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Intergenerational Service-Learning

Illinois Intergenerational Initiative

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What is Intergenerational Service and Learning?

A retired secretary assists with a high-school business class. When she suffers a stroke the students visit, encourage, and help her through rehabilitation --**Intergenerational Service-Learning** Members of a fraternity help senior citizens relocate to their new facility. The following semester senior citizens mentor freshman students who are overwhelmed by the university experience --**Intergenerational Service-Learning**.

An older couple visits a preschool to read and tell stories to the children. Three years later when one of them loses sight, the students take turns reading to them--proudly demonstrating their new skills --**Intergenerational Service-Learning**.

Retirees visit a Youth Center to tutor delinquent boys. Youths shovel snow for older residents --**Intergenerational Service-Learning**.

Introduction

▲ In rural communities, inner city neighborhoods, suburbs, and cities, old and young gather to share their talents and experiences. Older adults tutor, mentor, provide child care, guest lectures, and other events in the classroom, and students provide chore services, assist caregivers, visit nursing homes and homebound elders. Unfortunately there are too few programs in comparison to the need and available resources. The needs of children and education are almost unfathomable. The needs of the older population are increasingly complex. And yet we have not adequately tapped the rich resources of youth and older Americans that could address these needs. This report recognizes the needs and problems of youth and elders in Illinois and how generations are working together to provide solutions.

During the first four months of 1990, seven regional meetings were held in Illinois to create momentum for intergenerational program development, to increase awareness of the benefits of intergenerational programs, and to emphasize the interdependence of generations. Each meeting highlighted information on successful local intergenerational programs.

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The meetings were sponsored by the Illinois Board of Higher Education through a Higher Education Cooperation Act grant, the Retirement Research Foundation, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, the seven host institutions, and local sponsors to highlight programs and activities that demonstrate helping relationships between generations, especially young and old. The meetings examined the ways that intergenerational programs address the organizational priorities of education, health and human services and recognized the potential for students and retirees to serve and learn together.

Each meeting was hosted by a university and planned by local educators, students, older adults, service providers, and organizations interested in bringing generations together. Each planning committee was different, but throughout the state these committees included community colleges, educational service centers, teachers, student groups, children's organizations, health organizations, school boards, volunteer organizations, and aging organizations, such as area agencies on aging, Retired Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP), Foster Grandparents, and AARP. Model programs described successful ventures into intergenerational day care, nursing home learning centers for elementary students, pen pal programs, grocery shopping for the homebound, latchkey programs, friendly visiting, and a variety of other programs.

People met, shared ideas, became aware of intergenerational activities in their regions and discovered resources for future use. Those attending the meetings were a diverse group of educators, senior citizens, caregivers, administrators, advocates, and board members. The report reflects the feelings, ideas and recommendations of 324 Illinoisans regarding intergenerational programs.

Illinois Intergenerational Initiative: <http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii/>



Strategies for the Future

Having the opportunity to share with others, see programs in action, and believe in yourself this is the way of the future. Pat Shepherd, Schaumburg Park District, ably summarizes future directions.

What could this Future be? Imagine schools of the Future that include older adults as an integral part of all educational levels. The everyday life for older adults involves children and young people. The everyday life of young people includes older mentors. Communities and neighborhoods have a spirit of caring and working together. The Future can be what we plan, perform, and achieve.

Throughout Illinois long-term care facilities older persons with physical limitations are reading to small groups of preschoolers. A frail woman is demonstrating her quilt squares as a delighted 4-year-old observes. An aged mechanic is showing pictures of a car, asking the 3- and 4- year-old apprentices to name the parts.

In the elementary school, older persons are in most every classroom working as tutors, telling stories, helping solve arithmetic problems, and demonstrating lifelong skills. At noontime the cafeteria reveals older adults interspersed with lively youngsters. After lunch a group of students form a circle around an older man telling his story about life in early Chicago days.

Up the road at the high school older persons are also evident. A retired accountant is in the bookkeeping class to review problem sets; a retired journalist is working on the school paper, explaining how reporting and editorializing differ; and a retired photographer helps the yearbook staff select pictures. Outside, an older swimmer is timing the swim team. A group of neighborhood elders listens as their at-risk students share a victory in English class. After school, young and old board the school buses together with some voc-ed students accompanying their older friends to help them rake leaves and perform small repairs.

