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INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by
Marguerite F. Maines

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division
of Rowan College in Public Relations
1995

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved

5/4/95

ABSTRACT

Marguerite F. Maines

Intergenerational Programs in the Public Schools,
1995, Thesis Advisor: Dr. Don Bagin, Public
Relations.

The major purpose of this study was to research intergenerational programs in the public schools. The research was undertaken to establish whether intergenerational programs improve community attitudes and benefit the school systems that provide these programs. A broad base literature search and a database search were conducted. Numerous letters were written to school systems, state and county agencies, volunteer groups, and senior citizen groups that have instituted programs. The responses collected resulted in a compilation of successful programs that can be used by superintendents, community coordinators, and school public relations directors.

Several major conclusions were drawn from this study. Activities that brought senior citizens into the schools were more effective in building committed involvement. Successful programs followed similar planning strategies. Programs in which the benefits surpassed expectations were ones that were ongoing and ones in which participants were actively involved. Programs resulted in more positive attitudes and support for schools.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Marguerite F. Maines

Intergenerational Programs in the Public Schools,
1995, Thesis Advisor: Dr. Don Bagin, Public
Relations.

The major purpose of this study was to assess intergenerational programs in public schools. Research was conducted to examine and evaluate benefits school systems could receive from instituting intergenerational programs. Studies indicate well-planned programs that include active involvement by the participants result in support for schools and their pursuits.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to thank her family and friends for their constant support and encouragement throughout this project.

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Chapter I

Need

In A Reasonable Life, author Ferenc Mate points out that strengthening our school systems lies not in changing what schools are doing within their walls, but by creating community involvement. Meaningful connections of adults and students throughout the community are recommended by Mate and the Carnegie Report. In Mate's own words:

There is no doubt that the job of revamping our education system is urgent and enormous, but contrary to much current thinking the solution does not lie in leaner school curriculums, interschool competition, bringing more computers into classrooms or even in supplying packaged ten-minute news broadcasts complete with two minutes of much flashier commercials. That is merely cleaning windows when the building is falling down. A Department of Education report lays blame on both parents and the community for being uninvolved in our children's education. And the recommendations of the Carnegie Report are equally broad-based ranging from job sharing and more flexible hours for parents, to less mindless children's television programs, more parks, kids' tours for a broad range of stimulation, closed streets for safe play, and more adult contact and involvement. ¹

Mate and the Carnegie Report firmly believe the future of our schools depends on adult involvement. To recruit the greatest number of adult volunteers, where better to begin than the group that not only will outnumber all other age groups at the turn of the century, but also those who have more time to devote to volunteer work - senior citizens.

The first of the "baby boomer generation" will become senior citizens by the year 2000. Seventy-six million people are in that group.

The implications of the growing number of Americans age fifty-five and older are

¹ Ferenc Mate, A Reasonable Life (New York: W.W. Norton Inc., 1993), 154-155.

numerous and powerful. As the shift in population moves toward a larger percentage of older people, their voting power and views will have the potential to shape the social, political, and economic decisions of our country. “ ‘ The aging of the population tilts the landscape of political life toward the aged and away from children. It makes it harder to mobilize resources to invest in our future through our children. For example, schools are funded on the ‘remainder’ method - we give them what’s left over after we’ve paid for everything else - and an aging population puts a lot more stress and strain on state and local budgets.’ Senator Daniel Moynihan has commented.”²

The changes that could result if this group wields its power should be of concern to the institutions that depend on public support to function most effectively. J.J. Wuertner, executive director of Americans for Generational Equity (AGE), noted, “Seniors’ support is essential for assistance for the young. In addition to growing proportionally, the sixty-five to seventy-four age group has the highest rate of participation in elections. So in any political confrontation between young and old, the old win hands down.”³ One striking example of the power of public opinion and the money being allocated to seniors instead of the youth and their schools is in Holyoke, Massachusetts. “The educational system here collapsed this year. One-third of the teachers were laid off. More than forty students have been jammed into some classrooms. Students often share textbooks. But the majority of Holyoke’s voters don’t seem to care. Twice in six months they have rejected tax increases for the schools even as they approved increases for the police and fire departments and for the senior citizen center. Some voters are angry at school administrators, others are burdened by taxes and disgusted with modern education. But interviews with a number of Holyoke residents also indicate a more fundamental problem. The town’s mostly working class voters, many of whom are aged and childless, are alienated from its public school children. Michael Donahue, a retired municipal court judge who publishes a local newspaper, says it wasn’t a vote against the children; the voters just want the administration to be accountable. He contends the administration does not fully disclose finances and doesn’t teach what’s needed. We have to get back and teach basic things such

² K. Dychtwald and J. Flower, *Age Wave* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990) 61.

³ Richard Louv, *Childhood's Future* (San Diego: Anchor Books, 1990) 300-301.

as respect for people and property.”⁴ Another forewarning that political control of the schools is imminent is voiced in the study Educational Renaissance. “In the 1990’s, both parents and citizens without children in the schools will take an even more active role in formulating curricula, establishing teaching methods, hiring and firing teachers and many other functions that until recently have been the province of the school staff. This trend can be seen clearly in the Chicago public schools, where the cause of local control has put parents and disinterested citizens on the governing boards of each institution. This change from professional to political control of the schools will quickly spread to districts throughout the nation. Those educators who still retain their autonomy will soon grow accustomed to having their policies debated, often acrimoniously, in local elections, town meetings and other public forums. They will have to accept that they can no longer act, even in small matters, without the advice and consent of the community.”⁵

Many factors contribute to the intergenerational conflicts as well as the conflicts between the community and the schools. Since the schools are presently dependent on the voting power of the community, a proactive plan should be in place and operational to counteract the distrust and misconceptions that groups have for each other. A need exists to develop a public relations plan to produce an informed and cooperative relationship between schools and the community, especially the senior citizens. Whether it is taking information and programs to the senior citizens or bringing the senior citizens into the schools, the senior citizens and schools must work together to build a mutually beneficial community. Schools need to be marketed as a valuable commodity to gain community support for budgets and to interest volunteers to participate.

The plan should include information, both reporting to the community what is happening in the schools and encouraging community members to participate in the schools. As noted in the pr reporter, “Communication is not an end in itself, but a process. Information, awareness, and sensitivity are way-stations. The desired outcome is

⁴ “Voters Reject Tax Increases,” Wall Street Journal, 25 November 1991.

⁵ Marvin Cetron and Margaret Gayle, Educational Renaissance: Our Schools at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991) 210.

motivating behavior.”⁶ The schools need to motivate seniors to support the schools. Reporting provides opportunities for both the school population and senior citizens to obtain accurate information. Reporting also provides for those who are or choose to be homebound. The observations and shared experiences have many positive outcomes for both seniors and schools. It gives seniors a connection with younger people and gives them something constructive to do that makes them feel valued at a time when many people begin to believe their talents are no longer needed. Furthermore, it is noted in Age Wave that “national studies have repeatedly shown that as people grow older, they have a marked tendency to become more interested in what they give to others than in what they get. Our elders are a vital national resource, with many wishing to give.”⁷ Thirty-five percent of Americans over 55, according to an AARP survey, do volunteer work to keep active. AARP has more than 350,000 volunteers in its own network.⁸ The schools benefit by having more volunteers. With budget defeats and less available money, much aide time has been cut and the help of volunteers can relieve added burdens. The children’s interaction with older people can help them build acceptance and make first hand connections to become more aware of the value of ideas born from experience. As in Seattle and Miami, where senior citizens work directly with children in the classrooms, intergenerational programs in the schools can improve education, reduce teacher isolation, increase schools’ ties to the community, and most importantly, reduce the isolation of children.⁹ Psychiatrist James Comer, director of the Yale Child Study Center, is one of the leading proponents of the school as a community hub and children’s need for adult models. Frank Larkin, a full-time consultant for intergenerational programs to business, industry, government and education, states, “Students and older adults need to learn the facts about aging and each other. Together, they can tackle local problems and pass on traditions, values and cultures. It is an effective way to combat ageism, age-segregation and cultural-divisiveness.

