

# America's Best Intergenerational Communities

Building Livable Communities for Children, Youth, Families and Older Adults



## ABOUT GENERATIONS UNITED

Generations United is the national membership organization focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. Since 1986, Generations United has served as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. Generations United acts as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration between aging, children, and youth organizations, providing a forum to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation. For more information, visit [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org).

## ABOUT METLIFE FOUNDATION

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide. Through programs focusing on empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities, MetLife Foundation increases access and opportunities for people of all ages. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$530 million in grants to nonprofit organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. For more information, visit [www.metlife.com](http://www.metlife.com).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Generations United thanks MetLife Foundation for its financial support of this awards program and their ongoing commitment to intergenerational practice. Thank you to Leah Bradley for her leadership coordinating this project and Melissa Ness, Sheri Steinig, Colleen Appleby-Carroll, Donna Butts, Anne Tria Wise, Eric Masten, Rachel Snell and Alex Cutler for their invaluable help with this publication and the recognition event. Thank you also to interns Meaghan McMahon, who drafted the criteria for this awards program, and Neda Norouzi, who helped refine the process.

Thank you to our blue ribbon panel of judges who had the difficult job of reviewing an excellent pool of applications and selecting our finalists. Panel members are listed below.

Finally, we extend a very special thank you to all the communities who applied for the awards. The innovation and creativity in connecting generations exhibited by all the applicants is truly inspirational. Thank you for building strong, supportive intergenerational communities.

Photographs courtesy of the award winning communities.

## BLUE RIBBON PANEL

### **Ian Bautista**

President  
United Neighborhood  
Centers of America

### **Robert Blancato**

President  
Matz, Blancato, &  
Associates

### **Nancy Henkin**

Executive Director  
Intergenerational  
Center at Temple  
University

### **Jane Hickie**

Senior Research Scholar  
and Director  
Politics, Scholars and  
the Public Program,  
Stanford Longevity  
Center

### **Richard Lerner**

Director  
Institute for Applied  
Research Youth  
Development, Tufts  
University

### **Joan Lombardi**

Child Development &  
Social Policy Advisor  
and former Deputy  
Assistant Secretary,  
Early Childhood  
Development, HHS

### **Michael Marcus**

Program Director  
The Harry and Jeanette  
Weinberg Foundation

### **Karen Pittman**

President and CEO  
Forum for Youth  
Investment

### **Eric Utne**

Senior Fellow  
Utne Institute, Earth  
Corps for Global  
Service

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MetLife Foundation

**generations  
united**  
Because we're stronger together®

# America's Best Intergenerational Communities 2012



## INTRODUCTION

Generations United and MetLife Foundation are pleased to recognize five incredible communities with the first-ever Best Intergenerational Communities Awards. We created these awards to heighten awareness of the importance intergenerational solidarity plays in building strong, supportive communities. A blue ribbon panel of judges selected the winning entries from an excellent pool of applicants from across the country. The judges made their recommendations based on standard criteria that take into account a community's own demographics, services, programs and organizational structure. We recognized communities for their specific intergenerational successes, not as compared to other applicants.

## OVERVIEW

This report presents a brief look at the five award winning communities. We have included a profile on each community that includes:

- A slogan for the intergenerational focus of the community
- A snapshot of key facts on the communities
- A description of intergenerational work
- Quotes from younger and older community residents
- Images of intergenerational connections in action



## DEFINITIONS

The term **“community”** refers to a geographic area with defined borders and resident populations for which reliable demographic data is available. This could include metropolitan areas, cities, towns, counties, zip codes, neighborhoods and school districts.

The term **“intergenerational community”** refers to a place that (1) provides adequately for the safety, health, education and basic necessities of life for people of all ages; (2) promotes programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between people of different generations; and (3) enables all ages to share their talents and resources, and support each other in relationships that benefit both individuals and their community.

An intergenerational community is not just one where multiple generations reside. It is one where individuals of all ages are an integral and valued part of the setting. This perspective is reflected in the families, structures, facilities and services that children and older adults encounter in the community, as well as in day-to-day interactions and relationships. Partnerships are essential to intergenerational communities and can be between local government, senior citizen homes, schools, businesses, local cultural and community organizations and services, families, older adults and children. An intergenerational community builds on the positive resources that each generation has to offer each other and those around them. It advances policies and practices that both acknowledge and promote intergenerational interdependence.



