentional intergenerational connection.

Social Issues Addressed

How can a region, a county, a city, or a neighborhood shift its paradigm of social service delivery from a context of scarcity to one of holistic, comprehensive community building?

The CFAA framework was developed out of concern that policy makers far too readily see different populations, e.g. older adults, children, caregivers and disadvantaged families as competing for social dollars. The CFAA perspective turns upside down those limiting assumptions--viewing the different populations as having unique qualities and strengths, to be utilized in a new social construction.

Objectives

A funding strategy that activates a new social construction will:

- Form linkages involving a family foundation, e.g. Benedict, Foundation and a local United Way or a community foundation (Greenberg);
- Leverage grant making ((Henkin, Holmes, Walter, Greenberg & Schwarz, 2005, p.11);
- Influence policy makers to support CFAA goals (Henkin et al., p.11);
- Bring nationally recognized experts to the region to train and offer ongoing support (Greenberg, p.16);
- Distribute a wide array of grants that contribute to “the well-being of children, youth and older adults, strengthen families, and provide opportunities for ongoing, mutually beneficial interaction among age groups” (Henkin et al., p. 5).

Seven core values guide these objectives. Dr. Nancy Henkin and colleagues elaborate on these in *Communities for all ages: Planning across generations*, p. 8:

- Interdependence, such that elders and youth are viewed as resources;
- Reciprocity, such that all age groups can rely on each other;
- Individual worth, such that each individual deserves and receives respect and care;
- Diversity, such that understanding is fostered and shared priorities are identified;
- Inclusion, such that policies and programs are designed for all community members;
- Equity, such that advocates for the young and old work together for mutually beneficial policies;
- Social connectedness, such that formal efforts are made to build a shared sense of community.



Figure 29 Daily Activities Shared

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

The United Way of Westchester and Putnam designs and manages a grant making process (applications, goal setting, process reporting, review and approval process), and in consultation with the Benedict Foundation, it makes planning and implementation grants to local not-for-profit organizations for new and expanded initiatives. Discrete programs and community-wide efforts are supported. Short-term planning grants of up to \$10,000 can be awarded, followed by one-year implementation grants of up to \$50,000. Additional funding is often provided, in decreasing amounts over time.

In fiscal year 2006/2007 awards were made for five towns or communities:

- Mount Vernon for Community Wellness;
- Peekskill to assess housing and transportation needs;
- Port Chester for a general assessment;
- Ashburton Neighborhood of Yonkers for intergenerational activities;
- Runyon Heights Neighborhood of Yonkers to assess its cross-generational programs.

In fiscal year 2005/2006 awards supported new programs, program expansion and a regional alliance of educators:

- *JEWEL: Joining Elders with Early Learners*, operated jointly by Mount Kisco Day Care Center and Family Services of Westchester;
- *The SMART Program*, operated by Jewish Council of Yonkers;

- *The Yonkers ComNET Initiative, operated by Groundwork Hudson Valley;*
- *Westchester Alliance of Academic Institutions for Aging Related Studies and Workforce Development, coordinated by the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services.*

Insider Perspectives

Linda Grossman-Collura, JEWEL Coordinator, Mount Kisco Day Care Center & My Second Home

“Intergenerational experiences like this spontaneous unplanned loving moment bring generations together without barriers or boundaries: Ninety year old Carmelita sits alone and silent in a high back chair of the Adult Day Program. Four-year-old Nunzio, accompanied by the Day Care Director enters the center crying and inconsolable. Both the Day Care Director and the Adult Day Program Director feel that maybe Italian-speaking Carmelita and also Italian-speaking Nunzio might have a connection. Carmelita looks at Nunzio, speaks several words to him in Italian and he scurries onto her lap. They exchange several words to each other and they immediately share a moment. Nunzio stops crying, Carmelita smiles and starts to rock him back and forth. No words were needed. After about 15 minutes Nunzio was able to return to his classroom and complete the day. Carmelita sighed with glee and a sense of accomplishment.”

Vernon Brinkley, Director of Community and Economic Development at Groundwork Hudson Valley

“Working with the youth has brought energy and excitement to our mature adults. As Leon Wyka stated, ‘Many of my family and friends tell me I should move from this neighborhood, but I have faith things can be like they once were. Working with these kids, validates that faith in my mind. I believe there’s a positive future for the neighborhood I have lived [in] my entire life.’

