



Ideas for *Intergenerational Living*

Penn State Intergenerational Initiatives Advisory Group

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Newsletter Production
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PENNSSTATE



College of Agricultural Sciences
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From the Editor:

This issue of the “Ideas for Intergenerational Living” newsletter begins with two articles that serve as poignant answers to the question, “Why intergenerational?” The first article, written by Hila Colman (a woman in her 90’s) and published in the New York Times last August, is a powerful personal statement about why it is essential to nurture community living arrangements that connect rather than separate the generations.

The second article, entitled, “The Wolves Within,” is a gem that I received from a colleague as an e-mail attachment. Written by an “unknown” author, this touching story of a simple exchange between an elderly man and his grandson reminds us that a good mentor can play an invaluable role in the life of a young person.

The next three articles provide examples of how intergenerational programs can help create more livable communities. First, Christina Mercken, an intergenerational specialist working in The Netherlands, describes the “neighborhood reminiscence” model and how it has been used in Dutch neighborhoods to promote understanding and respect between people of different age, ethnic and cultural groups. As participants share their personal histories and learn that they have much in common with their neighbors, they report feeling less isolated and more comfortable with their neighbors.

The next article describes a special kind of community event called the “Futures Festival.” These events bring community residents of all age groups together to share their views about community development. Through seeing each other’s messages – in the form of murals, models, theatrical displays, photography exhibits, etc. – participants gain a better understanding of their local community and the needs and concerns of other residents.

The next article is written by Nike Liu, a graduate student in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at Penn State University who is program coordinator for an intergenerational program



now being planned at Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center in Centre County, Pa.

Next, we have the “Simple Ideas for Facilitating Grandparent-Grandchild Exchanges at Home” fact sheet. First distributed at the “Celebrating Mid-Life: The Best is Yet to Be” multi-state conference this April at the Oglebay Resort, W.V., this fact sheet presents a few ideas for encouraging young and elderly family members to engage each other, thereby taking some of the “pressure” off of those in the middle generation, particularly those who might have “dual caregiving” responsibilities.

We hope that by presenting such a diverse set of articles, this newsletter issue helps to demonstrate the significance of intergenerational programs for supporting individuals, strengthening family ties, and building better communities.

If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter, or would like to submit articles for future issues, please contact me at (814) 863-7871, e-mail: msk15@psu.edu. Thank you.

Matt Kaplan, Associate Professor
Intergenerational Programs & Aging
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“Young and Old Thrive Side by Side”

by Hila Colman

*(Originally published in the New York Times, August 15, 2001[NL])**

RIDGEWATER, Conn. — As a woman in my 90’s, I have empathy for those who will come after me and live into their 100’s and beyond. They will, I trust, include my grandchildren and great-grandchildren, of whom I have quite a few. I have some thoughts for those planning the quality of life to be enjoyed by this stunningly larger older population to come. The way things are going now, as I see it, the 21st century will be witness to two segments of society - the elderly and the rest of the human race. My word is: Please do not keep them apart.

I have lived through the civil rights movement; I have worked with women trying hard to achieve equality with men; I have marched with gays and lesbians in their fight against discrimination. But alas, I now see a new struggle looming ahead: over segregation by age.

I find it curious to listen to the talk about family values and closer family ties (conjuring up images of four generations living under one Victorian roof) and then read about money being invested in housing for the elderly. Housing for the elderly? Why not teenage housing or young-marrieds housing?

In a society that aims to be inclusive, why should older people be encouraged to live in a separate community? Most senior housing complexes, are sterile -- totally lacking the vitality that a generationally mixed community thrives on. Many people face old age just waiting to die, so society (and developers and the government) hand them a group of “activities” to keep them busy, to keep them occupied among people their own age, out of the sight of children, away from a flourishing community. Too often they have limited access to streets to walk on; shops to visit; churches, libraries, museums and other cultural centers. They are relegated to a life where they see only reflections of themselves, other old people.

