



Ideas for *Intergenerational Living*

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Compiled by Intergenerational Strategies, Long Island, NY

Newsletter Production

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From the Editor:

This summer has been an active and exciting one for all who are interested in promoting intergenerational exchange and unity. The “International Consortium of Intergenerational Programs” held a very successful second biennial conference at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada in June. I also had the privilege of participating in conferences in Singapore and Japan that served to strengthen local intergenerational programs and networks.

This issue of “Ideas for Intergenerational Living” shares news and reports from Generations United, Intergenerational Strategies and Child Trends. You will read of new resources and growing evidence attesting to the benefits of intergenerational engagement. Please also take note of the “Golden Opportunity—Today’s Grandparents” insert which, as always, we invite you to reproduce and distribute to grandparents in your area.

If you have an intergenerational program or perspective that you would like to share with others, please consider doing an article for our newsletter. Just drop me a line (814) 863-7871; e-mail msk15@psu.edu. Thanks. ❖

Matt Kaplan, Associate Professor
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Announcements

**Generations United to Create National
Virtual Resources Center Designed to
Reach Across the Generations**

For Immediate Release
July 30, 2004
hscarupa@childtrends.org

For more information:
Donna Butts
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Generations United today announced a national initiative designed to reach across generations and strengthen communities through a *virtual resource center* that will connect and encourage intergenerational programs and strategies. The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, provided \$258,000 to fund the three-year project.

The virtual resource center would serve as a national database to link local intergenerational programs and professionals, while serving as a catalyst to strengthen and expand the collaboration of national and local organizations that address issues affecting the generations that are often cast aside - the oldest and youngest.

“Intergenerational programs are emerging as important, effective vehicles to help communities address critical issues such as literacy, preparing the future work force and increasing cross-cultural understanding,” said John Rother, chair of Generations United’s board of directors and Director of Policy and Strategy for AARP. “The commitment of the Verizon Foundation will significantly increase the support available to programs throughout the country that work to involve people of all ages.”

The four-phase project will begin immediately by identifying existing intergenerational programs and resources through a survey of Generations United’s member network, which represents thousands of organizations throughout the country. This information will be used as a building block for the virtual resource center, which will eventually include program models, promising practices, publications, studies, and pertinent research.

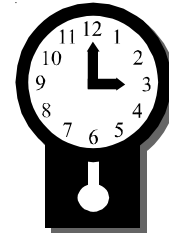
Additionally, online technical assistance will be offered in the form of scheduled chats with experts, discussion groups, and courses designed to build

(Continued on page 6)

Today's Grandparents

Written by: *Andrea Bressler, CFCS, M.S.*

*Extension Educator, Penn State Cooperative Extension
Clearfield County*



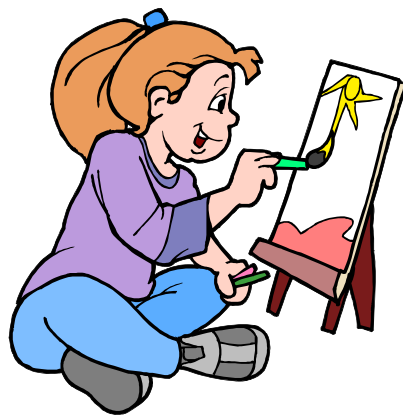
Helping Your Grandchildren Succeed in School

All grandparents want their grandchildren to do well in school. Your grandchild doesn't have to be the smartest child in the class to succeed in school. Mastering reading, math, and other academic subjects is clearly an important part of your grandchildren's education. School is also a time for children to learn how to value themselves and how to get along with others –valuable skills to have. Your grandchildren are more likely to do well, both academically and socially, if they feel confident about themselves.

Feeling confident is important for school success. Children who are sure of themselves are less likely to give up when an assignment is hard. Confident children are not afraid to raise their hands, are more willing to ask questions, and are more likely to try again when they make a mistake. Because self-confident children believe they will succeed, they tend to be more successful.

Unfortunately, some children lose self-confidence when they have trouble in school. How can you help your grandchildren feel confident that they can succeed in school? Here are some ways to help your grandchildren build their self-confidence.

Encourage your grandchildren to try new things. Help them find activities that they enjoy. Encourage them to take small steps toward mastering something new. Help them see the small ways that they are succeeding. If your grandchild is taking art lessons, point out the new shapes that he has learned to draw or the colors he created.