“The accomplishments of the ComNET team are beginning to accumulate. The work of last year’s team led directly to a vacant lot that had become a major dumping site being cleaned ... Additionally, a flight of city-owned stairs, built to connect one part of the neighborhood to the other ... had become a haven for drug dealing and other crimes, and fallen into a state of disrepair... [The ComNET team] refurbished and cleaned [it] up. Residents are now using the stairs... For their hard work and dedication, the mayor of Yonkers presented team members with certificates of appreciation.

“Finally, a statement that strikes to the core of what ComNET is all about was best summed up by Jonathon Kraus, one of our youth members, ‘Initially I got involved with ComNET as a way to satisfy my community service requirements for school, but working with the senior citizens has shown me how much they love our community and has given me a different view and deeper appreciation for where we live’.”

Impact

In Westchester this effort has fostered intergenerational / CFAA values, and programs that increasingly reflect them. The programs have helped to advance the role of older adults in the community. Students’ reading scores are on the rise. People of all ages are working together to improve their communities.



Figure 30 Helping with a Project

Evaluation

In 2003 The Philanthropic Group documented and assessed the impact of the first few years of the *Intergenerational Fund / Initiative*, by means of a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. By 2007, each grantee / recipient of *Intergenerational Initiative* grants was required to develop its own specific measures of success. By 2009, United Way began to require each recipient to agree on and track a common goal so that collective impact could be captured. Evaluation measures and tools for individual goals are reviewed periodically and, when appropriate, revisions are suggested in order to help partners reflect progress clearly and better describe some of the “more challenging to measure” results of their activities – such as growth in relationships. “The most impressive result of our Intergenerational Initiative partnership has been the exceptional quality of relationships established among the collaborating partners and the inter-age participants within so many neighborhoods in Westchester,” said Naomi Adler, President and CEO of United Way of Westchester and Putnam.

PREPARATION

Recruitment

Because of the need to recruit older adult volunteers, the Benedict Foundation awarded a separate grant to the Retired Senior Volunteers Program (RSVP) at The Volunteer Center to conduct a recruitment campaign.

Training

The United Way provides assistance to the non-profit organizations and teams; helping them to clarify goals and meet their reporting requirements and timelines.

Dr. Nancy Henkin, the Director of The Intergenerational Center at Temple University, and author of CFAA, brings up to four conference/workshops per year covering such topics as “recruiting, training older adults, creating meaningful volunteer opportunities, fund raising and evaluation” (Henkin et al., p.12). The Intergenerational Center at Temple University is renowned nationally for its leadership in developing, promoting and implementing intergenerational programming. There are extensive websites, www.templecil.org/ and <http://communitiesforallages.org> with information and resources where the visitor can survey an array of its intergenerational program models. Two tool kits are available from The Intergenerational Center: (1) for the CFAA model, *Sustainable Communities for All Ages: A Viable Futures Toolkit*; and (2) for intergenerational programming, *Connecting Generations, Strengthening Communities: A Toolkit for Intergenerational Program Planners*. The Benedict Foundation provided some funding for the *Connecting Generations Toolkit*.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

Collaboration is key to this *Intergenerational Initiative*—as elaborated throughout this chapter.

Budget

The Intergenerational Fund/ Initiative seed money from Benedict Foundation and United Way totaled approximately \$230,000 in 2006/2007. Subsequent contributions totaled \$230,000 in 2007/2008, \$270,000 in 2008/2009, \$240,000 in 2009/2010, and \$240,000 in 2010/2011.

Program Context

Local Factors

Since 2005, the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation and United Way of Westchester and Putnam have provided a major dedicated funding stream for existing and new intergenerational programs. As funding allows, the Intergenerational Initiative seeks to strengthen existing intergenerational programming, as well as to expand the Communities for All Ages philosophy with additional community partners.

Since 2007, the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation has awarded small grants to the Jewish Council of Yonkers to launch and coordinate a Westchester chapter of the New York State Intergenerational Network (NYSIgN), a collaboration of nonprofits that advocates, educates, and communicates the importance of intergenerational programs as a successful model for all community programming.

Critical Linkage

Barbara R. Greenberg guides the philanthropy of the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation. Ms. Greenberg is the president and founder of The Philanthropic Group, a consulting firm for grant makers. In 2001 her organization assisted the Benedict Foundation's Board of Directors in designing a grant making strategy in Westchester, and Greenberg now manages the Benedict Foundation's philanthropic activities.