⁶ “12 Trends that are Steering Public Relations Practice,” pr reporter, vol.36, no.11, March 15, 1993.

⁷ Dychtwald, 81 -82.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

⁹ *Loiv*, 362.

Becoming more knowledgeable about each other, the generations will mix better and cast more informed votes on issues affecting the young and old."¹⁰

School systems must institute community involvement programs for other reasons, also. Several state legislatures, including New Jersey, are mandating community involvement in school decisions. Certain state and federal programs will provide financing only if a community involvement plan is in place.

The taxpayers' demands for schools to be accountable for the dollars they spend is an obvious reason for implementing a plan. The community should be shown how the decisions are made as well as witness firsthand what the schools' needs are. Opening the schools has the potential to let the taxpayers see how the money is spent. However, if the selection of how to open the schools is not done with planning and critical assessment, it has negative potential also. Thus, the selection of the most appropriate program to meet a particular district's needs is critical.

This research presents intergenerational programs from all over the country that have been implemented and have succeeded. This information was obtained from school board associations, departments of education, and data bases such as ERIC and ASA. Each entry includes the technique, activities, results, recommendations and considerations, time frame, and location.

Various programs that were found through data searches and responses from organizations and experts were analyzed and organized. Appropriate programs were entered into the format previously described. Programs include the district-wide and school-based plans to reach out to the community and project samples that bring the seniors into the schools as partners in education.

The programs are in an outline format to accommodate readers who want to choose programs that fit their needs. The representative models of intergenerational programs can be used by superintendents, community coordinators and school public relations directors.

¹⁰ Frank Larkin, "Building Bridges with SCAN," SCAN Newsletter (January 1995).

Limitations

The programs selected are limited to the ones that can be used effectively in suburban public school districts similar to those in Camden County, New Jersey. When available, a contact person for each project was listed.

Definitions of Terms

community:	suburban, population under 50,000 people
non-parents:	voting-age citizens who have no direct contact with the schools in their community through a child
senior citizens:	community members over the age of 55 who are non-parents and eligible for a fixed income
senior citizens as educational resources:	senior citizens who provide information and experience that enhance the already established educational program

Chapter II

Related Research

In the past fifteen years, numerous books and articles have been written about intergenerational relationships and programs. Library searches were conducted for books and periodicals at Rowan College, at the Camden County Library in Haddon Township, at the Haddonfield Library and at the Cherry Hill Library. Also, two searches of Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) systems at Rowan and a search of Dissertation Abstracts Online were conducted. These searches provided one hundred and ten references. Many of these articles described specific programs that are presently in place.

The Economy

The economy from 1985-1995 has been typified by lost jobs, including a segment of the population just nearing retirement age, and a constantly rising cost of living. In addition, in New Jersey, the school funding formula was altered, resulting in significant losses to suburban districts.¹¹ To continue to offer quality education in districts with growing student populations and in all districts that strive to remain current with technology and research, tax levies for education need to rise.¹²

As the population ages and school enrollments shrink, those tax levies lead to conflicts between young and old. Fixed incomes and tax levies result in financial sacrifice

¹¹ Vanessa Phelan, "Senior Volunteerism in a K-8 Public School District," (Practicum Report, Nova University, 1992), 11-12.

¹² Joan Kuersten, ed., "Seniors See How Their Tax Dollars Benefit Kids," *PTA Today* (January / February 1995), 28.

for many Americans.¹³ Of the forty-six million senior citizens, four million live below the poverty level. Twenty million have incomes of less than fifteen thousand dollars.¹⁴ This means voters will be inclined to defeat any tax increases they can control. Also, whereas forty-four percent of adults had children in public schools in 1973,¹⁵ twenty years later that figure shrank to thirty percent. The demographic shift, as the population of elders and non-parents increases, has several effects:

- > nonparents are making more and more of the financial decisions affecting schools
- > involvement in budget decisions is based on personal and financial needs
- > nonparents have minimal understanding of the complexities of state aid and its relation to district revenues¹⁶

Budget defeats cause loss of classroom aides, part-time specialists, visiting artists and lecturers, and much individual attention for each student.¹⁷ The need for volunteers to replace these has grown.¹⁸ Traditionally, volunteers were parents, mostly mothers. The economy has curtailed the number of traditional volunteers because they increasingly have taken jobs outside the home for needed income.¹⁹

The National School Boards Association position statement on citizen involvement stated: "Given that many of the elderly live on fixed incomes and have few positive, personal experiences[with schools], the potential for conflict is apparent. In fact, older voters in many districts consistently have voted against tax increases to support schools."²⁰

¹³ Susan Drenning and Lou Getz, "Computer Ease," *Phi Delta Kappan* 73 (February 1992), 471.

¹⁴ George Kaplan, "Suppose They Gave An Intergenerational Conflict and Nobody Came," *Kappan Special Report* (May 1991), K4.

¹⁵ Thomas Hart, "Building Coalitions for Support of Schools," 23 *OSSC Bulletin* (September 1988), 9.

¹⁶ Phelan, 12.

¹⁷ John H. Daly, "Utilize An Untapped Resource," *Middle School Journal* (May 1984), 10.

¹⁸ Lois Lipson, "Senior Citizens as School Volunteers: New Resources for the Future," *ERIC Digest*, Washington, D.C. (May 1994), ERIC Ed369774, 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Kristen Amundson, "Involving Older Volunteers in Public Schools," *Education Digest* (March 1991), 61.

Voting Power

No group is growing more in power than the senior citizens. In 1900, there were three million people over the age of sixty-five.²¹ Presently, there are thirty-one million people over the age of sixty-five.²² They vote in greater numbers than any other group. They are the most conscientious voting group in the country.²³

Sylvia Porter wrote "Don't Ignore the Elderly, They Have Voting Clout." She states that seniors were overlooked in budget campaigns, confused by educational terminology, offered token overtures, and expected to give and get nothing in return.²⁴ Nonparents as a group have the power to support or defeat educational issues.²⁵ It has been found in studies in Washington, Wisconsin, and Delaware that older voters tend to vote in the same voting pattern as the total population if they are informed about the issues.²⁶

A striking, if extreme, example of voting power occurred in the Peoria district in Arizona. School officials will never again underestimate the power of senior citizens at the polls. Several bonds were defeated. The seniors had organized. The bond passed when the Sun City Retirement Village was redistricted out of the school district.²⁷

Seniors As A Resource

Seniors, by numbers alone, are a vastly underused resource. They are the fastest

²¹ Mickey Revenaugh, ed., "Quest for the Best: Old and Young Make a Winning Combination!" Instructor 93 (May 1984), 68.

²² Kaplan, K1.

²³ Amundsen, 61.

²⁴ Sylvia Porter, "Don't Ignore the Elderly, They Have Voting Clout," quoted in Frank Larkin, "School budget and Senior citizens, Has Your District Seen the Light?" School Leader (January/February 1982), 28.

²⁵ National Association of Elementary School Principals, Winning Public Support for Education, newsletter for principals for community involvement strategies, April 1983, ERIC ED241996.

²⁶ Pat Brown and Michael Walls, "With Work, You Can Win the Hearts (and the Support) of Senior Citizens," American School Board Journal (November 1985), 46.