# Georgetown, Texas

**Community Slogan:** *Growing a community where all are valued and have the opportunity to thrive.*



With its quaint Victorian storefronts, historic city square and charming restaurants, Georgetown, Texas is home to approximately 47,000 residents. The city is unique in a number of ways: it is the county seat of Williamson County; it has a fault line, called the Balcones Escarpment, that divides the city into a hilly west side and a flat east side; it is the home to Southwestern University, the oldest university in Texas; and it is the site of Sun City Texas, a retirement community whose residents make up one-third of the city's population. But what really sets Georgetown apart is its commitment to promoting an intergenerational mindset where everyone can feel welcome and wanted.

In Georgetown, no one entity plans or oversees the city's array of intergenerational activities or initiatives. Instead, the city government, schools, businesses, and religious and nonprofit organizations all work collaboratively to identify opportunities and strengthen existing efforts.

The city government helps sustain intergenerational efforts in a number of ways. Using an Asset Based Community Development

## **Description of Community:**

The City of Georgetown is a historic county seat in central Williamson County. The award winning "community" of Georgetown encompasses all geographic areas served by the Georgetown Independent School District, which does include some areas located outside the actual city.

## **Demographics** (Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 QuickFacts):

- Total population: 47,400
- No. under 24: 11,625
- No. over 55: 18,108

**Websites:** [www.georgetown.org](http://www.georgetown.org),  
[www.georgetownisd.org](http://www.georgetownisd.org),  
[visit.georgetown.org](http://visit.georgetown.org)

## **Current Program Examples:**

- The Georgetown Project – collaboration of many agencies, government
- Jr. Leadership Georgetown and Teen Advisory Boards
- Southwestern University, Civic Engagement and Senior University
- San Gabriel Park and Trails System
- Georgetown Independent School District programming
- Intergenerational dance and music performances

## **Intergenerational Fact:**

The Sun City (active retirement community in Georgetown) voters overwhelmingly supported the passage of a 2010 local school bond, at a time when other Central Texas community school bonds failed.

approach, it works to build the often underused “community assets” (talents) of seniors and youth. The city is also a major contributor to the Georgetown Project, which funds social service and youth development organizations that help sustain intergenerational connections. Other city projects include helping to revitalize the historic town square so it now serves as an intergenerational gathering place; overseeing a new public library that includes space to foster intergenerational interactions; and building a new recreation center that includes a teen/senior center.



The Georgetown Independent School District (GISD) leads many intergenerational program efforts. These include: recruiting senior mentors and tutors into the schools; co-sponsoring an annual senior spelling bee; arranging joint performances with the high school and Sun City choirs; inviting veterans to be recognized at school Veterans Day ceremonies; and sending school buses to shuttle the Sun City “Booster Club” to high school ball games. These efforts are having a beneficial effect. In a 2010 vote, Sun City voters overwhelmingly supported the passage of a local school bond at a time when this measure failed in other Central Texas community districts.



Senior adults (50 and older) in Georgetown can take advantage of affordable lifelong learning through the Georgetown Senior University program. Approximately 600 residents currently take classes. Recently, the program’s headquarters relocated from Sun City to the Southwestern University campus to encourage seniors to become an integral part of the university environment.

Georgetown’s commitment to intergenerational understanding means a great deal to residents.

As Stephanie Blanck explains, “I have lived here since 1980 and have seen the changes and growth within our city and our school system. The demographics...and physical footprint have changed, but one thing has not. The heart and soul of caring for one’s neighbor has remained. As my husband and I approached retirement, we decided there was no better place for us to ‘grow old’ than in Georgetown. We know we will be well taken care of here.”



Adds Lizz Stippick, “I have lived in Georgetown for all 19 years of my life...and I plan on growing old here...my ultimate dream would be to teach here in the district that I grew up in...that way I can still be involved in this great blended community!”

# Lamoni, Iowa

Community Slogan: *One Generation*



The residents of Lamoni, Iowa have never let their small population (just under 2,500 people) stop them from thinking big and acting even bigger. Indeed, Lamoni serves as a great example of what a small town can do when its residents believe in themselves and their future together.