Promoting the Vision

Dr. Nancy Henkin and colleagues write about the new CFAA paradigm in *Communities for all ages: Planning Across Generations*, saying that it is *age-integrated*. This terminology signals a view that includes, but goes beyond the idea of skip-generations interacting together. CFAA looks at society using "age as a lens" and builds "on existing theories to create a community...that is life-span focused" (Henkin et al., 2005, p. 5). Doing so places individuals at different points on a shared continuum across the span of life, where it is possible to see connections among the different age groups. Social differences can be seen as complimentary rather than competitive and contact can bring different but mutual benefit for all. The paradigm shift comes from a coordinated effort among funders, community leaders, providers, and participants, where people at the grass roots level are seen as important coauthors of the new vision.

CFAA Core Vision

- Support for caregiving families
- Access to quality health care and social services across the life course
- Opportunities for life-long learning
- Institutions with a life-span perspective
- Opportunities for life-long volunteerism
- Planned efforts to promote meaningful cross-age interaction
- Collaboration across systems
- Physical infrastructure that is safe for children and elders

(Henkin et al., 2005, pp. 8-9)

Leading the Way Locally

Barbara Greenberg of the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation and former United Way CEO, Ralph Gregory, launched the Intergenerational Initiative partnership in 2005. Since then, with the incorporation of CFAA philosophy, more of the Initiative's support has gone to partners who work toward broader community change. Under current CEO and President, Naomi Adler, United Way has aligned the Intergenerational Initiative with its overall funding cycle and moved oversight to the Community Impact Committee, which is chaired by a member of the Board of Directors, to signify the importance of the partnership's work. As it raises yearly dollars to match the Benedict grant, United Way shares stories and data that describe the positive impact the partners and the vision are having on participants and communities. In addition, United Way – along with the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation, Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, and JCY/Westchester Community Partners – has been involved in establishing and furthering the local NYSIGN-Westchester networking and advocacy group and its goals.

Provider History

Members of the Andrus family direct the HELEN ANDRUS BENEDICT FOUNDATION, which was created in memory of John Emory Andrus, who established the national grant making Surdna Foundation in 1917. The Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation was established in 1997 to further the family's interest in benefiting older people living in the City of Yonkers and surrounding Westchester County, New York. The mission is to create aging-friendly communities and to mobilize older adults to volunteer their time and abilities <http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/benedict>

UNITED WAY OF WESTCHESTER AND PUTNAM has long embraced the concept of bringing the community together and engaging all groups and constituencies within it. By collaborating with the Benedict Foundation to support and grow the Intergenerational Initiative, United Way is reinforcing its belief in building upon the skills and contributions of each generation. Since 1962, United Way has been advancing the Common Good in order to create opportunities for a better life for all.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

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The National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights (NCGCR)

www.grandparentsforchildren.org/

UPDATED 09.10.2010

<i>Provider:</i>	The National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights is a national coalition with local chapters.
<i>Goal:</i>	The goal of NCGCR is to build and sustain a strong network of individuals, groups, and organizations across the nation "to create one powerful voice...to advocate and lobby for substantial and urgent changes that protect the rights of grandparents to secure their grandchildren's health, happiness and well-being" (NCGCR, n.d.).
<i>Classification:</i>	ADVOCACY
<i>Interaction:</i>	INFORMATION & SUPPORT A "warm line " provides information to callers; support groups are lead by regional directors; its political advocacy arm works to expand the rights of grandparents and kin parenting again.
<i>Location:</i>	NATIONAL OUTREACH occurs from NCGCR Center at School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY.
<i>Participants:</i>	An estimated 10,000, via Internet
<i>Target audience:</i>	Grandparents and other relatives who provide the primary care for their young kin.
<i>Time intensity:</i>	Unlimited, ongoing.

OVERVIEW

Good Practices

Established in 2001, this national network is a model of grassroots advocacy with clearly identified goals and rationale. Planned weekly activities take place via Internet. Every region has its own representative. Outreach to new members is timely. The organization collaborates with other large entities (AARP, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, Generations United) to maximize its objectives.

Social Issues Addressed

"More than \$7 billion is spent each year to rescue children from abuse and neglect, but the effort is a failure. Full use of the nation's grandparents is the only cure for the sickness of foster care...but so far laws and policies do not put time and money into finding grandparents and enabling them to be caregivers" (Wallace, 2004, para.1).