Housing complexes ought to be designed for all ages, with some apartments appropriate for older people and others suited to the needs of younger people with families. Young mothers, as well as the elderly, can benefit from what is now offered in many senior complexes, like in-house restaurants, beauty parlors, libraries, and on-site nurses and doctors. And many planned “activities,” can be enjoyed by all ages. A painting class, for example, is more fun when not limited to old people.



For sure, age-integrated housing will not cure the generation gap, but perhaps it is a way to help older people get over adopting judgmental attitudes toward the young — being horrified at dyed hair, baggy clothes, pierced bodies — without ever having a five-minute conversation with any of them. As for young people, it would do them no harm to live side by side with older people, to really see us day by day, recognize that we are still people, men and women who were once as young as they are, and that like us, if they are lucky, they will one day be old, too. We have a lot in common.

We are all just people, and we should be neighbors living on the same street.

*Hila Colman is the author, most recently, of “Forgotten Girl,” a novel for young adults. Reprinted with permission from the New York Times.

“The Wolves Within”

(Author Unknown)

An old Grandfather, whose grandson came to him with anger at a schoolmate who had done him an injustice, said, “Let me tell you a story. I too, at times, have felt a great hate for those that have taken so much, with no sorrow for what they do. But hate wears you down, and does not hurt your enemy. It is like taking poison and wishing your enemy would die. I have struggled with these feelings many times.”

He continued, “It is as if there are two wolves inside me; one is good and does no harm. He lives in harmony with all around him and does not take offense when no offense was intended. He will only fight when it is right to do so, and in the right way.”

“But the other wolf, ah! He is full of anger. The littlest thing will set him into a fit of temper. He fights everyone, all the time, for no reason. He cannot think because his anger and hate are so great. It is hard to live with these two wolves inside me, for both of them try to dominate my spirit.”

The boy looked intently into his Grandfather’s eyes and asked, “Which one wins, Grandfather?”

The Grandfather solemnly said, “The one I feed.”



Source:
A Native American tale --
Author Unknown
(Found on the website: <http://www.barefootsworld.net/wolveswithin.html>)



New Newsletter on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Issues

"Penn State Cooperative Extension at Perry County has launched a newsletter series entitled, "Parenting the Second Time Around." It's directed toward grandparents who are assuming custodial care of their grandchildren. Information is provided to refresh grandparents' parenting skills (e.g., on topics such as discipline, effective communication, and how to select quality childcare) and to address some of the legal issues they face. The newsletter comes out 6 times a year and can be found on the website at <http://Perry.extension.psu.edu/Families/grandparenting.htm>.

For more information, contact Cheryl Miller, Family and Consumer Science Educator, Penn State Cooperative Extension at Perry County, at (717) 582-5150 or via e-mail (cam12@psu.edu).

Generations Together’s 10th International Intergenerational Training Institute June 19, 20, 21, 2002 University of Pittsburgh

\$350 Tuition by 4/19/02 -- \$375 Tuition after 4/19.
\$275 — Group rate: (if 4 or more from your organization)

Generations Together invites you to join with staff and other leaders in the intergenerational field to examine the rebuilding of communities through an intergenerational approach. The Institute features three days of intensive interactive training to help participants develop the skills needed for success in the intergenerational field. Regardless of area of specialty, the Institute offers a broad knowledge of the dynamics of intergenerational programs and research.

Contact: Jim McCrea, Executive Director
Generations Together
412/648-7151; jmccrea+@pitt.edu

Time with Grandparents

by Jane A. Landis, CFLE, M.Ed.
Extension Agent, Dauphin County



Kids and Money

Many parents and grandparents hesitate to talk to kids about it. We figure they'll learn how to handle it, somehow! Unfortunately, it doesn't always work that way. There are several things you can do as a grandparent to help kids learn how to use money wisely.



\$ At a restaurant, help the child check the accuracy of a bill, figure the tip, assist in paying the bill and count the change.

\$ Help your grandchild open a savings account with just a few dollars. Depending on the child's age, he/she can do extra chores for you while at your house to earn money to add to the account.