As the school bus rolls past the community college, the special-events director utilizes a cadre of retirees and students to assist with an upcoming intergenerational presentation of *Porgy and Bess*. A grandparent-grandchild communication workshop yields dynamic dialogue about the "difficult" middle generation. Older volunteers work with community college students children to help preschoolers prepare their unique books based on a storytelling session and help establish skills for reading readiness.

At the university, a group of retired faculty are critiquing research proposals with a research-design seminar. In the College of Education, 60- and 70-year-olds are studying to become certified day-care assistants. In the Basic Skills Lab, retired staff and faculty mentors are working one-on-one with special-needs students to improve study skills. In the Learning Resources Center, graduate teaching assistants are discussing instructional problems with retired master teachers. A psychology professor introduces a member of Widowed Persons Service to her adult development class studying the grieving process.

These experiences are happening now on a limited scale, but they could and should be happening in every school, college, and university. Throughout the educational system, the skills of retirees are

enhancing the quality of education. It is a win-win proposition. The students benefit from an educational experience that they would not otherwise receive. The older population contributes to education and provides continuity to education. Teachers and professors are able to bring variety to their classrooms and promote greater student accomplishments.

But the scenario need not stop with schooling. In the true spirit of service-learning, a cadre of student volunteers is activated within the schools; students are helping one another; and in the community, students are providing service to others, especially to older adults. Students tutor, mentor, assist with home repairs, do chores, offer respite for caregivers, provide friendly visits and stimulation to the homebound, help single-parent mothers, read to all ages thus promoting family literacy, and respond to the unique needs of the community.

Information centers staffed by both young and old provide critical information about services and how to access them, about wellness and disease prevention, and about topics of interest to young and old such as sex, employment, physical changes, AIDS, Alzheimers, childcare, money, eldercare and so much more.

Nursing homes have become learning centers, so that children are able to tap the knowledge, skills and experiences of seniors. Nursing homes are also centers for courses of interest to senior citizens and students. College students work with older adults as a part of the curriculum in recreation, health education, public health, political science, physiology, and education.

The scenario continues in the spirit of service-learning. The most dramatic development in our Future is that the leadership of our State makes a personal commitment. CEOs of corporations, state administrators, university and community college presidents volunteer at least one hour each week. The idea started with education presidents of the universities and community colleges agreed to volunteer an hour a week to an at-risk student. The glow of that attention created a powerful impact on the students and their academic performance. So each of the CEOs, presidents and directors of state agencies recruited five administrators from their organizations and the impact became more profound. The number of volunteers grew and grew until dropouts are all but eliminated. Something even more astounding has happened.

Other state agencies joined education to assist the populations they are mandated to serve. Like the presidents, the directors of state agencies led the way for their employees. The problems of poverty, drug abuse, infant mortality, child and elder abuse, and negative images of disabled and mentally ill seem to improve dramatically. The State is listening and responding to the needs of the people.

This is a Future where communities might once again reflect the "helping spirit" that was the foundation of our country. Education in the Future scenario produces individuals with the ability to read, write, communicate, and excel. Workers are adequately trained for employment opportunities, and literacy is a reality for all.

We have the resources in our youth, in our middle generation, and in our older persons. Our challenge is to bring the generations together to expand existing programs throughout Illinois. Carol Tice in the Carbondale meeting ably summarized our challenge: Those who reach into the Circle of Helping show they care, and by doing so, they kindle a ray of hope.



Recommendations

The Circle of Helping meetings confirmed that many Illinois communities and neighborhoods benefit from intergenerational programs. Intergenerational Service-Learning creates community harmony and improves the quality of life for all ages. Aging education, getting programs started, intergenerational communication and public relations were the topics of greatest interest to participants of the Circle of Helping meetings. Generational conflict was discussed but did not evoke significant response. Each of these topics led to a vision of what the future can be if generations work together.