Help children handle mistakes calmly. Nobody succeeds at every activity the first time. Failure is a part of life, and children need to know how to handle it. React calmly when your grandchildren make mistakes. Focus on what they learned from the mistake, and help them figure out how to do better in the future. Encourage children's efforts by saying things like, "You worked really hard to paint that picture."

Make sure activities are age-appropriate. Choose activities that are just challenging enough for children to learn something new, but not so difficult that they will become frustrated because they can't finish. Give children chances to feel successful. Know your grandchildren's abilities, and pick activities that fit them. Start with easier activities, such as a 5-piece puzzle. Once she has mastered the easy activities, you can move on to harder ones, such as a 20-piece puzzle.

Don't compare your grandchild to other children. This is easier said than done! Children have different talents and abilities. Celebrate each child's abilities and achievements, and pay attention to how they have improved over time. Instead of encouraging children to compete with each other, encourage them to improve their "personal best."

Ask leading questions. Telling children what to do may be easier and faster, but it doesn't teach them how to accomplish things on their own. Questions can help children think about the next step or different ways to reach a goal. If your grandchildren want to build a city of blocks, but don't know how to get started, you might ask them what kinds of buildings will be in their city.

The most important thing to remember is that children need to feel capable and lovable. When children feel sure of themselves, they can achieve almost anything! ❖

Doing It Together

Sharing things with others is a great way to help others and feel good about you at the same time. People living in neighborhoods need many things, but most of all they need friends. How can you and your grandchild show others you care? There are many ways you can share what you have with others in your community.

- Sort through the clothing your grandchild has outgrown. Groups like Salvation Army and Goodwill Stores collect clothes for others. Your grandchild will enjoy helping to take clothes to these centers. You can also have your grandchild sort through her toys and select the ones she no longer plays with.
- Most communities have food banks that provide emergency food to families. A donation of food and a trip to the center is a good way to see what others in your community are doing.



- The local S.P.C.A. might have a need for cat, dog food, or newspaper. Telephone them first to see what their current needs are.❖

Who's Taking Care of the Kids? Often It's Grandma; Grandpa, Too

Report from Child Trends

For Immediate Release

July 27, 2004

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Contact:

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Washington, DC – Finding convenient, trustworthy, affordable child care presents a challenge for many parents, but some parents seem to find a relatively easy solution: their own parents.

A new research brief published by Child Trends shows that close to half (47 percent) of grandparents with young children living nearby report providing some type of child care assistance to their adult children. And though grandmothers are more likely (54 percent) to provide this care, roughly one-third (38 percent) of grandfathers do so as well.

“The fact that so many grandparents provide some type of child care to their grandchildren is a strong marker of the lifelong patterns of support between parents, children, and grandchildren,” says Lina Guzman, a research associate at Child Trends, who authored the brief. “This pattern of strong intergenerational ties is in keeping with a growing body of research documenting the positive side of American family life,” adds Kristin A. Moore, president and senior scholar at Child Trends. “Unfortunately, this positive side is often underreported or ignored.”

The brief presents a statistical snapshot of grandparental child care in American families, including who provides this care, what type and how much is provided, and what some of the financial benefits of such care are. Among the specific findings:

- Among grandparents with young grandchildren living nearby, those who provide care are spending a considerable amount of time providing child care for their grandkids – an average of 23 hours a week.
- Employed grandparents are more likely to provide this care than grandparents who do not work or are retired – 54 percent versus 42 percent, respectively – indicating that many grandparents appear to be juggling both work and child care responsibilities.
- Almost one in five families pays grandparents for the care they provide their young grandchildren.

Child Trends, founded in 1979, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families by conducting research and providing science-based information to the public and decision-makers.❖

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Benefits of Intergenerational Programs for Children and Youth

Compiled by Intergenerational Strategies, Long Island, NY

Editor: A nice find on the Internet is the Web site for Intergenerational Strategies, a charitable, nonprofit organization in Long Island, New York. See: <http://www.igstrats.org/index.html>. The organization is run by Paul Arfin, who serves as President and CEO of the organization. With Paul's permission, the following is a summary of Intergenerational Strategies' research into some of the benefits of intergenerational programs for children and youth.