²⁷ Diane Dismuke, "Are Seniors Public Education's Enemy #1?" NEA Today (February 1994), 4.

growing segment of the population.²⁸ Life expectancy has increased dramatically. Five thousand people reach the age of sixty-five each day. Three thousand people over sixty-five die each day. That is a net gain of two thousand seniors a day.²⁹ In 1995, the thirty-one million, three hundred thousand people over sixty-five constitute twelve percent of the population.³⁰ Seniors live in all states in the United States and are becoming increasingly active in organizations and communities.³¹ In 1992, half of these seniors lived in nine states : California, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and New Jersey. The number is projected to double by 2030, creating a total number of seniors close to seventy million.³² These numbers assure the continuing availability of potential help from that segment of the population.

Seniors are increasing in number. The educational levels and job experiences of seniors are increasing as well. The United States, by far, has the largest population of able, educated, older citizens ever produced in any country. Unique to American society, though, after years of service and acquiring skills and knowledge and experience, older people are often retired from active participation.³³ Seniors today are healthier, better educated, more self-sufficient, and more active than previous generations.³⁴ They have time, resources, experience, and energy.³⁵ They have years of experience in human relations and careers.³⁶ Older people tend to be consistent, nurturing, non-judgmental and positive role models for children.³⁷ They have followed the work ethic all their lives and

²⁸ Phelan, 17.

²⁹ Daly, 10.

³⁰ Dismuke, 5.

³¹ Ronald Armengol, "Getting Older and Getting Better," Phi Delta Kappan (February 1992), 468.

³² Dismuke, 5.

³³ Daly, 10.

³⁴ Frank Larkin, "Senior Citizens: What They Don't Know Can Hurt You," Journal of Educational Public Relations (Second Quarter, 1993), 35.

³⁵ Armengol, 468.

³⁶ Guidelines for Involving Older School Volunteers" (Alexandria: National School Volunteer Program, Inc., 1978), 2, ERIC, ED226478.

³⁷ Carol Schreter, "Older Volunteers," American School Board Journal (February 1991), 36.

would find endless hours of card playing or television unsatisfying.³⁸

Because seniors have more free time and want meaningful utilization of that time, many welcome the opportunity to channel their knowledge and productivity back into the mainstream of society. According to the 1981 White House Conference on Aging, two of the four main concerns of citizens over sixty-five are giving through community participation and growing through lifelong learning.³⁹ The National Council on Aging Study conducted by Louis Harris and Associates shows:

- > Seniors desire to be productive, contributing members of society.
- > 75% of seniors prefer to spend time with all age groups.
- > Forty thousand seniors are already involved in education.⁴⁰

Seniors already volunteer or are more than willing to help when asked. Gallup, in an Independent Sector Survey, found that:

- > Three-fourths of the respondents volunteered when asked
- > There is a 47.1% rate of volunteerism in the 55 to 64 year age group. On average, they volunteered 4.7 hours a week.
- > There is a 40% rate of volunteerism in the 65 to 74 year age group. On average, they volunteered 6 hours a week.
- > There is a 28.6% rate of volunteerism in the 75 year and older age group. On average, they volunteered 4.4 hours a week.⁴¹

According to The National School Public Relations Association, one out of ten nonparents is ready to volunteer. That means a community of twenty thousand citizens, with the average sixty-eight percent nonparents, potentially has one thousand three hundred sixty people waiting to be asked to volunteer.⁴²

The American Association of Retired People always has had a close association with education. The Association's founder was a school principal. The group's vision

³⁸ NSVP Guidelines, 2

³⁹ Jeanne Magmer, "Non-Parents and Schools: Creating a New Team," Arlington: National School Public Relations Association, 1982), 27, ERIC, ED224114.

⁴⁰ NSVP Guidelines, 4.

⁴¹ Alec M. Gallup, "Giving and Volunteering in the United States," (Washington, D.C., Independent Survey Sector, 1992).

⁴² Magmer, 31.

statement is: "Bringing a lifetime of experience and leadership to serve all generations."⁴³ A spokesperson stated that AARP members are dedicated to programs that work for all members of the family.⁴⁴

Historically, elders of the tribe served as guardians and teachers of traditional values. Their job was to prepare new generations for the challenges they face.⁴⁵ Armengol reported that more and more schools are discovering the wealth of experience, expertise, talents, and skills that seniors possess.⁴⁶

From the seniors' point of view, seniors need to feel useful. Retirement can be a welcome opportunity or an unwanted halt to active living. Many seniors feel isolated from young people.⁴⁷ The one million seniors in nursing homes are often bored and lonely. Half of those have no close relatives to visit.⁴⁸ Tobin found that seniors can gain a great deal of emotional strength and security by giving time and knowledge.⁴⁹

Volunteering has a positive effect on self-esteem and social relationships.⁵⁰ Older citizens can remain vital and productive.⁵¹ One grandperson volunteer said, "Time has been a stone around my neck. Now it's a gift I can give a child."⁵²

⁴³ Robert B. Maxwell, "Senior citizens: We're Part of the Solution," School Administrator (January 1993), 48.

⁴⁴ Joe McGavin, ed., "Riley Calls on Retirees to Help Rescue Children," Education Daily (May 4, 1994), 2.

⁴⁵ Nancy Z. Henkin and Steven Tunick, "Organizing Intergenerational Programs," Here's How: National Association of Elementary School Principals (August 1994), 1.

⁴⁶ Armengol, 488.

⁴⁷ George Iannacone and Joan Skelly, "Bridging the Gap Between Senior Citizens and Young People," NAASP Bulletin (May 1985), 99.

⁴⁸ Winifred E. Pardo, "Middle Schoolers Work with the Aged," (Shoreham, NY: Shoreham - Wading River Middle School, 1980), 5, photocopied.

⁴⁹ Phelan, 18.

⁵⁰ Phelan, 18.

⁵¹ Henkin and Tunick, 4.

⁵² Susan de Pillis, "The Grandpeople Project," Thurst (November 1981), 30.

The seniors who volunteer feel needed, contribute to society, and have the opportunities for accomplishments and commendations.⁵³ Wisdom and accomplishments are noticed and appreciated by the community.

Seniors' Point of View

Traditionally senior citizens respect schools and have encouraged and funded education of younger generations.⁵⁴ Increasingly, they are concerned about the return on their investment.⁵⁵ Most seniors have lived through periods of austerity, such as the Depression or wartimes. Reactively, they are inclined to tighten belts before supporting increased spending.

Older Americans with grown children or no children tend to focus on budgets⁵⁶ rather than issues or programs. They are concerned with increasing taxes and see no reason to support a system from which they receive no benefits.⁵⁷ They attend schools only when invited and participation is limited to guest status.⁵⁸ They feel isolated from youth.⁵⁹ Their contact with children is to know them as the "little annoyances who trample gardens and cut across lawns."⁶⁰

Seniors who have no ties to schools must get most of their information from mass media.⁶¹ The media, which often focuses on crises, trends, and sensational stories, is some people's only source of information about public education.⁶² Through the eyes of

⁵³ NSVP Guidelines, 3.

⁵⁴ Magner, 27.

⁵⁵ Daly, 10.

⁵⁶ Roberta A. VanArda, "Seniors and Schools: A Symbiotic Relationship," School Leader (November/December 1994), 33.

⁵⁷ Armengol, 467.

⁵⁸ Phelan, 12.

⁵⁹ Iannacone and Skelly, 99.

⁶⁰ Alan Sears and George Bidlake, "The Senior Citizens' Tea: A Connecting Point for Oral History in the Elementary School," Social Studies (July/August 1991), 135.

⁶¹ Kaplan, K2.