The following recommendations and conclusions outline strategies and ideas for beginning, implementing and continuing programs. The recommendations stem from group meetings and questionnaires completed by meeting participants. The summary and recommendations include five categories: generational conflict and harmony, aging education, getting programs started, intergenerational communication, and public relations.

A. Generational Conflict and Harmony

Most participants did not view this debate as a concern. Young and old alike attached greater significance to accessing other generations.

Recommendation One:

Communities, neighborhoods, schools and service providers must work together to establish methods for providing easy access between generations.

B. Aging Education

A lack of understanding about other ages is prevalent. Individuals need to understand issues relating to various ages to create an understanding of that particular place in the life cycle and a greater appreciation of what others may be experiencing.

Recommendation Two:

Every school in Illinois, preschool through postsecondary should produce a plan for involving older adults in the classroom and students in service-learning opportunities.

Recommendation Three:

Educators should intergrate aging education (learning about aging) into existing courses and classes across the curriculum.

Recommendation Four:

Principals, superintendents, deans, and presidents are urged to endorse the efforts of teachers and professors who engage in intergenerational program development.

Recommendation Five:

Those involved in curriculum development must encourage the use of aging education in the classroom throughout the educational spectrum.

C. Getting Programs Started

Participants had concerns about the lack of definition of intergenerational programs, the lack of information about intergenerational programs, what they are, how to get them started, their benefits, the variety of programs, and the ways that diverse organizations could benefit from them. The networking between service providers, students, older adults, and educators helped to emphasize the importance of working together. Funding is not necessarily the issue. Participants concurred that the most important components of successful intergenerational program development are time and commitment. It is naive to believe that doesn't cost something, but funding was not seen by most conference participants as the critical element. Leadership is. Organizational endorsement is.

The recommendations for getting started include two important organizational levels. First, and most important, is the individual taking the initiative to get a program started. This person most often invests energy, time and creativity, and makes a commitment to solving an important educational or human need.

The second level for getting started and enduring continuity is gaining organizational endorsement and support. The program is more likely to be successful if it originates at the grassroots, but administrators have the power to encourage and foster those who might be interested by reticent. Once the program is established, the organization has an important role in promoting program continuity by rewarding, nurturing, publicizing, and supporting.

Recommendation Six:

Providing information about intergenerational programs and encouraging program development are timely roles for area agencies on aging, public libraries, educational service centers, and health and human service agencies.

Recommendation Seven:

Teachers and professors who would like to start an intergenerational program but cannot seem to get moving, are advised to pick up the phone and call one or two older persons from church, relatives of colleagues, or acquaintances. Invite them into your classroom with a specific job that is meaningful, and enjoyable.

D. Intergenerational Communication

Younger and older generations are sometimes fearful about interacting with each other. They often find it difficult to make conversation at first, thinking "we have little in common." Opportunities for significant interaction are not an integral part of the lives of students and older adults. One of the best vehicles for improving intergenerational communication is frequent contact so that students and retirees get time to learn about one another.

Recommendation Eight:

Communities and neighborhoods are encouraged to develop monthly or bi-monthly forums, socials, or activities involving multigenerations.

Recommendation Nine:

Local governments should consider multigenerational committees for solving community and neighborhood problems and planning for the future.

Recommendation Ten:

Older adults, including nursing home residents, need orientation to the characteristics and communication styles of the younger population.

Recommendation Eleven:

Young people are urged to become sensitive to the sensory changes that occur with age and sometimes inhibit communication.

E. Public Relations

Those involved with intergenerational programs are pleased and impressed with these programs. To accomplish the recommendations of the Circle of Helping meetings, the public must be made aware of the importance and impact of intergenerational programs to all ages. Administrators must view the programs as integral to their organizations and a vehicle for achieving organizational priorities.

Recommendation Twelve:

Education, youth and aging organizations must publicize information about model intergenerational programs--their benefits, timeliness, and rewards.

Recommendation Thirteen:

The media is encouraged to highlight intergenerational service-learning programs particularly as they address some of the most serious societal problems such as education, health, drugs, housing, long term care, and child care.