When a problem needs fixing or an issue needs attending, residents of every age are ready, willing, and able to help out. Responsibility for intergenerational efforts does not fall to any one group in Lamoni, but is a social norm for community life. All ages work together, and every resident has a special role to play. Where else might you find a 99-year-old resident volunteering each day at a local center that sells donated clothing and other items at low cost?

Taking on such an active civic role is not a stretch for most Lamoni residents. You might say intergenerational collaboration is part of the town's DNA. From the time they're very young, Lamoni children are exposed to service learning. Schools help partner young people with businesses, civic groups, social clubs, and other youth organizations to work on projects designed to better the community.

One current project, the Lamoni SAFE Coalition, was organized in 1998 to provide quiet, behind-the-scenes support for local families. Through the coalition, high school students, Graceland University students, young adults, middle-age adults, and seniors work together to identify and address local needs. The coalition comprises organizations and groups of every kind, including civic, justice, education, seniors,

## Description of Community:

The community encompasses the town of Lamoni and the surrounding school district located in Decatur County, Iowa.

## Demographics (Source: CLRsearch.com):

- Total Population: 2,489
- No. under 23: 1,293
- No. over 55: 621

**Website:** [www.lamoni-iowa.com](http://www.lamoni-iowa.com)

## Current Program Examples:

- Graceland University programming
- Lunch Buddies
- Technology Program
- Across Age Mentoring
- Adopted Grandparent Program
- Community Garden
- Tuesdays in the Park

## Intergenerational Fact:

There is a newly established Volunteer Center of Southern Iowa, which will help increase connections as well as a planned expansion of intergenerational mentoring programs.



public safety, community action, media and communication, faith communities, business, government, and a wealth of others. Each group takes part in monthly meetings and makes networking connections with other members to identify appropriate resources to address identified needs.

Lamoni has numerous strong intergenerational practices benefiting all ages. Graceland University students volunteer with school children, senior adults and local community organizations. High school students teach computer skills to adults. The weekly Lunch Buddies mentoring program brings mentors ranging from Graceland students to city employees, to Optimist Club members, to retired citizens to the local elementary school. Additional intergenerational programs include a Service Learning Club that provides a wide array of services for older adults and Across Ages mentoring that pairs middle school youth with adults aged 55 and over.



The Community Center offers community garden plots for adoption, encouraging participation of mixed-age gardeners tending to their plots. Recognizing the importance of the environment, all residents will gain from a new rain garden that will help create a sustainable urban drainage system.

All these intergenerational connections and programs enhance the lives of Lamoni's residents.

Describing his community, Lamoni resident Tom Morain says, "What makes Lamoni such a great place to live is community input. If good things are going to happen, it's because local residents roll up their sleeves and make them happen. That includes the community in its broadest sense. Youth, adults, and senior volunteers do good things for each other and, in return, discover the joy of feeling valued and cared for."



Cody Shield, who grew up in Lamoni and now attends Graceland University, agrees. "Growing up in Lamoni has been a great experience for me and has given me many opportunities to grow. I feel that all people in Lamoni are given a chance to take a leadership role and serve the community no matter what their age."



# Oberlin, Ohio

Community Slogan: *Live, Learn, Lead*



The City of Oberlin, Ohio, with approximately 8,300 residents, has many points of pride: it has a nationally-ranked liberal arts college, a strong abolitionist history, a rich and varied cultural life, and a legacy that all individuals matter.

Oberlin's commitment to the importance of intergenerational opportunities is evident in the city's logo, which includes the tagline "Live. Learn. Lead." That tagline underscores the city's commitment to encouraging all residents to live their lives to the fullest. Oberlin backs that commitment by offering opportunities for them to become lifelong learners (and help others learn) and to become leaders—locally, regionally, and globally.

Collaboration and community service are a big part of life in Oberlin, as the City of Oberlin has built strong alliances with community organizations that ensure that Oberlin is an intergenerational community. The local government, Oberlin College, Oberlin City Schools, Kendal at Oberlin (a retirement community), Oberlin Community Services, Oberlin Heritage Center, Mercy Allen Hospital, and many other local organizations work closely together to develop programs that support and encourage interaction among different generations.