⁶² Porter, 28.

mass media, older Americans see young people as violent, as drug users,⁶³ and as lacking patience, values and the knowledge of the human struggle.⁶⁴

In a positive light, seniors see a technologically sophisticated generation.⁶⁵ Those involved with youth are glad to have the involvement⁶⁶ and they see people and programs in a more objective way.⁶⁷

There is evidence to show seniors are willing to find out for themselves about both young people and schools today. One study of grandparents show they would like to:⁶⁸

- > be invited to classroom activities to which parents are invited
- > receive notes when children do something good
- > be put on the newsletter mailing list
- > be invited to share with the class
- > have the opportunity to buy photographs

Society's View of Seniors

The image of older people being "selfish, politically unstoppable, and insensitive to the younger generation is winning believers. Before long it may be as solidly implanted in the national psyche as the equally erroneous notion that our entire system of public education has fallen apart."⁶⁹ The current escalation of elder bashing has been evident in studies for the last twenty years. Cull and Hardy found that the general worth of seniors is looked upon as minimal. Butler found the general view is that seniors are inflexible and loners. Further studies characterize seniors as unalert, closed-minded, unproductive citizens,⁷⁰ incapable of learning or teaching, senile and useless, an increasing burden rather

⁶³ Sally Newman, "Connections," Generations Together newsletter Exchange (Autumn 1989).

⁶⁴ Jane Angelis and Lisa Wathen, "Involving Older Adults in Schools," Education Week (November 9, 1944), 32.

⁶⁵ Barbara M. Friedman, "Intergenerational Celebrations," Educational Leadership (May 1988), 53.

⁶⁶ Magner, 56.

⁶⁷ Frank Larkin, "School Budgets and Senior Citizens: Has Your District Seen The Light?" School Leader (January/February 1982), 10.

⁶⁸ Magner, 58.

⁶⁹ Kaplan, K2.

⁷⁰ Tenenbaum (1979) quoted in Phelan, 18.

than an asset,⁷¹ and narrow and rigid in their thinking.⁷²

With limited contact⁷³ and the extended family an endangered species in the 1990's,⁷⁴ young people have assimilated society's stereotypes about the aged. The Hickey Study shows preschoolers distinguish adults by age groupings and react more negatively the older they get.⁷⁵

Need for Programs Recognized

In the last ten years, the need for intergenerational programs has been recognized. Schools are looking for ways to demonstrate to the public they are putting tax dollars to good use.⁷⁶ Mobility, breakdowns in traditional family structures, and cultural changes have contributed to the lack of communication between senior citizens and young people.⁷⁷ Increasing numbers of school districts have reached out to tap the potential of older volunteers.⁷⁸ According to Frank Larkin, a leading proponent of intergenerational programs in this area, his brochure "School Budgets and Senior Citizens" produced 225 requests for additional information.⁷⁹

Intergenerational exchange is emerging as one vehicle for addressing issues currently affecting our society.⁸⁰ School based intergenerational programs are working models for the connections upon which societies are built: young and old, people and

⁷¹ M. Kouri (1990) quoted in Phelan, 18.

⁷² Armengol, 468.

⁷³ Henkin and Tunick, 1.

⁷⁴ Van Anda, 35.

⁷⁵ Hickey

⁷⁶ Drenning and Getz, 471.

⁷⁷ Wendy Warner, ed., "Schools, Senior Citizens, and Aging," NJEA Review (November 1985), 14.

⁷⁸ Amundsen, 61.

⁷⁹ Larkin, "School Budgets and Senior Citizens..." 29.

⁸⁰ Newman, 1.

systems, past, present, and future and ideas and values.⁸¹ Schools with intergenerational programs are redefining their roles in the communities. No longer fortresses for children divorced from the world around them, these schools use the community members as a learning laboratory not just to achieve educational objectives, but to increase public support of education.⁸²

Richard Riley, the Secretary of Education, in his keynote address to the American Association of Retired People in the spring of 1994, urged retirees to volunteer in schools. He stressed the need to reconnect generations.⁸³

Since 1990, several program designs have been published including Armengol (1992),⁸⁴ Amundson (1991) and Angelis (1990).⁸⁵ Each design, though slightly varied, includes: needs assessment, job descriptions, recruiting, screening, orientation and training, recognition and evaluation.

Program Benefits

Different programs vary widely in primary purpose for being established and in format. Research shows that the benefits of most programs surpass the expectations and often go into areas of success that were not considered in the initial plans.

Students are provided with experiences that they might otherwise miss. Since grandparents are less frequently members of the same household as children, the experiences gained from seniors are ones that no formal education can replicate.⁸⁶ Children learn respect for the aged and develop new and positive attitudes toward older people.⁸⁷ This contact can also fill personal gaps left by the decline of the extended

⁸¹ Hilda Taba, Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1962), 218.

⁸² Henkin and Tunick, 1.

⁸³ Gavin, 1.

⁸⁴ Lipson, 2.

⁸⁵ Angelis, quoted in Lipson, 3.

⁸⁶ Armengol, 468.

⁸⁷ NSVP Guidelines, 4.

family.⁸⁸ In these times of isolation, one million children run away each year, two hundred thousand are on the streets, 2.2 million are reported abused or neglected, and one in ten are involved in drugs.⁸⁹ Relationships develop as a result of intergenerational programs.⁹⁰ In a five-year study of twenty schools eighty percent of young people showed improved grades, self-esteem and social behavior.⁹¹ Students learn about aging and the aged and society's failures and responsibilities in relation to the elderly. They can learn skills of working with older people and develop a sense of responsibility and caring. They learn compassion, skills and emotional attitudes for working with the aged.⁹² Students become informed citizens who may be able to plan for the elderly. For example, one eighth grader prepared others who were about to work with the elderly with a caution to expect to be afraid at first.⁹³ In other programs young people get a chance to be teachers and teach seniors new technology.⁹⁴ Working with seniors gives students a sense of what America was like⁹⁵ and students can hear accounts of events that the seniors actually witnessed.⁹⁶ Philip Phenix states, "Above all, personal knowledge is not developed through formal instruction. It is the consequence of human association beginning with the family and extending out in widening circles."⁹⁷

Seniors benefit, as young people do, from personal contact that the breakdown of the extended family has eliminated.⁹⁸ The impact of isolation affects the senior population also. Eight million elderly are alone, often isolated, and five hundred thousand elderly are

⁸⁸ Lipson, 2.

⁸⁹ Newman, 1.

⁹⁰ Jan Simms and Bruce Simms, "E-Mail Across the Ages," Electronic School (February 1995), A47.

⁹¹ Schreter, 36.

⁹² Pardo, 1.

⁹³ Pardo, 13.

⁹⁴ Kuersten, 28.

⁹⁵ Iannacone and Skelly, 100.

⁹⁶ Revenaugh, 68.

⁹⁷ Philip Phenix, Realms of Meaning. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 196.

⁹⁸ Lipson, 2.

reported abused or neglected each year.⁹⁹ The relationships developed in intergenerational programs give seniors a sense of purpose and satisfaction.¹⁰⁰ Seniors have a sense of fulfillment¹⁰¹ and opportunities to see first-hand what is happening in the schools.¹⁰² Many seniors learn current technology and become aware of positive progress schools are making.¹⁰³

Schools benefit primarily as a result of supportive voices in the senior community¹⁰⁴ and because they have tapped an educated source to replace personnel lost in reduced budgets. The high rate of return from one year to the next gives continuity to a program.¹⁰⁵ Educators cite research that points out how important it is for home, school and community to have congruent learning goals.¹⁰⁶ The curriculum is enhanced especially with information not available from other sources.¹⁰⁷ Seniors present positive role models, and provide enrichment opportunities, resources, and individual instruction that many schools can no longer afford.¹⁰⁸ The real link to the community benefits seniors, students and schools.

The community benefits because real involvements extend beyond the school walls. The schools begin to mirror the community when all age groups are included in the educational settings. The variety of lifestyles, cultures, languages, motivations and ideas explored in a school setting helps everyone learn about each other. It develops a oneness with the town and students have more of an inclination "to treasure it than trash it."¹⁰⁹ An intergenerational program is good public relations and builds community spirit. In a

⁹⁹ Newman, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Schreter, 36.

¹⁰¹ Van Anda, 35.

¹⁰² Dee Ann Sakrison, "Aging with Care," School Safety (Winter 1990), 23.