In a nutshell, the recommendations from the Circle of Helping meetings include three key agendas: increasing intergenerational contact, creating opportunities for young and old to work together in communities and neighborhoods, and including aging education throughout the student's educational experience.

Illinois Intergenerational Initiative: <http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii/>

Program Examples

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A. National Intergenerational Programs

Two of the largest and oldest intergenerational programs are the Foster Grandparents Program and Retired Senior Volunteers Program (RSVP). These programs exist throughout Illinois.

RSVP, a component of ACTION, the national volunteer agency, involves volunteers 60 or older who serve through nonprofit and public community organizations. RSVP provides opportunities for retirees to make use of their knowledge and energy to help in the community. Although RSVP volunteers provide services to many organizations, one of their greatest successes is the service for children and students. The RSVP programs have led the way in Illinois with creative programming that addresses some of the most serious problems of education.

Foster Grandparents is another component of ACTION. Foster Grandparents are women and men who bring with them the experience of living and have a willingness to reach out to physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped children. They accept their role to be a grandparent in every sense--being a caring, stable presence in a child's life. The Foster Grandparents Program is open to low-income persons

60 years old and over. In return for their service, they receive a modest tax-free stipend, as well as a transportation allowance, hot meals while in service, accident insurance, and an annual physical examination. They attend 40 hours of preservice orientation and receive monthly in-service training.

B. Day Care

The following programs describe young children visiting an adult day-care center or older adults visiting a child-care center, or a combined adult-child day-care facility.

Rainbow's End Preschool in Carbondale brings children and senior citizens together in three ways. First, the children visit the seniors' day-care center facility each Tuesday at 10 a.m. There, the seniors and children participate in activities planned jointly by the staffs of both programs. Second, the active seniors visit the children once a month. These visits center around special themes such as a Mexican fiesta or circus. Third, the children regularly make tray decorations for those seniors who are served in their homes by the Meals on Wheels program.

The Child Care Center at Oakton Community College was instituted several years ago by Helene Block, a pioneer in intergenerational programming. She involves older adults in the preparation of child care workers and preschool children. The program brings senior citizens to class several times each week to participate in a wide variety of activities with the children.

The Child Care Center at Northeastern University in Chicago involves senior citizens who read stories to preschool children and assist in other classroom activities. One morning a week seniors recruited from the local community read, play games, and indulge in other tiny-tot pursuits with a captivated audience of youngsters at the center. The purpose of the project, in addition to linking old and young, is to conduct a pilot research study measuring what changes, if any, occur in the perceptions of the parent, the children, the seniors, and staff of the Center, regarding interest in reading and other measures of satisfaction. Bubbes and Babies is a program that targets young mothers and their babies. They take their infants once a week to the Council for Jewish Elderly Group Living facilities to interact with the oldest elderly. This multigenerational program helps babies, whose own grandparents often are not living in the area; the children benefit from the extra attention and stimulation the elderly provide; the elderly share their parenting experience and reminisce about their years as a Mom or Dad as they act as advisors or good listeners.

Sheridan Intergenerational Day Care, is a community-based program consisting of three components: child day care, nursery preschool, and adult day care. The child programs are in place, licensed and developing. The adult program is in its planning stages and is expected to be implemented this year.

C. Nursing Home Visiting

Nursing-home visiting is perhaps the most common intergenerational program in Illinois. Principal Jerry Montague at Gilson Brown Elementary School in Godfrey views the nursing home as a learning center for his students. "A learning resource unbounded in life's lessons was found near our school—a nursing home for the aged, infirm and physically handicapped. The Blu Fountain Nursing Home has been providing our students and teachers alike with decades of living experiences the residents willingly share. The elderly are not only giving, but they also receive. Our children provide the aged with a glimpse of their own youth coupled with the changes of the current generation.² They provide individual activities, such as pen pals and letter writing, making favors together, exchanging cards and presents on birthdays, playing games students reading to residents, and residents reading to students. Group activities include the Halloween parade; Thanksgiving dinner; Christmas class programs; band, orchestra, and choral concerts

performed at the nursing home; gardening activities; weekly coffee-room activities, with the residents going to school for coffee, conversation, and student contact. All school programs are open to the nursing home, and a school activity newsletter is sent to the nursing home each month.

