

# Penn State **EXTENSION**

AGRICULTURE | COMMUNITY & FAMILY | ENVIRONMENT

## Ideas for Intergenerational Living

### On the Inside:

- **Attaching Your Child to Your Land** (page 2)  
By Nancy G. W. Baker, PA Forest Steward, Bradford County
- **The Golden Opportunity—Today's Grandparents** (pages 3 & 4)  
By Andrea Bressler, M.S., CFCS, Extension Educator, Clearfield County
- **Reports, Resources, and Media Highlights** (pages 5 & 6)



### From the Editor

It's hard to know in advance where the next great story about meaningful intergenerational encounters will come from. The first article of this newsletter comes from *Forest Leaves*, a Penn State School of Forest Resources newsletter about Pennsylvania's privately owned forestlands. In "Attaching Your Child to Your Land," Nancy Baker shares a poignant story about how grandchildren in her family became attached to family-owned forest lands. Her family's forest stewardship plan included a section on creative activities for introducing children to their family-owned woodlands and promoting a sense of discovery and excitement.

The following section, *Golden Opportunity--Today's Grandparents*, consists of two articles, one about passing on family traditions related to hunting, and the other about technological tools for reducing geographical distance between grandparents and grandchildren. The newsletter ends with information on reports, resources, media highlights, and a new intergenerational course at Penn State University.

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Intergenerational Bonds

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## Attaching Your Child to Your Land

By Nancy G. W. Baker, PA Forest Steward, Bradford County

I have a cousin. He has forested land and family. The family lives in Ohio; he has a Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Plan. The plan, designed by a consulting forester with the assistance of the West Virginia Office of the Nature Conservancy, has as an objective the attachment of his grandchildren to this particular piece of Pennsylvania land. An entire section of the Forest Stewardship Plan has activities for six children, now aged 3 to 13; the explanations are detailed, and there's an appendix to help mom and pop along.

For example: (the condensed version!):

- Draw a map; give names to all the places you identify.
- Print an aerial photo of the land (magnify it, perhaps you'll need to tape it together), mount it on cardstock, cut out each field, forest block, house, barn or habitat to make the puzzle pieces. Test your knowledge of where different places lay in relation to each other.
- Go on a scavenger hunt: Assign scavenger lists that require a child to think creatively or to look very closely (e.g., A chewed leaf (not by you!), something that makes a noise, exactly 100 of something, something that reminds you of yourself.....plus twenty-one more!).
- Call in predators: buy a predator call at a sporting goods store and use it to draw in animals for a closer look.
- Watch a thunderstorm move across the landscape; learn to know the clouds.
- Create a wild garden at the stone cabin: using rocks, sticks or logs, mark the garden and walking paths so visitors don't step on the plants. Identify, map, and label the plants so friends can see and learn about the natural diversity of flowers and other plants growing in your woods. Expand and maintain the garden by transplanting plants that are growing abundantly elsewhere on the property, by removing undesirable or competing plants, and by mulching with leaves in the fall to protect their roots through the winter. Keep a bucket at the cabin to water the plants during droughty times. Include wild plant nursery visits, protection from deer, studying woodland spiders and insects.
- Build a bird box, mount it in the correct habitat, and monitor the occupants.
- Identify animal and bird tracks by taking photos in mud or snow; see if you can follow their trails in the winter.
- Keep a journal with notes, pictures, drawings and found objects.
- Sleep outside (remember the bear spray).



What's happened in the seven years since the plan was created? There's a much loved children's map with the Fairy Forest and the Super Hill of Doom. (See drawing on next page.) There's a secret fort. There are piles of sleeping bags and a telescope for watching the stars. There's a little girl who wanted to know what all the different caterpillars were one summer. There are new collections of stones among old collections of moths, the sand mound is seeded with wildflower mix, and it once took a whole weekend to hang up the tire swing on the highest branch. Everyone brings their friends and shares their fun in the woods and fields.