Students from Oberlin College's Bonner Center for Service and Learning work with the many community organizations to address concerns and challenges, using many intergenerational techniques to achieve the goals. The Oberlin Early Childhood Center draws senior citizens, Oberlin College students, and Lorain

## Description of Community:

Oberlin is a city that encompasses 4.78 square miles

**Demographics** (Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 QuickFacts):

- Total population: 8,286
- No. under 24: 4,321
- No. over 55: 2,001

**Website:** [www.cityofoberlin.com](http://www.cityofoberlin.com)

## Current Program Examples:

- The Listening Post: Elementary and Older Adult conversations
- Oberlin Early Childhood Center programming
- Oberlin College's Bonner Center for Service Learning programming
- Kendal at Oberlin Retirement Community & Kendal Early Learning Center programming
- Grandparent Reader Program
- Community Technology Center

## Intergenerational Fact:

Older adults contribute 40,000 hours annually in volunteer hours, many of which provide intergenerational opportunities.

County Joint Vocational School students who volunteer in a variety of ways: in the classroom; in the kitchen, even helping prepare grant proposals.

The Kendal at Oberlin Retirement Community is a beehive of intergenerational programs as well. Its Volunteer Clearing House—initiated by a resident—matches the interests, skills, and expertise of senior volunteers with the needs of local organizations, many serving children and youth. The Kendal Early Learning Center, located in Kendal, provides daycare in an intergenerational setting. Oberlin Elementary Schools have a Grandparent Readers Program and a Listening Post Program, providing opportunities for children to interact regularly one-on-one with older adults.

These are just a few examples of how the generations are working together in Oberlin and all with no one organization or office in charge of engagement or intergenerational matters. Residents credit the community's emphasis on intergenerational connection with improving their own lifestyle and outlook.



Says Oberlin High School student Rachel Mentzer, “I have attended the Oberlin City Schools since kindergarten. My life has been enriched in many ways because our community is committed to multigenerational projects and many of these revolve around community service. From elementary school through high school, we are learning how important it is to do something for others in even greater ways.”

Adds octogenarian John Dixon Elder, “We Kendal [retirement community] residents live with a lot of old people—very fascinatingly talented, experienced and wise old people. But we keep our curiosity, creativity, and intellectual capacity alive thanks to the extraordinary intergenerational opportunities that Oberlin provides.”



# San Diego County, California

Community Slogan: *Live Well, San Diego!: A Healthy Community For All Ages*



Think of San Diego and you probably focus on its physical beauty: the sandy beaches and imposing canyons, the charming historic area, and, of course, the lovely weather. But if you concentrated solely on the physical attributes, you'd miss out on one of San Diego's most appealing traits: its commitment to making life better for all generations.

With three million residents strong, the County of San Diego believes in the need to support intergenerational connections. In 2001, it backed up that belief with serious funding by adding a full-time staff position of Intergenerational Coordinator at the county's department of Aging & Independence Services (AIS). That investment has paid big returns: through intergenerational programs it has employed residents' strengths to expand services and address serious challenges. Residents benefit by having the opportunity use their talents and creativity to contribute to the county's well-being and vibrancy.

## Description of Community:

The County of San Diego is 4,261 square miles.

**Demographics** (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey – One Year Estimates, 2010):

- Total population: 3,095,313
- No. under 23: 1,039,850
- No. over 55: 681,041

## Website:

[www.sdpublic.sdcounty.ca.gov](http://www.sdpublic.sdcounty.ca.gov)

## Current Program Examples:

- Young and older adult leadership initiatives
- Annual Intergenerational Games and County-wide health initiative
- Kinship Programs
- Intergenerational Art, Math, Reading, and Jazz Clubs
- Intergenerational Garden Program
- Connections to schools through mentoring, safe routes to school, breakfast in classrooms

## Intergenerational Fact:

In 2000, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors established a full time Intergenerational Coordinator position at Aging & Independence Services, with the goal of helping to establish, implement and sustain intergenerational programming throughout the county.

Over the past 11 years, the county's commitment to intergenerational programs has only strengthened as the economy has weakened. By sharing sites and resources, it has maximized financial resources. It has also challenged traditional ways of funding. For example, AIS allocates funding from the Older Americans Act to support intergenerational program development. It also requests and receives funds from other county agencies to support intergenerational programs. Recently, a \$16.1 million dollar Centers for Disease Control Healthy Works grant included an intergenerational thread that supported Safe Routes to School, Breakfast in the Classroom, Community gardens, and Community Engagement.