¹⁰³ Iannacone and Skelly, 101.

¹⁰⁴ Magner, 62.

¹⁰⁵ Friedman, 55.

¹⁰⁶ John Marvelle, "The Home-School Connection," Technology and Learning (October 1992), 42.

¹⁰⁷ Sakrison, 23.

¹⁰⁸ NSVP Guidelines, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Van Anda, 35.

connected society individuals feel valued, cared for and important. Cohesive units providesupport, encourage growth and give guidance.¹¹⁰

The more connected the generations become, the more information, trust and understanding are shared.¹¹¹ Intergenerational programs break down the typical age segregation found in American culture.¹¹² Hilda Taba stresses the legitimate role of education in serving society. Students need concrete situations and need to discover rather than be taught. The measure of effective learning is the extent to which it can be applied.¹¹³ Intergenerational programs serve as a forum for this type of learning. Margaret Mead wrote, "The mental health of a nation is based on its abilities to make meaningful connections between its elderly, its young, and its families." ¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Newman, 1.

¹¹¹ Larkin, "School Budgets and Senior Citizens...", 29.

¹¹² Pardo, 2.

¹¹³ Taba, 218.

¹¹⁴ Margaret Mead quoted in Newman, 1.

Chapter III

Procedure

The first undertaking of this study was to conduct a computer search for intergenerational studies and projects already in place. ERIC was searched for education articles and documents relating to intergenerational programs in American suburban public schools. Words included were "senior citizen," outreach program," and "volunteer." The second search conducted was through Dissertation Abstracts Online. A second ERIC search was conducted for "schools and senior citizens."

The Reader's Guide and The New York Times Index gave other articles that supported need and described successful programs and projects presently operating. A library and bookstore search yielded several current books on this topic, notably, Age Wave and Childhood's Future.

Letters were written to the state school board associations, the federal and state departments of education, and several senior citizen groups such as American Association of Retired Persons, Americans for Generational Equity, the Administration of Aging, the Gerontology Society, and the National School Volunteer Program. The author requested information about projects and programs that are currently working in the schools today.

The projects and programs were grouped according to techniques employed, such as tax relief programs, volunteer programs, advisory committees, and meal programs. The strategies and activities for the most proven examples were listed. Results of these individual programs were enumerated focusing on the benefits of each program.

Recommendations and considerations for implementation were made. These recommendations and considerations were drawn directly from program directors' comments, program literature, or deduced from the findings of a combination of programs. When available, a person or school district to contact was included. A variations section was added under certain examples. This included programs which paralleled proven programs. If a program added another factor, it was noted in a brief description. All programs and projects were put into Chapter 4 to be used as a reference by superintendents, community coordinators, and school public relations directors.

Chapter IV

Programs

Chapter four covers forty-two techniques that have been used to bring senior citizens into the schools or that have been used to provide services for the senior citizens through the schools. The techniques include: Grandparents' Day, Meals for Seniors, School Visitations, Adopt-A-Grandfriend, Pen Pals, Volunteers, Seniors as Educational Resources, Comprehensive Intergenerational Program, Students Helping Seniors and Spokespeople.

Each technique has several case studies that highlight the successful strategies and activities of those programs.

The case studies were written in outline form to expedite use by the busy administrators who would use this compendium of ideas.

TECHNIQUE: Grandparents' Day

CASE#: 1

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Developed task force on aging (included students, senior citizens, and staff)
- Developed goals
- Committees investigated how to improve communication, how to effectively utilize and help with the programs already in place under the Office on Aging, how to organize Senior Citizens School Day, how to work with nursing homes, how to survey students and retired people
- Developed workshops
- Comprehensive picture of aging given by expert in gerontology

RESULTS:

- Improved interaction and understanding between young and old
- Unique conference took place at Stockton College, joining young and old.
- Intergenerational dance

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Start with Grandparents' Day at elementary level, Senior Citizen Craft fair at junior high level and Back to School Day at high school level
- School board could provide buses, sponsor a district tour
- Contact AARP/NRTA, state and county offices on aging
- Tips for working with seniors: Don't stereotype. Don't patronize.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Middle Township School District
Cape May, NJ

TECHNIQUE: Grandparents' Day

CASE#: 2

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Members from three senior citizen clubs invited to spend a day at school during American Education Week
- Senior citizens taken on tour of district, including 1890 School House and newest Jr.-Sr. High School
- Turkey dinner provided
- Senior citizens visited elementary classrooms
- Local businesses donated 30 to 40 door prizes
- Seniors also entitled to free admission to school activities (Gold Card Pass). Includes plays, sports events, use of swimming pool, reduced prices for dinners and lunches, free courses in district community education program or adult school.

RESULTS:

- First year, 40 people came to Grandparents' Day activities; 7th year, 300 senior citizens came.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Need committee to solicit door prizes
- Need to budget for dinner costs

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Webster Central School District
Webster, New York
Public Information Coordinator, Joyce Rice

TECHNIQUE: Grandparents' Day

CASE#: 3

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Principal sent letter home requesting names and addresses of grandparents or senior neighbors who would be willing to attend school celebration
- Concert invitations, lunch invitations sent to those on list

RESULTS:

- More than 100 people attended

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Cost of lunch needs to be part of budget

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Ventura Park Elementary School
Ventura, Oregon

TECHNIQUE: Meals for Seniors

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Senior citizens from three retirement centers and Moorestown residents of AARP were invited to an annual luncheon.
- Students were waiters and waitresses.
- Cafeteria staff prepared meals.
- Orchestra ensemble and concert choir provided musical entertainment at lunch.
- One-act plays performed by drama club after lunch.

RESULTS:

- More than 150 attended in 1994
- Two-way communication between senior citizens and students took place.
- People who would not ordinarily be in schools participated.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Expense built into school budget

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Student Government Organization
Moorestown High School
Moorestown, NJ

VARIATIONS:

- Haddon Township Senior Citizen Breakfast prior to school election day
- "Pleasure of Your Company" school lunch program in Tucson, AZ.
Children and senior citizens eat together. Senior citizens pay going rate in cafeteria.

TECHNIQUE: School Visitation

CASE#: 1

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES: "Senior Prom"

- From announcement published in local newspaper.
- Invitations distributed to local businesses, churches, banks, supermarkets and local senior citizens groups.
- Guests made reservations, received free tickets
- Decorations - art department
Food - student council and volunteers
Entertainment - music department, local talent
- Senior citizens received dance cards, music was geared to 30's and 40's dance music.
- High school seniors and juniors and senior citizens attended.

RESULTS:

Of prom:

- Extraordinary comraderie of senior citizens, students.
- Frequent visitation to schools by senior citizens following prom.
- High level of credibility and support fostered with senior citizens.

Of other programs:

- Senior citizens valued
- Young people given a sense of what America was.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- This program is an opening, but other programs exist to maintain connection between senior citizens and students. These include classroom visitations, foster grandparents and developmental seminars in which senior citizens talk about life when they were young including immigration and factory work.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Glen Meadow Middle School
Vernon Township, NJ
Superintendent, George Iannacone

TECHNIQUE: School Visitation

CASE#: 2

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES: "Greatest Show in the Neighborhood"

- Mailed invitations to residents in the attendance area.
- Open house was to show building and students' work.

RESULTS:

- Those who attended gained insight into what schools were doing.
- People who would not ordinarily be in schools attended.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Mailed invitations ignored a high percentage of the time. Other ways to bring people to schools necessary.
- Senior citizens would not necessarily attend unless encouraged by grandchildren.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Mann Junior High School
Clover Park School District
Tacoma, Washington
Principal, Donald Price

VARIATIONS:

- Yeadon, PA
William Penn School District has a "Showcase" event. It is a one-night event.
Parents and non-parents are invited.