Begin now. Introduce your next generation to your woods; you can make it their "place of initiation." A 3-year-old can identify a cedar tree and a maple—even if she can't tell you what color pants she's wearing. And a 4-year-old can tell the difference between squirrel and rabbit tracks—even if he can't yet read any of the writing on a map. Young children learn through the sounds, scents, and seasons of the outdoors. You will find a wonderful beginning resource guide to introducing your child to your outdoors at <http://richardlouv.com/children-nature-resources>. And if you are attached to your piece of land, share and teach your attachment to those future owners.

(Portions of this article are reprinted, with permission, from: *Forest Leaves*. Vol. 19, #1, Summer, 2009. Quarterly newsletter published by Penn State University's School of Forest Resources.)



*The Children's Map* by Amanda Layman. Copies of this map are laminated and used as placemats for all the cousins' and friends' meals at the farm.

## The Golden Opportunity Today's Grandparents

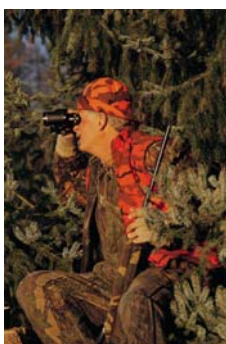
Andrea Bressler, M.S., CFCS  
Extension Educator, Clearfield County

### Share Your Love of Hunting with Your Grandchildren

With the onset of autumn, central Pennsylvania comes alive. The trees display their gorgeous, rich colors, the fields take on a golden glow and hunting is in the air. Some small communities in central PA double their population during hunting season.

Whether you live in central PA, the mid-West or many other parts of the country, hunting is an important tradition for many people. Going back in time, hunting was the mainstay of providing food for one's family. In more recent years, hunting has evolved into a leisure time activity, and a choice for many families.

Grandparents who hunt say sharing the sport with the next generation gives them an important opportunity to pass on an endangered tradition and to participate more actively in their grandchildren's lives. Some grandparents aren't comfortable with all the new electronic technology, but they know hunting and fishing and want to share these activities with their grandchildren.



In my own family, hunting is a tradition and passion. Starting with our own daughter and continuing with the grandchildren, the hunting tradition begins on my in-laws' farm. As a gunsmith, my father-in-law looked forward to sharing his passion. All beginning hunters of the family use the same gun, hunt from the

same tree, and pose for photos with their first deer. As these young hunters mature they are introduced to archery hunting, which is my husband's passion.

Today our daughter no longer hunts, but the family tradition continues. My husband looks forward each fall to hunting with his son and teen-

age grand-daughter. And if you're curious, both these your girls have bagged deer each hunting season. From the photos, it's hard to tell who is more excited – the young hunter or my husband.

In sharing this tradition with your grandchildren, remember to share your own hunting stories, your love of the outdoors, your knowledge of animals and their behavior, and especially advice on respecting firearms. Consider attending hunter safety classes with your grandchild. All of these experiences helped to develop your love of hunting, so share what excites you about this sport.

Hunting's popularity is decreasing across our country. So be sure that your grandchild has the desire to learn this sport. You can tell your grandchildren about hunting and let them experience being in the woods, but if the desire is not there, you should not pressure them.

In the heart of deer country, there are many girls who take up the sport of hunting, so don't limit your knowledge to your grandsons. In today's culture, athletics, peer activities and girl-boy relationships occupy an increasing amount of your grandchild's time. So if you have a grandchild interested in hunting, seize this opportunity before it passes.

In closing, I feel the need to acknowledge those folks who are against hunting. If you don't favor hunting, share your thoughts, reasons, values and concerns with your grandchildren. Then find another opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors with your grandchildren!



## Grandparenting From a Distance

According to a 2002 AARP report, approximately 50% of grandparents live more than 200 miles from their grandchildren. If you want to have more than a drive-by relationship with your grandchildren, it does require some extra effort and perhaps some new skills.

My first suggestion is to purchase a webcam for your home computer. Thanks to Skype (free to download); you can see your grandchildren while talking with them. Then begin to share a variety of creative activities.



Engaging grandchildren in creative activities can provide a forum in which long-distance grandparents can provide a meaningful role. Children's lives change quickly, and the rewards from sharing activities together can last a lifetime.

Some families are avid readers so they have developed a book club via Skype. You can have valuable screen-time with your grandchildren either reading the book together or discussing it after you both have read the book. Allow your grandchildren to select what you'll read and they'll delight in sharing their favorites with you.