In San Diego today, all types of county services and programs have an intergenerational aspect. Libraries and Parks and Recreation offer intergenerational art, math, reading and jazz programs. Older adults take part in a Workforce Academy for Youth, mentoring foster youth for six months as they get ready to leave the foster system and join the work world. Young people have the opportunity to join the Legacy Corps Program where they serve caregivers and learn about the aging process. The county also works with providers that serve older adults and youth to sponsor Resident and Youth Leadership Academies. These academies train older adults and youth in leadership, and primarily focus on community planning principles and environmental prevention strategies. The list goes on.

This June, county agencies, non-profit organizations, for-profit agencies and faith communities will conduct a summit: Live Well, San Diego! Building a Healthy Community for All Ages. Speakers and activities will focus on how to make healthy choices and create living environments that encourage safe, active lifestyles. The event will take place in five locations to ensure all San Diegans have access to the information and activities.

San Diego's efforts have resonated well with residents of all ages. As retired volunteer and community gardener Rich Rogers noted, community gardening "has turned into a labor of love. Gardening is as "grass roots" as you can get and teaching and mentoring kids of all ages increases my desire to be a positive influence and asset in my community."



And for Alexis Wilson, a college student, her labor of love is to volunteer to meet with an older adult who has Parkinson's disease. As she describes it, "Phil's wife recently told me he sometimes forgets I'm not part of the family. Spending time with Phil reminds me I'm not going to be young forever. I would want the same help when I am that age."

# Virginia Planning District 10

Community Slogan: *Healthy Aging is a Lifelong Activity*



Covering the City of Charlottesville and sprawling counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson, Virginia's Planning District 10 was, until fairly recently, as divided in its approach to serving multiple generations as in its geography. Thanks to a concerted effort by the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA), that has changed. Today, organizations with audiences as different as the Boys and Girls Club, the Alzheimer's Association, the YMCA, and the Local Food Hub work together to help ensure healthy aging at every stage of life in Planning District 10. The district has become a national model by embracing a philosophy of intergenerational mutual benefit. This unity of vision and purpose within an exceptionally diverse community, gives Planning District 10 its distinctive identity as one of the best places in America to age – at any age.

The roots of JABA's pivotal role in Planning District 10's intergenerational movement date back to 1975—long before most communities had even considered the need for or importance of intergenerational practices. As the movement grew, the district recognized it needed a formal plan to guide the growth of intergenerational initiatives. This transformation began

## Description of Community:

Virginia Planning District 10 encompasses the autonomous City of Charlottesville and the five surrounding counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson.

**Demographics** (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey)

- Total population: 234,712
- No. under 23: 78,994
- No. over 55: 61,739

**Websites:** [www.jabacares.org](http://www.jabacares.org),  
[www.charlottesville.org](http://www.charlottesville.org),  
[www.albemarle.org](http://www.albemarle.org),  
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[www.louisacounty.com](http://www.louisacounty.com),  
[nelsoncounty.com](http://nelsoncounty.com).

## Current Program Examples:

- Development and distribution of an intergenerational program toolkit
- Shared site facilities with preschool children and adult care center clients
- Active intergenerational programs in all 8 community centers
- Community Gardens, Community Farmers Market and various food/healthy living initiatives across the planning district
- Music, tutoring, vocational education

**Intergenerational Fact:** Jefferson Area Board for Aging's mission reads: "to promote, establish and preserve sustainable communities for healthy aging." that benefit individuals and families of all ages."

in 2003 when Planning District 10 created the *2020 Plan: Aging in Community*. The plan recognized the importance of intergenerational initiatives and provided a clear blueprint the community could follow in its quest to become a truly great intergenerational place to live. The 2020 Plan caught the attention of the U.S. Administration on Aging, which presented Planning District 10 with an “Overall Excellence Award.” From that plan, Planning District 10 partnered with Just Partners, Inc. to develop the “Viable Futures Toolkit,” which offers ideas on creating solutions for older generations that simultaneously address the needs of younger people and community livability. Thirteen states now use the toolkit.