TECHNIQUE: School Visitation

CASE#: 3

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES: "See For Yourself"

- Communications department prepared a fifteen-minute slide presentation about schools.
- Communications department prepared a list of twenty-five ideas to encourage community participation in schools.

RESULTS:

- Well received. More than 200 non-parents attended the first meeting
- Visitors from service clubs, businesses and civic associations, local hospital staffs, church groups, senior citizens, realtors and community service agencies participated in activities from idea list.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Seventy-two percent of citizens have no school age children. Need to show what is happening to counteract impressions and generalizations not based on fact.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Columbus Public Schools
Columbus, Ohio
Public Information Officer, Robert Grossman

VARIATIONS:

- Tigard, Oregon
"Visit Your Schools" Week just prior to district's annual finance election

TECHNIQUE: Adopt-a-Grandfriend

CASE#: 1

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Students shared holidays and visited nursing home residents. (Graystone Manor Convalescent Center)
- "Adopted" grandparents
- Able grandparents worked on projects and visited classrooms each Tuesday.

RESULTS:

- Students experienced grandparent-type relationships
- Life more pleasant for senior citizens who received visitors
- Senior citizens had opportunities to engage in meaningful activities

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Transportation needed to and from center and for some seniors who volunteer
- Specific responsibilities for volunteers must be established.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Gilbert Heights Elementary School
David Douglas School District
Portland, Oregon
Coordinator, Doris Cameron

TECHNIQUE: Adopt- a-Grandfriend

CASE#: 2

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Nearby retirement center was selected. Ideas were discussed by school coordinator and program director at retirement center.
- Relationships established with residents (interests, talents, abilities)
- Residents visited school; met staff, children and reported back to other residents
- A kickoff event was held to introduce grandfriends, teachers, students.
- Activities varied. Senior citizens told students about travel and helped with map work, taught languages, helped decorate classrooms, came to programs, participated in pen pal program and went on field trips.

RESULTS:

- Gave senior citizens sense of belonging, actively involved in community
- Students eagerly looked forward to activities with grandfriends.
- More volunteers (second year) from both groups

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Teachers' participation should be on a volunteer basis to ensure positive involvement.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Corey Elementary School
Arlington, Texas
Principal, Randall Gribbin

TECHNIQUE: Pen Pals

CASE#: 1

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Teacher met with senior citizens in Rockynol Retirement Community
- Computer hookups were installed at school and retirement center.
- Children, senior citizens exchanged notes on a regular basis.

RESULTS:

- Writing made meaningful to children.
- Older retirees learned basic technology and were in contact with children not available in retirement community setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Apple Crossroads Grant provided funds for Applelink computer equipment.
- Senior citizens need to be trained in use of Applelink.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Karen Grindall
Portage Path Elementary School
Akron, OH

VARIATIONS:

- Fairfield, CT
Fourth and fifth graders wrote monthly letters as part of social studies and English curricula.
- Westwood, MA
Fourth graders were pen pals the first year. The second year the students met weekly for four months with the seniors to learn about the Jazz Age. Both groups celebrated the end of the program with a project fair and musical show.

TECHNIQUE: Pen Pals

CASE#: 2

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Teachers contacted two senior centers in community to solicit interest.
- Computers, printers, and modems loaned to centers by school district
- Both fifth grade classes held fundraisers to get dedicated telecommunication lines at the centers.
- District paid \$10.00 a month on-line fee.
- Senior citizens, age 55-91, received training on use of equipment.
- Students wrote biographies about their senior friends.

RESULTS:

- Students made help sheet of handy tips for seniors to use.
- Senior citizens learned computer on-line technology.
- Students had audience for writing, reason for writing effectively, gained vocabulary and historical information
- Students socially gained self-esteem, increased leadership skills, improved cooperative learning skills

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Cost of equipment or a source for loan.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Jan and Bruce Simms
1080 Frankel Lane
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
(810) 335-5838
Voice mail - (810) 673-1236-6441
Internet E Mail jansmi @ aol.com. or brucemich @aol. com.

TECHNIQUE: Volunteers

CASE#: 1

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Senior citizens must be 65 years or older, live and own property in district, pass tuberculosis and background checks.
- Volunteers got \$5 per hour for up to 100 hours of work; they could not earn more than their property taxes.
- Got in form of rebate check in June
- Wide range of work options -- assisted in classroom, tutored, typed, maintained grounds, did maintenance jobs. Open to participant suggestions.
- For those who have physical or other limitations a substitute could do work (district resident could serve as stand in, only required to be at least 55 years old)

RESULTS:

- Senior citizens got tax relief up to \$500.
- Senior citizens became familiar with what goes on in schools.
- Students benefitted from relationships with senior citizens and learned from their experiences.
- Positive relationship developed between senior citizen voters and school system.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Cost must be considered. Elizabethtown District paid for background checks and \$10,000 in rebate checks.
- System may need to be developed to allow people with greatest financial needs to be accepted first if response exceeds budget.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Elizabethtown Area School District
District Superintendent, Dr. Dale Williams
(717) 367-1521

VARIATIONS:

- Daniel Boone Area School District, Berks Co.

TECHNIQUE: Volunteers

CASE#: 2

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Recruited 'Grandpeople' as volunteer tutors
- Volunteers met with staff
- Selected teachers to participate.
- Decided appropriate tutorial activities.
- Discussed preparation for staff, students and volunteers
- Set up tentative schedules

RESULTS:

- Senior citizens not interested
- After three-week campaign to include seniors in "replanning," twelve volunteers came to orientation.
- Now productive program.
- Students received individual help.
- Program expanded and includes weekly history presentations by senior citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Volunteers may need incentives, transportation, meals.
- Made plans without consulting volunteers. Must involve senior citizens in planning process.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Emerson Elementary School
Riverside, CA

TECHNIQUE: Volunteers

CASE#: 3

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES: Dove Program

- Senior citizen volunteer coordinator (Community Relations Office) went to nursing homes to find willing volunteers.
- Transported to schools
- Made beanbags, games, read to children

RESULTS:

- Senior citizens more comfortable coming to schools, asking about schools
- The involvement of senior citizens and youth created a caring environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Hire a senior citizen to find willing volunteers

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Dallas School District
Dallas, Texas
Community Relations Office
Director of Information Services, B. Rodney Davis

TECHNIQUE: Volunteers

CASE#: 4

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Advisory committee (principal, students, staff, senior citizens) and consultant who specialized in senior citizens and schools met.
- Senior citizens social held, video shown about generational interaction, students served meal, played music, socialized
- Senior citizens encouraged to become involved in school.

RESULTS:

- Prior to institution of program, budget defeated six times. First year after program, budget passed by 250 votes, second year by 500 votes.
- Program continues and has expanded (students visit retirement centers, retired people visit schools, roller skating party, seniors and students visit nursing homes, senior citizens attend unfilled classes at high school).

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Cost of consultant

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Bloomfield School District
Bloomfield, NJ
Dr. James McNashby

TECHNIQUE: Volunteers

CASE#: 5

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Those over 60 and those under 16 mixed, matched skills and abilities of older citizens with interests and ideas of children
- Senior citizens spent half-day sessions at school once or twice per week.