"Regardless of the route that led them to the assumption of the role of surrogate parent, the grandmothers we interviewed frequently shared in common anger, shock, and frustration at a social services bureaucracy that thwarted, rather than assisted them in their efforts to help their grandchildren. Giving up jobs, privacy, leisure time, and the prospects of economic security in later life, the women had almost all made major sacrifices in order to provide a safety net for their grandchildren. And, although they did not expect thanks from the government for the sacrifices they were making, neither did they expect to be mistrusted, stigmatized, and obstructed by a 'bureaucracy of care' that seemed to care little for them, or for their grandchildren" (Minkler & Roe, 1993, p. 64).

Objectives

- To raise political awareness about grandparent caregivers and kin caregivers raising children;
- To lobby for legislative changes that support the decision making authority of kin on behalf of the children they are raising;
- To provide information on rights and how to navigate the legal system;
- To provide grandparent caregivers a venue for peer support.

CORE CONTENT

What Happens

The organization's two-fold advocacy strategy addresses issues at the personal and political levels. Political advocacy occurs through the co-hosting of national and state rallies, by holding conferences, and through its extensive legislative action. Individuals are assisted in many ways: via telephone-based *information & referral*; via the website's information on federal and state laws and court rulings; via web-based support groups organized by local NCGCR chapters; and with the direct services of NCGCR's **Long Island KinCare Connection** for residents of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The KinCare Connection has been in operation since 2005, and is funded by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services. Its social services promote permanency placement for children living with kin caregivers, and teaches strategies on kincare child

raising. Supportive services include individual and family counseling, support groups, educational training, case management, phone counseling and respite activities for both the caregivers and children. The KinCare Connection also creates and maintains relationships with other local service providers.

NCGCR raises social awareness about the important role of kin caregivers--calling for recognition of kin caregivers' critical contribution to the welfare of children and urging removal of institutional barriers that exponentially complicate the work of raising kin. The organization joins forces with other organizations to conduct surveys and lobby for policy changes. It joined with AARP in Albany, New York to petition Governor Pataki to sign into law the *Grandparent Caregiver Rights Act (2003)*, *The Foster Care Law* and the *Caregiver Consent Bill (2005)*. It has also worked with the NYS Kincare Coalition to implement a statewide system of kinship services that in 2010 includes a Kinship Navigator, <http://www.nysnavigator.org/>, and 21 regional kinship programs administered by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. As a result, procedural and rule changes have been implemented that assist caregivers in obtaining public benefits and access to foster care. In 2004 NCGCR collaborated with AARP to conduct a statewide study on *Obstacles in raising grandchildren*. It co-hosted the 2003, 2005, and 2008 *GrandRallies*, held in Washington D.C. where speakers were Senators Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden and Debbie Stabenow.

Email Interview with Executive Director Brigitte Castellano in 2007:

How was NCGCR involved in the push to get legislation passed--the NY Caregiver Consent Act, the NY Grandparents Rights Act, US Appropriations for the Legacy Bill, and the US Kinship Caregiver Support Act?

► All three laws that were passed in NYS were the result of our intense advocacy – meeting with the legislators (trips at least a few times a month to Albany), rallies and support building from other organizations. Senator Clinton's bill was the result of the first DC rally in 2003, which we sponsored with our partners (AARP, CWLA, CDF and GU). We were the only national grandparent organization listed as a partner because we brought in the grandparents from around the country.

► Update in 2010: Current director, Gerard Wallace, Esq. notes that kinship elements in the original federal bill became law in October 2008 with the passage of the federal "Fostering Connections Act". This act funds kinship navigator programs and implements the notice provisions first enacted in New York State. The act also includes many other elements of kinship policy that NCGCR's supported, including kinship guardianship, training for child welfare workers, and others.

How is the Kinship Navigator Program different from or complimentary to what NCGCR offers?

► We work directly with the people that contact us. The NY Kinship Navigator Program is a referral program. The Navigator Program will refer people to our organization or other support organizations around the state.

How do the local chapters work?

► There is a network of forty-one local chapters throughout the country, with twelve regional directors. These chapters are tasked with responding to members in their area and advocating for effective legislation--by holding state rallies and working with their state legislators. Of course, some chapters are more active than others. The executive board has telephone board meetings, but when we have an event they always schedule a board meeting at the event.