Today, JABA’s mission is “to promote, establish and preserve sustainable communities for healthy aging that benefit individuals and families of all ages.” All eight of JABA’s community centers have active intergenerational programs and members of its two adult care centers interact on a daily basis with co-located child care centers. In addition, there are intergenerational song-writing/performance programs, tutoring opportunities, vocational education programs, nutrition initiatives, and high school student representation on JABA’s volunteer board, as well as many other intergenerational activities. Community gardens yield locally grown food that is used to feed elderly residents at the local community and senior centers.



So what effect has this careful planning and emphasis on intergenerational living had on residents?

For Ray and Linda Jacquin, who tutor at a local elementary school, the experience has practically left them speechless—in a very good way. “Our participation in intergenerational programs has enriched our lives. We recently received a card from one of our students that read, ‘Thank you for coming every week to make me a little bit smarter.’ What more could we possibly add?”

Living in a community that honors everyone’s talents has opened high school student Lanie Newton’s eyes to new opportunities. Newton serves on the Volunteer Council at the Jefferson Area Board for Aging. She says, “I am the youngest member [of the Council]; the next oldest is a student at the University of Virginia. From the beginning, the council members have sought out my opinion. I will take this experience with me to college and beyond.”



# Intergenerational Communities & the Older Americans Act

Generations United strongly supports the mission of the Older Americans Act: to help older adults maintain maximum independence in their homes and communities and to promote a continuum of care for vulnerable seniors. As Members of Congress plan for the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, Generations United urges the inclusion of intergenerational opportunities to improve programs and respond to specific needs. Intergenerational programs bring together diverse groups and networks, and multiply human resources by engaging volunteers and maximizing financial resources by sharing sites and supplies.

## LIVABLE COMMUNITIES (TITLES III & IV)

The rise in the number of aging citizens will dramatically affect the social, physical, and economic fabric of our nation's cities and counties in areas such as: aging, health, and human services; housing and transportation; education/recreation; and volunteerism, lifelong learning and civic engagement.

Livable communities for all ages are defined as places where citizens can grow up and grow old with maximum independence, safety and well-being.

State and local governments already have a mandate to develop and implement broader long-term community infrastructure and service systems in a variety of arenas. Despite the impending demographic forecast, few communities have begun to prepare to address the aging of their population. With 78 million Baby Boomers retiring over the next 20 years, the pending reauthorization of the Older Americans Act provides a key opportunity to initiate important changes for governments to prepare for the aging of their communities.

**Generations United recommends establishing new provisions with dedicated funding authorizations to support AAAs and Title VI programs to assist county, city and tribal governments across the nation to use intergenerational strategies to proactively prepare for the aging of their communities.** The provisions would authorize funding and outline the role and activities to be performed by a full-time intergenerational planner/community organizer position. This new planner/community organizer would take a leading role in working with other agencies and stakeholder organizations (including children and youth organizations) in developing a comprehensive livability plan, including approaches that design communities for all ages, and implementation strategy factoring the range of community policies, programs and services.

For a full list of Generations United's recommendations for the Older Americans Act visit [www.gu.org/OURWORK/PublicPolicy/OlderAmericansAct.aspx](http://www.gu.org/OURWORK/PublicPolicy/OlderAmericansAct.aspx).

For more information, please contact Melissa Ness, Public Policy Manager, at [mness@gu.org](mailto:mness@gu.org).

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# Intergenerational Communities & the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Generations United strongly supports the goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. As Members of Congress continue to work on the reauthorization of ESEA, Generations United urges the inclusion of intergenerational opportunities to improve programs and respond to specific needs. Intergenerational programs bring together diverse groups and networks, and multiply human resources by engaging volunteers and maximizing financial resources by sharing sites and supplies. Generations United sees two specific areas within ESEA that can help support intergenerational communities:



Photo by L. Roger Turner

## SCHOOL-BASED SHARED SITES

Faced with tough budgets, communities can save scarce resources by consolidating services for children, youth, and older adults under one roof while preserving quality and offering added benefits to each generation. Our nation's schools are uniquely positioned to become intergenerational shared sites and engage older adults as resources for the education of our youth. We support legislation that will help schools transition into intergenerational shared sites.