RESULTS:

- "Grandpersons": givers of human and historical connection as well as skills.
- Produced hundreds of projects in fine arts, graphics, woodworking, crafts, photography, pottery, storytelling, reading, gardening, music, carpentry, filmmaking, weaving, rug-hooking, lace-making, movement, flower arranging and plant care.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Matching participants is time consuming

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Teaching-Learning Communities (TLC Project)
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Project Director, Carol Tice

VARIATIONS:

- Prairie Norton Elementary School
Columbus, Ohio
Grandparent program - flexible scheduling so "experts" can drop by

TECHNIQUE: Volunteers

CASE#: 6

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES: "Generations Together"

- Volunteers 55 years or older spent a minimum of a half a day a week in the classroom.
- Linked needs of students with interests, strengths of senior citizens
- Provided tutoring, storytelling, arts and crafts, library assistance

RESULTS:

- Shared growth, learning, friendship

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Need coordinator to match volunteers and students and to schedule
- Tutors need in-service training specific to curriculum goals.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Monessen Elementary Center
University of Pittsburgh
Philip L. Davis
(412) 684-5400

TECHNIQUE: Seniors as Educational Resources

CASE#: 1

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Advertised in local newspaper: requested senior citizen volunteers to be interviewed by students
- Volunteers spent an hour or two in classroom or talked to student on phone or answered a letter.
- Research topics listed. Volunteers asked for information about travel, gardening, firefighting, birdwatching

RESULTS:

- Students learned to interview, communicated with others
- Developed resource book to provide living resources for small groups of children, a speaker's bureau, mentors.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Transportation needed for some volunteers
- Volunteers are less likely to respond to ads than to respond to personal requests

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- PEP Program - Intergenerational Networking Program
Zane North Elementary School
Stokes & Lees Avenue
Collingswood, NJ 08108
Linda Goldkrantz

TECHNIQUE: Seniors as Educational Resource

CASE#: 2

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Senior citizens and teachers attended one-day institute and planned grade-appropriate history lessons for the period 1939-1989.
- Senior citizens shared experiences in K-12 classrooms, discussed changing perceptions of responsibilities of citizenship.

RESULTS:

- Students improved understanding of Constitution, Bill of Rights
- Partnerships between schools and senior citizens established
- Senior citizens increased understanding of teaching requirements

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Screening of applicants would be a significant challenge.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- ABA's Model Site Program
Easthampton, MA
Project Coordinator, Leone Lizotte
School Business Community Partnership Facilitator

TECHNIQUE: Seniors as Educational Resource

CASE#: 3

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Madison Public Schools and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.) of Dane County worked together to plan.
- Intergenerational programming (strategies and activities) is a regular agenda item at 6th-8th grade curriculum meetings.
- Units of study in each academic area have been expanded to capitalize on resources of older people.
- Plans vary for limited interaction (remedial tutoring, oral history panels, aging seminars, career guest speakers) to extended interactions (mentors, instructors to small groups, equal participants with students in a unit of study, supervisors and aides in the computer center).
- Three interdisciplinary units have been developed that enhance the curriculum and extend the involvement of old and young together. These are a five-week study of energy, a seventh grade writing project, and a three-week apprenticeship program that enables students to learn from master craftsmen.

RESULTS:

- Positive change in student attitudes toward older people
- Addition of more affective objectives to the curriculum
- Increased support of public schools through older persons' community voice
- Developed a handbook for senior citizen volunteers

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Key is cooperation between school coordinator and R.S.V.P.
- Working since 1979
- Must determine who is responsible for coordinating the volunteer program
- Other issues that should be addressed during planning stage: screening of volunteers, scheduling, support for volunteers, recruiting

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Thomas Jefferson Middle School
Madison, Wisconsin
Learning Coordinator, John H. Daly
Director of Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Mary Stamsta

TECHNIQUE: Seniors as Educational Resources

CASE#: 4

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Information about senior citizen involvement was disseminated to school district staff.
- Partnership established between regional volunteer program and the school district.
- School needs and senior citizens' interests matched.
- Development of a Living History project in which students interviewed senior citizens about their experiences during World War II
- Living History Day - Students presented historical papers based on interviews and library research.

RESULTS:

- Many senior citizens refused to participate due to past negative experiences with senior citizen-student projects.
- Those who did participate thought the project worthwhile.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Preliminary projects and public relations to make senior citizens comfortable with students is necessary.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Ed.D. Practicum Report
Nova University
Author, Vanessa C. Phelan
Accession # ERIC: ED 366421

TECHNIQUE: Seniors as Educational Resources

CASE#: 5

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Local newspaper published an invitation for residents to study the community -- past and present.
- Activities: took census, compared it to seventy-five years ago
- Interviewed business people and senior citizens about history and future of business
- Designed historical mural
- Dug clay and reproduced Indian pottery typical of area tribes
- Prepared a documentary about the project and area history
- Explored importance of coal mining in development of area and related it to current energy alternatives
- Conducted tests of water and soil to determine problems and possible solutions
- Traced family backgrounds, land ownership
- Tape recorded interviews with early residents and collected old photographs for publication in an historical booklet
- Compared old with the new

RESULTS:

- Whole community became involved.
- Made local TV news
- Raised community awareness
- Appreciation for school

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Budgeting needs for equipment, advertising must be considered.
- Need contacts at local television station.
- Coordinator needed.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Frederick Colorado Junior High Frederick, Colorado

TECHNIQUE: Seniors as Educational Resources

CASE#: 6

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Read to children
- Listened to children read
- Shared children's successes

RESULTS:

- Article written in district newsletter brought more volunteers
- "Grandparents doing what grandparents do best"- appreciating achievements, budding talent, giving hugs.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Orientation necessary to make shared reading successful and beneficial to students

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Menlo Park School
Portland, OR

VARIATIONS:

- Prairie Norton Elementary School
Columbus, OH
Similar to Menlo Park, but scheduling is more flexible. Even though seniors are scheduled on a specific day, they are invited to drop in anytime. Brochure describing program distributed.

TECHNIQUE: Seniors as Educational Resources

CASE#: 7

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Third grade program (The Rumson Unit): history of community. A community of administrators, senior citizens and a board member obtained leads for information and videotaped interviews with local celebrities. Students in gifted program interviewed other people. Activities were developed by staff in several areas of curriculum which included panel of seniors as historical witnesses.
- Eighth grade graduating class worked on a unit of community and school history. Speakers were invited. The town was photographed to compare today to sites shown in "The History of Rumson" published nearly 50 years earlier. Interviews with senior citizens videotaped. A program was held at the end of the year to honor and thank senior citizens who took part. Reports and videotapes were presented to Rumson Historical Society.
- Tenth and twelfth graders were eligible to participate in a non-credit program called Academic Passport. They worked on in-depth projects focusing on local history with senior citizen residents as mentors.
- "A Little Something" - Students collected little extras that made life a little more enjoyable for those who exhaust their income on basic necessities.
- Grandparents' Day program - concert and tour of school
- Judges, Juries, Audiences: eighth grade history classes conducted a mock trial "Should the U.S. have bombed Hiroshima?" The jury was composed of Rumson senior citizens.
- Halloween parade - judges were senior citizens.
- Senior citizens included in annual sing along at holidays
- Senior Citizens' Club was invited to the annual musical and provided with brunch.

RESULTS:

- The Rumson Unit received the Monmouth County Historical Association's Local History Award.
- Students got to know senior citizens and now volunteer to help with their service projects.
- Children understood value of experience and wisdom of older generations.
- Increased support for schools, school budgets
- Increased community spirit

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Need coordinator to find mentors, willing seniors for all phases of the program.
- All programs are excellent opportunities for public relations.
- One year planning was required.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Rumson School District
Rumson, New Jersey
Superintendent, Eileen Smith-Stevens

TECHNIQUE: Comprehensive Intergenerational Programs

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES: AGES Program

- Opening night forum: speakers reminisced about public schools in the "old days" and discussed in small groups.
- Planning committee brainstormed projects, PTA coordinator wrote guidelines, faculties polled for need for older adults.
- First year, thirty older adults participated in classroom activities, tutored, read to students, helped in offices, worked with ESL students, taught skills, helped with PTA projects.
- Work of volunteers was publicized in PTA newsletters, local and regional newspapers.
- Pen pal program, room grandparents, high school initiative (older adults teach home economics), cultural outreach programs, in-service training on aging, summer seminars for senior citizens, adopt a nursing home program

RESULTS:

- Enthusiastic response to forum - ideas led to AGES Program
- Range of projects that involved more than 800 people
- Awarded Robert Famaghetti Award for Excellence in Gerontological Education to Fairfield Public Schools, the Fairfield PTAs and the Center for the Study of Aging at the University of Bridgeport

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Program was funded by Fairfield County Cooperative Foundation and Physicians Health Services
- Each school had a coordinator.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- AGES Program
Fairfield PTA Council
760 Stilson Road
Fairfield, CT 06430

TECHNIQUE: Students Helping Seniors

CASE#: 1

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES: "Computer Ease"

- Three 90-minute instructional sessions offered to senior citizens who wished to become computer literate; taught by elementary students.
- First session students and senior citizens paired. Senior citizens guided through basics.
- Second session introduced primary graphics program. Senior citizens made letterhead stationery for themselves.
- Third session senior citizens learned word-processing to write letters.