The residents of the Blu Fountain Nursing Home are not to be outdone by the Gilson Brown students. Several residents attended a class about being involved and useful. As a class project they decided to write an essay entitled Bits of Wisdom. It is dedicated to those students who are frequent visitors. The dedication of the book reads as follows: ³To the youth of the 1990's from the youth of the 1900's. We traveled by horse and buggy and put a man on the moon.² These programs depict a successful Circle of Helping that improves education and the quality of life for all. The Hamilton County Preschool Intergenerational Program in McLeansboro also views the nursing home as a learning center and has developed much of its curriculum around the exchanges between students and senior citizens. Supervisor Brenda Lueke and teacher Dayna Frey tap the skills and forgotten talents of senior citizens such as woodcrafting, art, quilting, apple peeling, cornshelling and others. They prepare the preschoolers by discussing the life cycle using plants and animals and talking about the past.

At the Children's Learning Center the preschool and K-4 students make weekly visits to the Barb City Manor, a nursing home in DeKalb. They interact for brief periods and get to know each other. On a monthly basis one or more of the groups will enjoy a sing-along, show-and-tell, the player piano, storytime, or puzzle group. The unplanned interactions seem to hold the greatest benefit for all ages.

Brenda Nardi from Mulberry School in Bloomington takes the preschool and K-2 children to a local nursing home. The Circle of Helping is demonstrated according Ms. Nardi: ³The program allows our students the opportunity to bring a little joy into the lives of seniors living in nursing homes. The seniors provide a kind of knowledge no one else can generate.²

D. Career Days and Career Exploration.

Career Days and Career Exploration brings in older volunteers to discuss their experiences with students. For example, Career Connections, in Palos Heights, allows retirees to share career information and skills with 19 schools, kindergarten through eighth grade.

In many classrooms throughout Illinois, older adults enter the classroom to demonstrate arts, crafts, and skills, such as sewing, quilting, drawing, woodwork, basketweaving, and others. For elders who are frail, these activities may also be a part of nursing home visitation. The spirit of Circle of Helping is readily apparent in such cases; the children visit to share their time and enthusiasm, and the elders teach them to sew or read.

A Career Day is held for students in grades six through eight at Highland Park School District 111 where older adults describe their occupations. They provide similar presentations on their lives and careers throughout the year.

E. Adopt-A-Grandparent or Adopt-A-Grandchild

Mary Givens from the Cherrywood Health Care Center in Vandalia describes the benefits of Adopt-a-Grandparent. ³It is a chance for the young to be of service; to feel needed; to develop sensitivity; to respect the needs of others; to learn how to develop friendships with older people; to work as a team for the benefit of someone else; to develop better communication skills; and to establish a sense of concern for the community and its people. For the Grandparent, the program offers an chance to share talents, knowledge, and friendship with the young. The elderly regain the feeling of being useful and productive. Through the personal contact of a handshake, a hug, a kiss, the grandparent experiences the most basic of

all human needs, that of love.²

In Grandparents Unlimited older adults become surrogate grandparents as they volunteer time and services at local child-care and nursery schools. This provides an opportunity for young children and older adults to share a close relationship within a school setting. Grandparents Unlimited is just one of several intergenerational programs created by Helene Block, Oakton Community College.

The DeKalb County Nursing Home brings in junior-high, high-school, and college students to experience one-on-one interaction with specific residents. The students read, visit, talk, take walks, play cards, and participate in group activities together. The students are given an orientation to the facility. ³These programs help maintain and spark interest in life essential to our aging adults,² commented Michele Green.

The Adopt-A-Grandparent is a little different for the Coles County RSVP. The RSVP volunteers are adopted by college students. The students fill out interest cards, and then they are matched with an RSVP member. A break-the-ice potluck is held at the beginning of the program so that volunteers and students get together, visiting at the seniors' home, going out to dinner, and attending functions together. The Chicago Heights Foster Grandparent Program targets at-risk pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. The grandparents visit the classroom four hours each day five days a week.