\$ With older children, look for opportunities to talk about budgets and why even they should have a spending plan. Kids need to know how money is earned, what happens when there isn't enough money, and the difference between wants and needs.

\$ If you enjoy stocks, perhaps visit a stock broker or explore the options on a web site.

Money and how we spend it is a part of an individual's value system. Each set of parents and grandparents will have their own idea on how children should be taught about the use of money. Be sure you are "in sync" with the parents as you discuss money matters.

Pot-O-Gold Fruit Dip

1 8 oz. carton vanilla low-fat yogurt
2 tablespoons orange juice concentrate
sprinkle of cinnamon

Children can help wash and prepare fresh fruit such as sliced melon, banana slices, chunks of apple, strawberries, and/or blueberries. They can also help measure and mix dip ingredients. To avoid a problem with double dipping, give each child his own small bowl of dip.

Variation: Use tangerine, lemonade or limeade concentrate for flavor variety.

Dollar Ice Cream Sandwich Cookies

Peanut butter or chocolate chip cookies
1 pint ice cream (any flavor)
3 ounces of semisweet chocolate chips
1 tablespoon of shortening

Bake cookies; cool. (May use packaged cookies, if desired.) Melt chips and shortening, stirring occasionally; let stand 2 minutes.

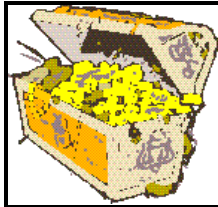
For each ice cream sandwich, press 1 slightly rounded tablespoon of ice cream between 2 cookies; place on jelly roll pan. With a teaspoon, drizzle a dollar sign across the top of each cookie. Freeze until firm.

The Golden Opportunity—Grandparenting (continued)

Buried Treasure

Materials:

- * dishpan, half-filled with sand
- * coins in various dominations
- * spoons



Bury coins in the sand and let your grandchildren use the spoons to dig for “buried treasure”. Be sure to discuss what type of coins they find and their value – one cent, nickel, dime, quarter, half-dollar, and the two-dollar coin.

Note: be sure to cover the table with a plastic cloth to help keep the sand more on the table than the floor.

If it is a nice day, this is a great outside activity on a picnic table.

Make Your Own “Fun” Bank

If you cut a slit in the top of an oatmeal box or shoe box, it can become a bank to save for “special treats” for you and your



grandchild. Cover bank with construction paper that your grandchild has decorated or glue a collage of pictures or paint it a bright color. Decorating it will be as much fun as saving for your treats.

Be sure that both of you contribute to the “fun” bank, even if it is just a few pennies. The treat can be an ice cream cone, movie date, or trip to an amusement park. Have your grandchild help count the money periodically so you know how close you are to reaching your savings goal. This teaches not only the value of money, but gives children an idea of how long it takes to save for a goal.

Mystery Rubbings

Materials:

- * paper
- * colored pencil or crayons
- * small objects to “rub”
(variety of coins, keys, paper clips, etc.)

Hide several coins under a sheet of paper and tape down the corners. Using a crayon or colored pencil, rub over the coins to reveal the imprint and shape of each one. Use both sides of the coins to add to the challenge.

Talk with your grandchild about what you might do with each coin. How are they the same? How are they different? What could we buy with it? How many would we need to buy an ice cream cone?



To expand the game, add other items under the paper. Play a guessing game with younger children to see if they recognize the items. Children can do rubbings themselves and then use the rubbings as a matching game with the real items.

DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows that children and youth are increasingly materialistic, and this is exceedingly so when they have materialistic parents.

--A national study of materialism in 9- to 14-year olds (led by Penn State Smeal College of Business Administration faculty) shows that materialistic youth tend to shop more, save less, and expect their parents to spend more on Christmas and birthday presents.

--It is estimated that by age 10, the average child makes five trips a week either to a store or a shopping center. They are very interested in “new” products and very responsive to advertising and promotional efforts.