RESULTS:

- Children experienced role of teachers, increased self-esteem
- Positive intergenerational attitudes developed
- Students learned time management, organization
- Senior citizens acquired specific computer skills, often opt for further training
- Good public relations - senior citizens willing to support programs they valued
- School budget passed

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Cost of equipment or a source for equipment is needed

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Tremont Elementary School
Upper Arlington, OH
Senior Program Coordinator, Susan Drenning
Upper Arlington Senior Center
1945 Ridgeview Road
Upper Arlington, OH 43221
(614) 481-8829

TECHNIQUE: Students Helping Seniors

CASE#: 2

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- "Rent a High School Kid Program" matched student services with senior citizen needs at reasonable price or for class credit.
- Students trained to file appropriate tax relief forms (senior citizens are entitled to tax relief by law, but are not taking advantage) and then helped senior citizens fill them out.

RESULTS:

- Senior citizens appreciated value of education because they benefitted tax wise.
- Claims filled out by trained students generally contained fewer errors and omissions. This helped Department of Revenue process claims.
- Students better understood needs of senior citizens and provided service to community members.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Need time and expertise to train students
- Need to have way to ascertain who needs tax services

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Operation Circuit Breaker
DeSoto School District
Desoto, MO

TECHNIQUE: Students Helping Seniors

CASE#: 3

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Community car wash - senior citizens given free coupon
- Community yard cleanup - senior citizens given coupon for free service
- Senior citizens registered with schools, students checked on them on way to and from school.
- Senior Citizens Day at mall. Student groups set up booths offering services to older people.

RESULTS:

- Senior citizens given free service
- Community spirit, students' positive efforts acknowledged

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- This school system has also made a major effort to advertise its accomplishments in local newspapers. (school employee groups, board members and administrators pay for a full page ad each year to highlight accomplishments), have children make announcements on local radio. Board meetings are sometimes held at senior citizen centers or earlier in the day to accommodate older people.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Beloit Wisconsin Schools
Administrative Secretary, Pat Brown

TECHNIQUE: Students Helping Seniors

CASE#: 4

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- School district and Pima Council on Aging formed partnership to develop projects.
- Intergenerational Advisory Committee coordinated programs.
- Students worked in teams of three or four with adult volunteer, who was often a senior citizen to help maintain older citizens' homes and made minor repairs, paint.

RESULTS:

- Increased cooperation, interaction and exchange between senior citizens and students.
- Senior citizens able to keep homes, live as independently as possible.
- Community property values maintained.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Safety considered with team concept.
- Often senior citizens have expertise to teach students how to make repairs, but need physical help that can be provided by youth.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Tucson Unified School District
Tucson, AZ
Student Service Learning Coordinator, Dee Ann Sakrison

TECHNIQUE: Spokespeople - Retired Teachers

CASE#: 1

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Retired teachers talked to community groups, but particularly targeted fellow senior citizens.
- Explained school tax initiatives
- "Schools are like fire and police departments; we may never use them, but we still need them." Stress schools are America's future.
- Offered experiences to seniors: holiday concerts, Association-sponsored bingo nights, sports events, classes.

RESULTS:

- Senior citizens made aware of school tax initiatives.
- Turned some critics into supporters
- Established some communication between schools and community.

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Retired teachers' association worked with teachers' association.
- Retired teachers have time to pick up slack for working supporters. Can speak during the day when senior citizens more receptive to going to meetings.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Washoe County Teachers Association-Retired (WCTA-R)
- Ellington Education Association (EEA)
President, Fred Colosimo
- Virginia Education Association - Retired
Fairfax County Retired Educators
John Duncan

VARIATIONS:

- Oakland California School District
PTA Council Leader, Mae Monroe
PTA members as spokespeople stressed importance of education-what seniors themselves got from schools

TECHNIQUE: Spokespeople - Teachers

CASE#: 2

STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES:

- Teachers spoke to community groups.
- Talked about relationship of education to Social Security, about maintaining our standard of living, investing in schools rather than prisons.
- Senior citizens encouraged to work on advisory councils of individual schools and community programs to fight juvenile alcohol and drug abuse.

RESULTS:

- Strong support for education in a community with a large percentage of senior citizens

RECOMMENDATIONS and CONSIDERATIONS:

- Tax initiatives are won or lost long before election day.

SCHOOL or DISTRICT:

- Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association
Pinellas, FL
President, Doug Tuthill

VARIATIONS:

- Grand Island Nebraska
"ABC Day" - Area residents are invited to a continental breakfast at their neighborhood school to hear administrators and teachers talk informally about schools today and then visit in classrooms.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

A search for techniques used by successful intergenerational studies and programs was made by searching libraries and databases. Letters were written to state and county agencies as well as specific school systems, volunteer agencies and senior citizen groups. The programs found were grouped into areas by the technique each used. The ones included give a range of strategies and activities that have proved successful.

Conclusions

The finding common to the majority of programs was that the most important aspect of community involvement was bringing senior citizens into the schools. Senior citizens wanted to be more involved. It was more effective to show seniors today's education than to try to explain it. Taking part in the schools helped them believe in and understand modern education's value. The programs range from a single activity in which senior citizens participate only as an audience to ones in which senior citizens were actively involved on a long-term basis.

The on going programs had one common element. All had several planning

stages. These steps most often included: 1) a needs assessment of seniors and schools, 2) development of specific job descriptions, 3) organized recruiting of volunteers, 4) screening of volunteers, 5) orientation and training of all participants in a program, 6) recognition procedures so services were publicly acknowledged, and 7) frequent evaluation of the program by all participants.

Recommendations

Recommendations for instituting an intergenerational program in a school system, first and foremost, would emphasize the planning procedure that the most successful programs employed. Certain additional points in this planning procedure would also make a program's effectiveness more likely. Several of the programs had coordinators. With the immense undertakings of recruiting, screening, and training, there would need to be someone who is committed to the success of the program and has the time to do the tasks well. The other recommendation would be to have a training manual. This could be used as a reference so participants would not be dependent on remembering all that was said at orientation and training meetings.

The one-time programs in which seniors were the audience or not actually in contact with school students and personnel had few, if any long range effects. The programs in which the benefits surpassed the goals were ones that were on going and ones in which participants were actively involved. Programs designed to effectively change attitudes and win support for schools should start on a small basis to be manageable, but must plan long range to have an on going program that actively involves students and senior citizens together.

One aspect not mentioned in very few of the programs was expense. Transportation, meals, equipment, and training cost money and budgeting needs must be considered.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for further study would include a survey to find the effect of intergenerational programs on the voting habits of the senior population. Another survey would be recommended to find if there were attitudinal changes by the students, senior citizens, and school personnel after intergenerational programs were instituted for a year or more. Finally, further investigation into outreach programs using key communicators or home visits would benefit the expansion of present programs. Investigation should be made into the development of a system to share successful programs with other schools. The success of the goals that benefitted many school districts in the last ten years could enhance other districts willing to invest the time and energy.

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