F. Reading and Literacy

In Arthur, students in School District 305 invite grandparents to Grandparents' Oral Reading Day. Students and grandparents or surrogate grandparents participate in a variety of reading activities. Another program at Arthur gives the students an opportunity to contact nursing home residents. Telephone Buddies is an imaginative program centered on weekly phone calls instigated by the students

Older volunteers with the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) assist as literacy tutors at Joliet Community College.

The Literacy Program through the Secretary of State's office provides tutoring for young adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults. The tutors, often from a different generation, are trained to help students learn to read. The literacy program reaches all corners of Illinois.

The Family Literacy Program at Kishwaukee College is a cooperative effort designed to improve the parent's understanding and stress the importance of prekindergarten skills development of the child. Older adults serve as tutors for young parents and children.

G. Tutoring

Tutoring programs, involving one or a few older persons in the classroom, are the second most common intergenerational programs in Illinois. The usual scenario finds a teacher, concerned about students' reading, writing, or math, realizing that some special attention could make a big difference. This teacher will ask other teachers about their older relatives, make contacts at church, or just find the volunteer serendipitously. The teacher provides the volunteer with a little orientation and training, the volunteer comes to class and the program is created. Some expand, many continue on a small scale because that is the most comfortable basis for the teacher and volunteer. The students look forward to the visit of the older volunteer. The teacher says: ³I could use 20 just like Mrs. X,² and the older volunteers witness the contribution they are making. Programs such as this exist all over the state with little fanfare or attention beyond the local community. Tutors help students in a variety of subjects, but most frequently in math and reading. Intergenerational tutoring programs are also found in libraries, churches, community centers and

private homes.

The Homework Helpers program was organized as a community project under the auspices of the Aurora Area Retired Teachers Association and the Aurora Branch of the American Association of University Women. It was designed to assist middle-school children with their homework assignments. The volunteers hold 90-minute sessions after school in the basement of a local church. The service is available to any student needing assistance.

North Shore Senior Center Tutors travel to the Cove School, a school designed for children with learning disabilities. Each Monday, 15 senior tutors work one-on-one with a child, and together they go over reading and math concepts. The children's teachers explain the assignments and problems that the children are having to the tutors and assist them when necessary.

The Conrad Senior Citizen Center provides tutors to elementary students at Chicago Housing Authority's Lathrop Homes through the Education Network for Older Adults. The program links senior citizens with students at-risk of dropping out to spend time together during the summer to talk, study math and read.

Senior volunteers from the nursing home come to the Des Plaines C.C. School District 62 to serve as tutors in a program called Caring and Sharing.

The Intergenerational Tutoring Program, a tutoring service covering comprehension and vocabulary skills, began its pilot stage in January 1986. This program represents a collaborative effort between the Chicago Public Schools Bureau of Volunteer Programs and the Department of Aging, Southwest Multipurpose Center. Volunteers assist fourth through sixth graders with homework assignments and tutor in reading and math.

The Coles County RSVP assists teachers by listening to the students read. Many times, the volunteers will have a comfortable chair placed in the hallway outside the classroom. The students take a book to the volunteer and read for a designated period of time. They also serve as tutors, either in small groups or one-on-one. Teachers select two to three students who need extra help with reading or math. The students meet with the volunteer once or twice a week and work on projects the teacher has prepared. If one-on-one tutoring is required, the volunteer and student meet once a week to work on homework.

The RSVP Program in Quincy targets at-risk prekindergarten students. The volunteers assist teachers by telling stories, reading, and working individually with the children. The program convenes at least once each week.

The East St. Louis Foster Grandparent Program provides one-on-one tutoring for children with special needs.

Students are tutored by senior citizens at the Leaning Tower YMCA in Chicago. Tutoring is one-to-one, and both groups share swimming lessons and lunch.

Seniors in the Classroom is a tutoring and teacher's aide program through the Forest Park School District 91.

H. Students Serving Seniors

In the Bloom Township Youth Committee, Youth provide minor repairs and maintenance tasks for older and handicapped residents living independently, safely and with dignity in their own homes.

DeKalb middle-school and high-school student council members, and Northern Illinois University students help as drivers or navigators to deliver meals.