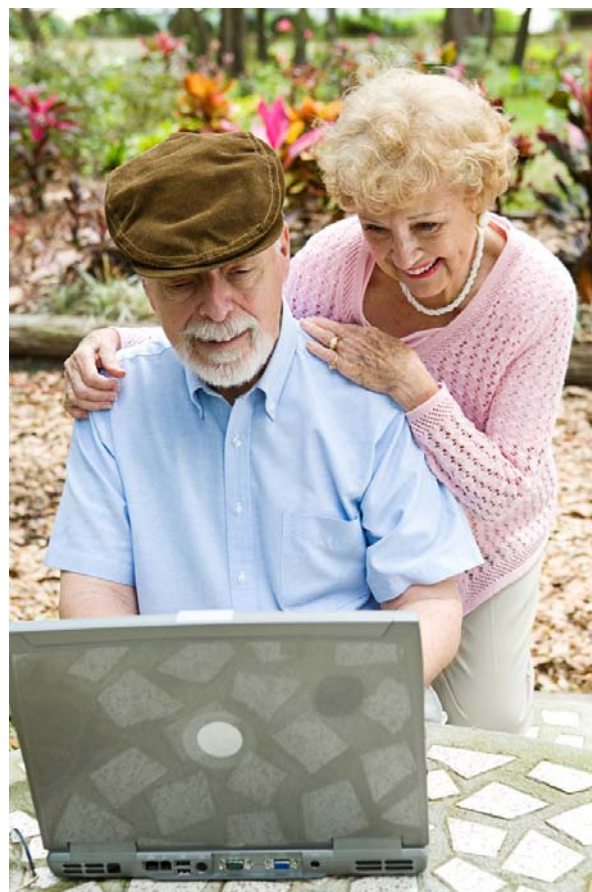
Some families are avid sports fans and have developed fantasy sport leagues with their grandchildren. You can celebrate each other's victories and if more competitive, tease about the losses.

Other families enjoy food and cooking. You can plan a monthly cooking session that begins with an email exchange of a recipe and the grocery list. Then at the designated hour, log onto Skype and being cooking together. Chat and tell stories while cooking and you're likely to learn a lot about your grandchild's world.

I know families who play board games on-line with their grandchildren. Some of these games become on-going games taking a few days or a few weeks. The continuous back-and-forth helps keep the communication going.

True, these methods may not be the vision of grandparenting you hoped for. True, you may prefer face-to-face visits. But if you accept this long-distance relationship and are open to learning new skills and methods to stay in touch, you can develop the meaningful relationships with your grandchildren that you hoped for. And those infrequent face-to-face visits will be even more meaningful.

(Reference: How to Bond from a Distance, [www.grandparents.com](http://www.grandparents.com))



## REPORTS, RESOURCES, AND MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

### Intergenerational Programs and Possibilities within Cooperative Extension

Check out the Web site:

[http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/in\\_focus/ig\\_intensive.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/in_focus/ig_intensive.html) in order to:

- See the agenda and highlights from the pre-conference intensive conducted at the Generations United conference on July 29, 2009.
- Read the *Rationale and Recommendations for Strengthening the Intergenerational Agenda Within Cooperative Extension* “white paper” (2008).
- Find out how to join a listserv of Extension professionals interested in learning about, coordinating and expanding intergenerational work within Extension.

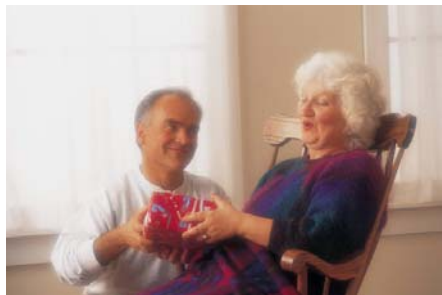
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### US: Close Relationship with Caregivers Slows Alzheimer’s

(From: [Global Action on Aging, July 27-31, 2009 newsletter](#))

A group of Utah State University researchers and colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, Duke University and Boston University have demonstrated that the rate of clinical progression of dementia may be slowed by a close relationship with

one’s caregiver. Started in 2002, the Cache County Dementia Progression Study has monitored 167 partici-



pants with Alzheimer’s disease for three years. The study measured the cognitive and functional status of the participants and the caregiver-reported relationship of the participants. It was found that higher levels of closeness to one’s caregiver were significantly associated with a slower decline in both cognitive and functional domains, especially among persons with spouse caregivers.