What do you think this means in terms of teaching our young people about the value of money?

Neighborhood Reminiscence: A Dutch Approach for Bridging Generations and Cultures

by Christina Mercken
Intergenerational Programming Consultant (The Netherlands)

Many neighborhoods in The Netherlands and in other developed countries are plagued by a lack of social cohesion. It is common to hear reports from citizens that they feel unsafe on the streets and stressed by the fact that they barely know their neighbors. It is against this backdrop of concern that the NIZW (Netherlands Institute of Care and Welfare) has developed a three-year intergenerational promotion program called “A Neighborhood for All Ages.” One of the major goals of this initiative, as in other social programs in The Netherlands, is to develop programs that promote social cohesion; in other words, programs that create a livable community in which everybody feels comfortable and included. Special attention is paid to reducing tensions between people of different age groups.

A notable feature of the NIZW program is the development of the *neighborhood reminiscence* approach. This method uses the memories and stories of neighborhood residents to promote exchanges, mutual understanding and respect between different age and cultural groups. The focus is on the local neighborhood because this is where people live, where they meet each other and where tensions between citizens with different lifestyles, ages and interests might erupt.

The first neighborhood reminiscence pilot program took place in a multi-cultural neighborhood called Lombok in the city of Utrecht. The participating seniors were Dutch, Turkish and Moroccan (the two largest immigrant groups in the Netherlands). The target group for the Turkish and Moroccan seniors were older immigrants who were not well integrated into Dutch society. This means that not all of them spoke Dutch well. Language was an issue with which we had to deal. Although the Dutch and non-Dutch participants had been living in the same neighborhood for thirty odd years, they barely interacted with each other before the program started.

Neighborhood reminiscence is a form of reminiscence, a method that uses triggers (objects, photographs, aromas or other people’s stories) to stimulate memories of the past. With the help of a trained facilitator, participants share their memories and ask each other follow-up questions so they can learn more about each other, including information about cultural backgrounds and neighborhood living experiences.

Neighborhood reminiscence is comprised of three phases, with each phase bringing in more participants. The program starts with senior citizens, the so-called pioneers, who work at including other age groups in the final phase.



This photo is of a Moroccan girl sharing memories with an older Dutch woman during a reminiscence dinner with street youth. During this meal, the young and old participants shared stories of discrimination from the gypsies and the Jews in the past to the Moroccans today. They also shared stories of street behavior in past and present (with the youth of today being surprised by the organized fights between street gangs in the 1940s). And the youth were also surprised by the fact that the different religions never mixed in the past. Up to the early 1960s the Catholics and Protestants didn't even shop in each other's stores! When it comes to that, things have changed for the better. [Photo is from the Neighborhood Full of Stories documentary (Copyright NPS/Vanzetti Producties).]

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(Neighborhood Reminiscence continued)

Learning to Reminisce

The first phase, *learning to reminisce*, is aimed at teaching the participants to recall memories and to discover what a good story is. This is done in small, relatively homogenous, enclosed groups of senior citizens divided by ethnic background. The goal of this phase is the creation of a safe, familiar environment in which the participants feel comfortable enough to exchange stories.

Learning to Exchange Stories

In the second phase, *learning to exchange stories*, the groups are mixed, creating new heterogeneous groups in which all cultural backgrounds are represented. This phase is aimed at teaching the participants to exchange stories on a small and relatively safe scale with senior citizens with different cultural backgrounds.

Learning to Create a Narrative Neighborhood

The last phase, *learning to create a narrative neighborhood*, strives to create a neighborhood where residents of different cultures and age groups exchange stories and memories in a large variety of locations such as libraries, schools, community centers, street corners, nursing homes, and shops. The participants of the first two phases now go into the neighborhood and encourage other residents of all ages and ethnic backgrounds to reminisce and exchange stories. These sessions are organized and publicized widely in the neighborhood, and this helps to draw in a growing pool of active participants.