How do people get linked with a support group?

► When a member joins they are invited to join the email support group. This allows them to communicate with other members across the country and from other nations as well. It is very helpful for kinship caregivers to realize they are not alone.

Insider Perspectives

- “Many of the half-million children left in foster care could live with their grandparents, but so far laws and policies do not put time and money into finding grandparents and enabling them to be caregivers” (Wallace, 2004, para. 5);
- “Suitable relatives are often not informed of the opportunity to become foster parents – contrary to the mandate under §1017 of the Family Court Act;
- “Grandparents and other caregivers are often unable to obtain prompt medical treatment for children in their care;
- “Inconsistent school district policies regarding school enrollment may prevent enrollment of a child in one district but allow for enrolment in a different district” (Waller & Miner, 1998).
- “Grandparents raise their grandchildren because their grandchildren need someone to care for them. It is rarely what they planned to be doing at this point in their lives and almost always the result of one or several [family] tragedies” (Westheimer & Kaplan, 2000, p. 190).
- “It is important to acknowledge and address the multiple potential threats to *caregivers’ physical and emotional health* [ital. added] caused by the intersecting demands of small children...who have already been hurt in a social environment that puts them at continued risk” (Minkler & Roe, 1993, p. 81).

Impact Successes for kin caregivers:

KINSHIP CAREGIVER SUPPORT ACT (2008) Enacted as the Fostering Connections Act

This act was reintroduced over several years to Congress, championed by then Senator Hillary Clinton—finally enacted in 2008 as the Fostering Connections Act. Four of its provisions are directly related to kinship: (1) Establish a critical information service called the Kinship Navigator Program, to link kin caregivers with a wide range of information about available services and support, not based on income or the child’s welfare status; (2) Establish a Kinship Guardian Assistance Program (KinGAP), to help caregivers who want to become permanent guardians and provide a needs-based subsidy for these caregivers; (3) Ensure notification to adult relatives when a child enters foster care; and (4) “Allow states to have separate licensing standards for kin and non-kin foster parents (The Children’s Defense Fund, 2005 and Kane, 2006). Follow this link for key information:

<http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=website.viewArticles&issueid=118&articleid=2930>

NEW FOSTER CARE LAW (2005)

The law provides more opportunities for children to be cared for by family members by: widening the search for a child’s relatives, including absent parents; requiring the court to ask children (as young as five years of age) who are being removed from their homes about relatives who play a significant role in their lives; expediting the certification process for relatives, or other suitable persons seeking to become foster parents; and creating a new procedure to permit relatives to petition to become foster parents up to 6 months after the notification of the removal of the child.

CAREGIVER CONSENT LAW (2005)

New York’s Governor Pataki signed into this law in February 2005 (*The New Standard*, 2005). The law is “extremely important to grandparents who are caring for their child on an informal basis. New York is one of the few states that did not have such a law” (NCGCR, *News*, n.d.). It grants kin caregivers the authority to make certain decisions on behalf of the children they are caring for by using the newly defined parental power of attorney document. It has been an informal practice for the child’s parent to write a note authorizing the grandparent/relative who has custody (informal custody) to make decisions concerning the child. But being in possession of this legal instrument, in which the parent temporarily assigns authority over to the caregiver, gives the bearer a new level of recognition as to their responsibility and authority. It makes it easier for kin caregivers to execute necessary decisions on such matters as enrolling a child in school,

signing for other school related matters, consenting for routine medical and other health care (Beltran, 2005).

LEGACY BILL APPROPRIATIONS (2005)

Congress passed the *Legacy Bill* in 2003, which mandated that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) support demonstration projects to develop safe and affordable housing for grandfamilies (Langosh, 2003). This is important because elder caregivers living with limited incomes in subsidized housing are sometimes at risk of losing housing due to rules and regulations if they take custody of young family members. The law was implemented in 2005 when appropriations finally came through in the amount of \$4 million dollars. Generations United spearheaded the lobbying and NCGCR provided backup call-in support. It was supported by Senators Landrieu, Stabenow and Obama (Pressley, 2005).