The Centrillio Council of Girl Scouts in Bloomington prepares birthday cards monthly for the Heritage Manor Nursing Home.

In Quincy, through a learning-service program, students help with Meals on Wheels, visit nursing homes and produce a Carry Out Caravan. The Carry Out Caravan is a grocery-shopping assistance program for homebound elderly and handicapped persons who are unable to shop for themselves. The service is a cooperative project of the Adams RSVP, Chaddock School and SAVE U MORE Foods. Grocery orders are taken on Mondays at the RSVP office. Volunteers from RSVP fill the orders and volunteers from Chaddock School deliver the groceries. The Chaddock School service-learning program also provides volunteers for chores and handy-work around the homes of elderly residents.

Wee Care, Inc., taps the services of young people from local schools. High-school students serve and provide programs and decorations for the Care-N-Share group and help with Meals on Wheels. They also serve meals at the high-school cafeteria, plant flowers, perform and provide support services to the Morton service organization.

The Snow Removal Resource Exchange in DeKalb matches students willing to shovel snow for older adults who need the service. The senior center sponsors this program involving 50 students and 100 older adults.

Elder-Teen Project of the Charlie Murdough Foundation helps young people to see and experience people "who have lived life." A survey conducted by young people with older adults creates cross-generational communication. Several hundred older adults are interviewed during the summer to determine their needs and talents, and to help understand what is happening in their lives socially and spiritually.

Northern Illinois Radio Information in DeKalb offers students the opportunity to read on the radio for the blind and physically handicapped.

The Newman Foundation in DeKalb obtains names from the senior center of needy elders with suggestions for Christmas gifts. These are hung on the tree for students to select. The students purchase a gift and deliver it before Christmas.

La Voz Latina Hispanic Resource Development Center in Rockford utilizes the skills of youths to help senior citizens learn about and access services.

Augustana College sponsors a program called Generations. Generations is a friendly visitors program with students visiting older adults in retirement centers and nursing homes.

Design students at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale renovated the lounge at the Carbondale Senior Center. The experience brought a new dimension to their learning as they attended to the acoustical, lighting and space needs of an older population.

Oral-health screening is conducted by Parkland College students at health fairs in conjunction with the Champaign Geriatric Dental Committee.

I. Latch Key Programs

Latch key or after school programs are becoming more and more popular as parents work and children go home to empty houses. Grandma Please, sponsored by the Uptown Center Hull House, is an intergenerational telephone helpline that links latch key children in the Chicago area with older volunteers who are often frail or homebound. The lines are open from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, so that children ages 6 to 12 can talk with a grandma or grandpa. The telephone calls help by comforting and reassuring frightened or lonely children; mediating arguments between fighting children; assisting in completing homework assignments; listening to the news of the days' events; and advising children. A supervising professional is on call during helpline hours to handle emergencies.

The after school program at Carl Sandberg Elementary School in Charleston presents opportunities for learning new hobbies, joining a writing or reading club, and learning social skills. Before the after school program was initiated, the students talked about being bored. Now they can't wait for the few hours each day when they interact with their older friends.

J. Pen Pal Programs

Pen Pal programs are a great way for old and young to link and maintain contact over a number of years. One program in Homewood involves older adults from a local AARP Chapter. ³I have been involved in pen pal programs for eight years, I see the children come into the program at the age of six and have the pleasure of seeing some of them as they go through the upper grades,² commented Frank Ertl, former AARP state director. He further describes the program developed with a first-grade teacher, Gretchen Pallet: ³The children come into the program not knowing how to write at the beginning of the school year and are taught to make letters, then words and sentences, and finally write letters. They set up a mock post office, staffed with a postmaster, clerk, and mail carrier, giving the children knowledge of how the postal system works. They start to write to each other in the classroom and by December are ready to write to an unknown pen pal, thus the correspondence begins. By March 1st, after several letters, they meet their pen pals for the first time at a classroom get-together. They meet this way about four times during the school year. Some of the children continue to write as they advance from grade to grade. Mr. Ertl added, ³I write to one of the students now in eighth grade. I receive three or four letters a year (they are a delight!²

The RSVP of Coles County corresponds with students from an elementary classroom at least once each month. A get-together planned by the students is held for the pen pals to meet after the correspondence has started. At the end of the year, a picnic in a local park is held to say good-bye.