The outcome is a neighborhood full of stories, where residents of all ages and all cultural backgrounds meet and exchange stories in settings throughout the neighborhood. By creating awareness about how each neighborhood is *full of stories*, residents learn that the histories of the neighborhoods they share can be a source of shared pride and unity. Such a realization, I believe, is crucial to starting an enduring process of social integration in the local community.

Note: A documentary on the neighborhood-reminiscence program was created as a co-production between the Netherlands Programme Services (NPS) and NIZW called A Neighborhood Full of Stories. It will be aired on Dutch National television May 18, 2002 and is available on video (in Dutch). A book with the same name will come out on May 11th. For more information about NIZW (Netherlands Institute of Care and Welfare) intergenerational program A Neighborhood for all Ages, contact Corine van Rijswijk (E-mail: c.vanRijswijk@nizw.nl).

The Futures Festival: Coming Together to Share Hopes for the Future

by Matt Kaplan
Intergenerational Programs and Aging Specialist
Penn State University

A "Futures Festival" is a special event that enables people of all ages to share their community development hopes and concerns. They are geared primarily toward youth and older adults, two population groups that often have limited community participation opportunities. Through murals, models, photographs, theatrical displays, and other communications media, community residents and public officials come together to share their ideas about community development. All participants get the chance to answer (and learn how others answer) the all-important question: "What would you like to see in the future of your community?"

There are various ways to conduct a Futures Festival. It can be organized as a separate event or incorporated into another event, such as an annual fair, for which a strong local tradition already exists. This latter approach may be more feasible in rural areas where people have greater

geographical distances to travel. In either case, it takes a team effort to conduct a successful Futures Festival event. At the core of the team, there needs to be an official event coordinator and a home base for operations.

The key to running a good Futures Festival event is to plan it carefully and to involve many people. The event planning process takes place over a 2-4 month period and involves the following steps.

Step #1: Organize an event coordination team.

The first step is to establish an event coordination team. Members of this group will be responsible for recruiting participants, exhibitors, and presenters; publicizing the event to the media; and coordinating, facilitating, and evaluating activities on the day of the event. Try also to recruit planning professionals working at the community, county, and municipal levels as well as volunteers with skills and interests in environmental design and development (perhaps retired architects, city planners, construction managers, etc.), community history, photography, public affairs, etc.

(continued on next page)

(Futures Festival continued)

Step #2: Determine event location and date.

- (a) *Location:* The event should be held at an accessible park or in a large, spacious, indoor facility.
- (b) *Date:* Choose a date that will give the event coordination team plenty of advance planning time. Also, choose a time that allows those who work to attend (e.g., Saturday morning).

Step #3: Recruit exhibitors/presenters and generate community interest and excitement.

Every group and organization with something to say about local community development or quality-of-life issues should be encouraged to develop some sort of exhibit or presentation for the Futures Festival. To get the word out, develop and distribute a “call for presentations” flyer. Place postings on local bulletin boards and notices in community organization newsletters. Outreach efforts might also include presentations at meetings of various school and community organizations. Personal social networks should also be used to reach out to local educators, community organization administrators, human service professionals, and local development agency administrators.

For the Futures Festival event itself, try to include a range of activities that allow participants to express their ideas, concerns and hopes for the future of their community. Here are some examples:

◆ **Mural painting**

Have facilitators engage participants in group discussions and preliminary sketching exercises aimed at illustrating ideas for community improvement. As they develop their mural plans, encourage participants to consider recreation, education, housing, shopping, and city services, and to accommodate the needs and desires of residents of all ages in the themes of their murals. Also encourage participants to be creative in their planning in terms of visualizing new community settings, transportation systems, services, and industries.

◆ **Model building**

Models enable participants to develop three-dimensional models to display their community development visions.

◆ **Theatrical displays**

Invite participating groups and organizations to develop theatrical skits for display at the Festival. These skits could dramatize quality-of-life concerns, highlight new

ideas for community improvement, arouse feelings about places of sentimental value, and promote a sense of civic awareness and responsibility.