- A 1995 study found that mentored youth were less likely to engage in violence and drug use, are more likely to attend school and improve academically, and have healthier social relationships (Source: Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, "Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters." Public/Private Ventures.)
- The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (2000), the largest survey of adolescence ever completed in America, reports "the connection to a caring adult other than a parent was found to be one of the highest rated protective factors for youth."
- Manheimer reports that intergenerational projects generate increased tolerance, comfort, and intimacy between generations and dispel negative stereotypes of aging and old age. (Source: "Generations Learning Together," in *Intergenerational Approaches in Aging: Implications for Education, Policy and Practice*, Hawthorne Press, 1997, pp. 79-91.)
- Larkin, Newman, and Manheimer (1997) report that intergenerational programs build common bonds between generations by facilitating the discovery of shared life themes, challenges, and problems. (Source: *Intergenerational Studies: A Multidisciplinary Field*, Journal of Gerontological Social Work.)
- American youth who completed an intergenerational course on aging with a community-based service component had more positive perceptions of older adults and were more knowledgeable of aging than were students in a comparison group (Knapp & Stubblefield, 2000). (Source: In "Changing Students' Perceptions of Aging: The Impact of an Intergenerational Service Learning Course" in *Educational Gerontology* 26, pp. 611-621.)
- Canadian school children demonstrated enhanced literacy development following an intergenerational mentoring program (Ellis, Small-McGinley & Hart, 1998). (Source: *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 44(2), 149-162.)
- Research funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1996) found that children who participated in Across Ages, an intergenerational mentoring program, had more positive changes in knowledge and reactions to drug use; significant decrease in alcohol and tobacco use and attitudes; decreased school suspensions; and better school grades and attendance than students who were not in the full Across Ages program. The study also found that there was significant improvement in attitudes toward school and the future; significant improvement in attitudes towards adults in general, and older adults in particular; and improvement in sense of personal well-being. (Source: "Understanding Substance Abuse Prevention – Toward the 21st Century: A Primer on Effective Programs," Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, unpublished document.)
- Preliminary research conducted by the Center for Intergenerational Learning's Abuelas y Jovenes (2002), a drug prevention and in-home support program in which older women serve as mentors to Latina pregnant and parenting teens, shows positive results in the areas of fewer teen pregnancies, better school performance and attendance, higher rates of high school graduation, more employment, and increased likelihood to find satisfactory housing. (Source: Interview with Dr. Andrea Taylor, October, 2002.) ❖

(Continued from page 2)

intergenerational programs to address important community issues. The project will include outreach to new audiences and markets that have the potential to integrate this intergenerational approach.

Nationwide, the Verizon Foundation last year awarded 22,000 grants totaling about \$70 million to charitable and nonprofit agencies that focus on improving basic and computer literacy, enriching communities through technology, and creating a skilled work force. The Foundation uses its resources in the United States and abroad to develop partnerships in technology and



connect them with organizations serving the needs of diverse communities, people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and the economically and socially disadvantaged. For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizon.com/foundation.

Generations United is the only national membership organization focused

solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. For more information on GU, visit www.gu.org. ❖

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For more information on the Penn State Intergenerational Program, please check our Web site:
<http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu>

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Announcements

Civic Ventures Publication on Older Adults and After-School Programs

Civic Ventures' Experience Corps has just published a new "toolkit" entitled, "Experience After School" (see <http://www.experiencecorps.org/news/afterschoolreport/index.html>) which is designed to help community organizations engage more older adults in after-school programs. This new resource was released at an all day meeting in San Francisco on June 24th that brought together statewide leaders from after-school programs, aging, and service organizations to explore the potential of older adults as volunteers or paid staff. ❖

Web Resources

(Highlighted in Coming of Age - The Civic Ventures Newsletter, May 2004, H. R. Moody, Editor)

Experience Corps. Can helping kids also improve retirees' health? For an evaluation study of the Experience Corps model, see the recent article by Linda Fried and colleagues, "A Social Model for Health Promotion for an Aging Population" available at: <http://jurban.oupjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/81/1/64>.❖

Senior Volunteerism. For an article on "Reimagining Work: The Next Chapter" see: http://www.asaging.org/at/at-244/IF_Reimagining_Work.cfm.❖