### Through a New Lens: Toward a Fundamental Reframing of “the Client”

(From *Generations This Week*, August 14, 2009, Volume 4, Issue 32, Generations United)

According to a new National Assembly white paper, “the economic crisis is an opportunity...to come together across traditional divisions within human services and to rethink artificial and misrepresentative conceptions about those who we serve.” *Through a New Lens: Toward a Fundamental Reframing of the ‘Client’* calls for new policy and coordination to meet the needs of children, youth, and families. The paper reflects the consensus view that ‘family’ is the context in which agencies serving children, youth, families, and communities should think and speak about their work. To download the paper, go to: [http://www.nassembly.org/fspc/documents/ThroughaNewLensFinal\\_000.pdf](http://www.nassembly.org/fspc/documents/ThroughaNewLensFinal_000.pdf).

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### Access American Community Survey Data

(From Generations United)

GU has posted a step-by-step demonstration (<http://www.gu.org/Defin8191322.asp>) of how to access data from the American Community Survey (ACS) on the National Center on Grandfamilies Web page. The U.S. Census Bureau collected the ACS data by conducting annual research on a sample of the U.S. population. The research provides detailed information about the characteristics of *children raised in families headed by grandparents or other relatives* and the *grandparents who are raising their grandchildren*. This new [PowerPoint presentation](#) includes detailed instructions to help you search the ACS database.

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### ICIP Conference in Singapore

International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes (ICIP) Conference, April 26-29, 2010: “Linking Generations - Family, Work, Community.” Visit [www.c3a.org.sg/icip2010](http://www.c3a.org.sg/icip2010) for more information. Abstracts for paper, panel, or poster presentation proposals are due October 15, 2009 and are to be submitted online: <http://www.c3a.org.sg/icip2010/abstracts.html>).

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## REPORTS, RESOURCES, AND MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS—CONTINUED

(From *Caregiving Policy Digest*, a newsletter of FCA's National Center on Caregiving, September 2, 2009. Volume 9, # 17)

### Pennsylvania: Group Establishes Principles for LTC Policies

The Southwest Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging recently published "Principles of the Ideal Long Term Living System for Pennsylvania's Older Adults" and has been distributing the document to members of the state legislature ([http://www.swppa.org/pdf\\_docs/SWPPA\\_futures\\_card.pdf](http://www.swppa.org/pdf_docs/SWPPA_futures_card.pdf)). The principles are meant to serve as a guide against which to measure all future policy options for long-term care. Some of the principles state that the "ideal long-term living situation for Pennsylvania's seniors must be: Person-Centered; Coordinated, with Seamless Transitions through a Complicated Array of Services; Focused on Prevention, Wellness and Early Connection to Home and Community-Based Services; and Vested in a Viable and Competent Direct Care Workforce." For more information, visit Southwest Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging (PHI) at: <http://phinational.org/archives/pa-group-publishes-principles-for-ideal-ltc-system/>.

### Eldercare Difficult for Families as Economy Suffers

(March 18, 2009, Volume 9, #6)

An NPR story that aired on March 9, 2009, examines the financial hardships many families face when they become caregivers, especially when the economy at large is suffering. The report discusses ways in which families - including those directly hit by the current economic crisis - can trim financial burdens when caring for an older relative. To listen to the story, visit NPR at: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101612109&ft=1&f=1003>.

### YFE 845—INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

Penn State's Department of Agricultural and Extension Education is offering an online, three-credit, graduate course: **YFE 845, Intergenerational Programs and Aging.**

Visit <http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Docs/YFE845.pdf> for more details and information on how to register for the course.

Contact Matt Kaplan ([msk15@psu.edu](mailto:msk15@psu.edu)) with questions about course content, or the Continuing Education office (814-865-3443) with questions on how to register.

We're on the Web!

<http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu>

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