◆ **Photography exhibits**

Encourage participating groups to display photos, old and new, of favorite landmarks and other locations of significance. Images of existing and desired future settings can be taken from newspapers, magazines, drawings, and existing unpublished photographs, and woven into collage-like displays.

◆ **Display plans for new facilities**

County, regional, and municipal planning officials and business representatives can use the event as an opportunity to inform the public about future developments. Displays of sketches and models of planned facilities would be appropriate.

◆ **Traditional games (for display and play)**

Encourage active older adult volunteers to bring in traditional games (i.e., games they played when they were young). If appropriate, have materials on hand so that children and youth can build their own games.

◆ **Community study**

Encourage community agency representatives and citizen groups to display charts, tables, and summary lists derived from their community investigation activities. This is a good opportunity to share research results and the outcomes of community action campaigns.

The Futures Festival does not have to be a one-shot deal; there are several key follow-up actions that can be taken after the event to keep residents interested and involved in their community. Write a post-event press release to highlight community visions. This can lead to media coverage to create more about residents’ hopes and concerns.

Finally, if there is interest in establishing the Futures Festival as an annual event, a good time to solicit agreements and commitments to plan next year’s event is during the weeks following the event, when people are still thinking about all the fun they had at the event.

The full Futures Festival Facilitator’s Guide is on the Web at <http://AgExtEd.cas.psu.edu/FCS/mk/Futures.pdf>.

The Shaver's Creek Intergenerational Outdoor School Initiative

by Nike Liu, Graduate Student, Program Coordinator
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education

A new intergenerational program is taking form at the Shaver's Creek Environmental Center. The plan involves recruiting older adults who love being around nature and children and involving them in the Center's "Outdoor School" program. Based on a partnership between Penn State Cooperative Extension and Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, this pilot project aims to demonstrate how older adult volunteers can have a positive impact on what and how children and youth learn when they participate in environmental education programs.

The Shaver's Creek Environmental Center (SCEC) is one of the biggest environmental centers in Pennsylvania. The Outdoor School is one of many programs offered popularly by SCEC. Activities of this unique outdoor experience include natural history discussion, lake walks, and community mapping. Each year, hundreds of 5th and 6th grade children participate in this 4-day outdoor learning experience. The Shaver's Creek Intergenerational Outdoor School program aims to bring young people and older adults together not only to learn about the natural environment, but also to gain insight into each others' lives, including their values for caring for the environment. For example, as participating children and older adult volunteers take a planned nature walk together, they will examine evidence of ways in which humans influence the natural environment – e.g., by building trails, planting shrubs, vandalizing trees, etc.

We believe that, as a society, we need to nurture such opportunities for dialogue about the importance of taking care of the natural environment. Once we have open and honest dialogue about what it takes to care for our natural environment, joint action is not likely to be far behind. We hope to start a trend in environmental education centers, where older adults regularly join children and youth in their environmental learning and service experiences.

Senior Adult Volunteers Needed for Shaver's Creek Program: The Intergenerational Outdoor School is a weeklong program beginning this Fall. As part of this new intergenerational environmental program, older adults will be asked to volunteer their time and experience for about 4 hours a day in the weekdays of either Sept. 16th or Oct. 7th. The program is currently looking for any individuals age 55+ who are willing to explore and discuss nature with children. Past experience and educational background are NOT necessary. Meals and a short training will be provided. Seniors interested in sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm on related topics with children are encouraged to join the program.

If you are interested in participating in this program, please attend one of the following information sessions at 301A Agricultural Administration Building, Penn State University campus.

- *(Tue.) July 23, 2002: 3:00-5:00 p.m.*
- *(Thu.) July 25, 2002: 10:00-12:00 a.m.*
- *(Thu.) August 15, 2002: 6:00-8:00 p.m.*
- *by appointment*

*For more information, please contact
Nike Liu at 863-7877.*

**For more information on the Penn State Intergenerational Program, please check our Web site:
<http://AgExtEd.cas.psu.edu/FCS/mk/menu.html>**

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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