Research shows that shared sites provide substantial benefits for children. For example: preschool children involved in intergenerational programs had higher personal/social developmental scores (by 11 months) than preschool children involved in non-intergenerational programs.<sup>1</sup>

Preschool children involved in intergenerational programs had higher personal/social developmental scores (by 11 months) than preschool children involved in non-intergenerational programs.

## ENGAGING OLDER ADULTS IN EDUCATION

In order to foster growth of programs that enhance students' learning experiences, address community needs, spur innovation in the classroom and improve student outcomes, the reauthorization of ESEA should include language that complements efforts in the Serve America Act to support the integration of intergenerational civic engagement opportunities in student curriculum.

<sup>1</sup> Rosebrook, V. (2006). *Research Indicates: Intergenerational Interactions Enhance Young Children's Personal/Social Skills*. In Press.

Studies have shown that youth who are involved in intergenerational mentoring programs demonstrate improved grades, significant decreases in school absences, and decreased suspensions from school. Children in schools where older adults were a regular fixture (volunteers working 15 hours per week) had improved reading scores and fewer behavioral problems than their peers at other schools.<sup>2</sup>

Intergenerational opportunities in schools – including programs such as community schools and Promise Neighborhoods – allow for the community to come together and foster supportive and collaborative relationships to support student success both in and out of school.

In these challenging times, we must take steps to strengthen our schools and facilitate relationships among students, older adults and the community. If implemented, these recommendations will save limited resources now while investing wisely in ways that will bring multiplying returns for our children, families and communities of tomorrow.

For a full list of Generations United's recommendations for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act visit [www.gu.org/OURWORK/PublicPolicy/Education.aspx](http://www.gu.org/OURWORK/PublicPolicy/Education.aspx).

For more information, please contact Eric Masten, Policy & Program Coordinator, at [emasten@gu.org](mailto:emasten@gu.org).

Children in schools where older adults were a regular fixture (volunteers working 15 hours per week) had improved reading scores and fewer behavioral problems than their peers at other schools.



Photo by Stuart Kandell

<sup>2</sup> Rebok, G.W., et al. (March 2004). Short-Term Impact of Experience Corps® Participation on Children and Schools: Results from a Pilot Randomized Trial. *Journal of Urban Health* Vol 81, No. 1, p. 79-93.

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*Larry Naake*  
Executive Director  
National Association of Counties

*Sandra Nathan*  
Senior Vice President, Economic  
Security  
National Council on Aging

*Barb Quaintance*  
Senior Vice President  
Office of Volunteer and Civic  
Engagement  
AARP

*John Rother*  
President & CEO  
National Coalition on Health Care

*Pamela B. Smith*  
Director, Aging & Independence  
Services  
County of San Diego

*James Taylor*  
President, Senior Living  
Sodexo, North America

*Paul N. D. Thornell*  
Vice President, Federal Government  
Affairs  
Citigroup, Inc.

*Sandra Timmerman*  
Director  
MetLife Mature Market Institute

*Marla Viorst*  
Senior Vice President  
Wexler & Walker Public Policy  
Association

## **STRATEGIC ADVISORS**

*Robert Blancato*  
President  
Matz, Blancato, & Associates

*James Firman*  
President & CEO  
National Council on Aging

*Marc Freedman*  
President  
Civic Ventures

*Irv Katz*  
President & CEO  
The National Human Services  
Assembly

*Catherine Milton*

*Mary Ann Van Clief*  
Vice President  
The Brookdale Foundation Group

*Juan Williams*  
Fox News Correspondent and  
Journalist

## **STAFF**

*Donna M. Butts*  
Executive Director

*Colleen Appleby-Carroll*  
Communications Coordinator

*Ana Beltran*  
Special Advisor  
National Center on Grandfamilies

*Leah Bradley*  
Program Specialist

*Alex Cutler*  
Special Projects Assistant

*Adam Hlava*  
Operations and Grants Manager

*Jaia Peterson Lent*  
Deputy Executive Director

*Eric Masten*  
Policy and Program Coordinator

*Melissa Ness*  
Public Policy Manager

*Rachel Snell*  
Intern

*Que Spencer*  
Intern

*Sheri Steinig*  
Deputy Executive Director

*Tom Taylor*  
Special Advisor, Seniors4Kids

*Bettina Thorpe-Tucker*  
Office Assistant

*Anne Tria Wise*  
Senior Project Manager

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