GRANDPARENT CAREGIVER RIGHTS ACT (2004)

This was enacted into law early in 2004. It amends New York “Chapter Law 657 of the Laws of 2003” with two significant changes. First, it “adds a section to the current grandparent visitation statute, Domestic Relations Law Section 72, that will govern custodial disputes”(Wallace, n.d.). The law requires a judge to look at a custody dispute between parent and non-parent in light of “extraordinary circumstances”, which now includes a reference to an “extended disruption of custody”, where the child has resided with a grandparent for two or more years. If this is found to be the case, the law directs the decision of placement to be made based on what is considered to be in the child’s best interest. This is important because it supports a measure of security and stability for the child whose parent may come and go in the child’s life, or be entirely absent but suddenly appear and demand custody based on nothing but consanguinity. Secondly, the new law puts all departments of social service on notice that they must find and notify grandparents of children who are removed by protective services from their parents’ homes. Additionally, they must inform the grandparents of all the options they might pursue to become the child’s kin caregiver, as well as the consequences of not doing so (Beltran, 2004). “No longer will relatives find out too late that children are being adopted out of their families” (Wallace, n.d.).

Evaluation

There is no evaluation protocol in place. Members can readily reach the executive director or other board members by email to communicate questions and concerns. As to training, questionnaires were distributed at the International Summit to evaluate the effectiveness of the conference speakers and the workshops. In terms of recognizing the value of its work, the organization was awarded the Child Welfare League’s Advocacy Award for 2007.



Figure 31 Caregiver Summit 2007: Alexander Sidorenko, Bridgette Castellano, Patti Page, Gerard Wallace, and Beth Finkel

PREPARATION

Recruitment

The outreach of the organization is national, and its network includes local chapters. The membership is made up of caregivers (present and former) who are diverse in age, culture, gender, language and location, employment and economic and marital status. Caregivers connect with the organization at the website.

Training

As a national advocacy network the organization is focused on strategies to build awareness about kin caregiver matters. Training involves organizing international summits for grandparent and kinship caregivers. The first summit, held in Brooklyn, New York in May of 2007, was co-sponsored by the Florida Kinship Center of University of South Florida, Grand Magazine, Stony Brook University, and AARP—in partnership with NCGCR. This summit, “Grandparents Caring for Children: A Global Challenge”, brought together leaders from other nations to discuss the necessity of bringing global attention to the issues affecting kinship caregivers.

A new international organization was created: “The International Alliance of Relative Caregivers of Children” which works with the United Nations to ensure that grandparents and other relative caregivers are recognized and supported in their efforts raising their children’s children.

RESOURCES

Collaboration

The NCGCR leadership collaborates with other organizations to plan rallies and organize conferences. Conference, rally and research partners are: AARP, Child Welfare League of America, Generations United and the Children's Defense Fund. Its newest partnership is with the National Association of Former Foster Care Children of America, Inc. (NAFFCCA)--joining forces for advocacy purposes.

The organization is listed in Grand Magazine, a special-interest magazine for kin caregivers. NCGCR retired Executive Director Brigitte Castellano is on the magazine's board and is editor of the magazine's Kinship Section. Current Executive Director Gerard Wallace, Esq. is the recipient of the 2008 Generations United award for outstanding service to the kinship community and the 2010 Brookdale Foundation Janet Sainer award. He is a co-founder of the NCGCR and a nationally known advocate for kinship families. Mr. Wallace has written numerous legal and policy articles on kinship care, and plans to sponsor a national Kinship Summit in 2010.

Budget

The budget for 2007 was approximately \$200,000.00. The organization receives donations, but the bulk of financial support comes from grants. The Nassau and Suffolk County, New York, Long Island KinCare Connection program is funded by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services. In-kind support for the organization comes from the School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook University. The Dean of the School of Social Work understands and supports the work of kinship caregivers and the NCGCR organization and provides office space and resources.

Looking ahead, the organization will continue with grant writing and expand through international outreach, and intensify its efforts to bring together a national coalition of kinship advocates and service providers.

Program Context

Children raised by non-parent relatives are part of an emerging population group of kincare families, documented in the two most recent U.S. Census surveys. According to the 2000 Census, the number of children living in grandparent headed households increased 30% from the 1990 Census (Goyer, 2005). Additional facts:

- New York State has 143,014 grandparent caregivers. New York City has 83,946 grandparent care- givers (AARP, 2006, September).
- New York has 409,045 children living in households headed by a non-parent relative--almost 300,000 live in grandparent-headed households, with 165,493 having no parent in residence (AARP, 2006, September).
- "Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren...71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty" (AARP, 2006, October).

- Nationwide—six million children --one in twelve--are living in non-parent relative households (AARP 2006, October). 4.5 million of these children are living with their grandparent, who is head of household (Goyer, 2005).



Figure 32 Summit Speakers: Duncan Laki Muhumza, Chris Leaves, Justice Josefine Koeblitz, Anne McLeish, Diane Vivian, Betty Cornelius

Although public policy and court rulings have implemented laws to support kin caregivers since the late 1970's, there has not been a comprehensive approach to assisting this demographic group. There has been a lack of clarity in the law, making room for interpretation according to biased social standards and a bureaucratic notion of parental authority, as if the nuclear or single parent family is the only legitimate family structure. The "system" reasons that because ultimate responsibility for children belongs to parents; no matter the circumstances, it is parents who should be granted the greatest consideration on all matters. Unfortunately, this is not always in the child's best interest--as kin caregivers know all too well. "The formal services on which many depend are a fragmented pastiche of aging, child welfare, and public aid programs not designed for them or their families", wrote Denise Burnette, in *Project 2015*.

Gerard Wallace, Esq., legal advisor for the NCGCR and current executive director, writes that, "Kin caregivers experience...legal difficulties, despite statutes that are supposed to ameliorate them (Waller & Miner, 1998). He has prepared an information chart (posted on the NCGCR website) that shows what the obstacles are for every status of caregiver, be it informal custody, formal custody, legal guardianship, foster care or adoption. The chart indicates such problems as: (1) relatives not being recognized as a resource for

caregiving; (2) lack of authority to give consent on behalf of the child (for example: to register the child for school, or to receive medical care); (3) lack of security regarding the new family configuration; (4) a need for access to financial assistance to support the child; and (5) a need to plug in to resources that will help the surrogate parent cope with the unintended responsibility (Wallace, 2002).

Provider History

The National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights was formed in 2001 as a coalition of kinship grandparents, lead by Brigitte Castellano, an advocate, technical writer, and a grandparent experienced in the full range of legal complications and frustrations pertaining to parenting again.

The challenges for kin caregivers of children generally include economic, legal, health and emotional issues. Of these, the coalition took legal rights as it's subject—because those involved knew that the rights of children needed strong advocacy and support. Officials routinely bury such considerations under the presumption of parental control. When families are restructured in the absence of a parent-child dyad, laws and rules make or break the security and well being of the family, and totally influences a child's life. So, the organization's byline is: "Children from broken homes should not have to lead broken lives!"

Gerard Wallace has been leading the fight to gain caregiver rights on behalf of grandparents and other kin since 1996. As director of the Grandparent Caregiver Law Center of Hunter College, Brookdale Center on Aging, he spearheaded a grassroots effort in New York to gain rights for caregiving grandparents. He is director of the New York State Kinship Navigator, funded by the New York State Office for Children and Families, which provides information to support the efforts of kinship caregivers--about state funded programs throughout counties in New York (New York State Kinship Navigator, n.d.). He has been a consultant to AARP NY and the co-chair of the NYS Kinship Coalition. In 2010, he assumed the directorship of the National Coalition of Grandparents for Children's Rights.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Informants

Brigitte Castellano, Executive Director (through May 2010)

Gerard Wallace, Esq., Executive Director

Interview Dates

May 1, 2006, June 7, 2007, September 3, 2010

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CONCLUSION

This work presents a variety of programs—different in scale, objectives, setting and type of provider, and different in degree to which all standards of good practice are illustrated. Yet each program demonstrates a dedication to linking the generations and nurturing the rich social capital that can develop between young and old in the environment of thoughtful programming. Much goes on behind the scenes for this life-enriching connection to occur. The work is essential.

Attention to detail and to demonstrating good practices not only makes for a good program, it furthers the field. The reward for this work is in being witness to the authentic voices and unvarnished expressions of participants; revealing satisfaction, joy, surprise, value, compassion and belonging.

Intergenerational programs foster the innate creative potential in people. The palpable “magic” that occurs is the connective spark, mutually felt, that opens the door to appreciation, bringing something new and valuable into the world, every day.

This is a small sampling of programs. The constraints of time and the demand for comprehensive and accurate information placed a limit on the number of initiatives presented here. Many worthy programs are not in this first edition. We hope this is only a beginning effort to recognize and share the creative intergenerational work that is developing and being practiced in New York and across the country.

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