Lincoln School in Macomb is the setting for a pen pal program between K-4 students and nursing home residents. Gary Dunham describes the five steps to a pen pal program with nursing-home residents: 1. We study and practice letter writing. 2. Pair up and meet nursing home residents. 3. Write weekly letters. 4. Visit at least once more during the year. 5. End with an ³old fashioned school-day picnic.²

K. Mentoring

The Elder Mentoring Program for At-Risk Students at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale involves retired university professors working with freshman students once a week and helping them with basic skills. The retirees are recruited by a volunteer coordinator, provided orientation and training, and attend weekly discussion sessions. The mentors use structured activities with the students, including time management, test taking, note-taking. The university environment and goals are part of the program, but a critical purpose is to be advocates for students, to help and to listen.

Share and Learn is a network designed to link seniors and young adults through the DeKalb County Cooperative Extension Service. The two generations share skills and talents with one another to promote

learning.

AARP Mentor Program is a minority educational outreach project that involves older citizens, college students, community outreach, and aging-service programs. Through their years of wisdom, mentors help students bridge the gap between aging services and the community. The mentor provides leadership, guidance, and inspiration to college students in a mutually planned and executed minority outreach project. This program pairs college students and minority elderly vis-a-vis visits to the elderly, volunteering at a senior center, or helping seniors access services. Mentors take part in an initial orientation along with monthly multi-group discussion.

The Amicus program through the Volunteer Visitation and Reunification Project in Rockford was developed to provide assistance to children who are separated from their parents. Older adults enter the lives of the children to help and listen. The program is sponsored by the Department of Children and Family Services.

L. Library Programs

Share the Magic is a Pekin Public Library program that provides a special love of sharing for grandparents and grandchildren. The children and older adults visit the library and have their picture taken together. The child's handprints and a special wish (what they would like to do with their grandparent or older friend) are recorded in a booklet. Then they share entertainment and refreshments. They have their special booklets as a keepsake to remember the time together at the library.

The Normal Public Library sponsors story hour for young children at a local nursing home.

Senior volunteer librarians at Maryville Elementary School talk with young people and encourage students to read and use the library properly. The volunteers commit a day a week to working in the school library. They organize and sort materials and work with the children and teacher when library time arrives.

M. Special Events

A Grandparents' Day and a Senior Citizens' Day are common yearly events. Grandparents go to the school for lunch, attend classes, and the students prepare a performance for them. Grandparents' Day can be an excellent opportunity for recruiting and involving older adults in education.

Proms or dances for old and young are becoming more and more common. The use of the arts--singing, dancing, theatre--recognizes a common culture.

Volunteer Fairs are held in many communities throughout the State. One example is the fair held annually in Decatur. The schools demonstrate different programs available for volunteer opportunities, and people of all ages can choose a way to serve.

Thanksgiving or holiday meals are often held in schools, so that the students can experience the traditional sharing of holiday time.

N. Guest Lectures

Guest Lectures by older adults in the classroom provide opportunities for seniors to share expertise, travel experiences, and humor, thereby adding diversity and interest to learning.

The Lebanon Community Unit School District 9 uses a speakers' bureau staffed by senior citizens

from the Belleville Senior Center.

The Traveling Grandparent Discussion Group at Oakton Community College takes older adults to elementary, junior-high and high-school classrooms. They participate in discussions with students, help enrich classes, and provide models of healthy aging.

Maryville Elementary School takes knowledgeable older persons to the classroom for speeches and presentations. They discuss topics ranging from history to science. The students also have an opportunity for oral history interviews.

At Bradley University older adults with practical knowledge of the theatre are invited to lecture, demonstrate, or perform for the students.

Older volunteers assist in political involvement programs and U.S. history classes, and they speak about on age and cultural values in the social studies classrooms. This Maine Township High School Program in Des Plaines also includes participation in group competitive programs, such as the Voice of Democracy, the Constitution Contest, and the Metro-History Fair.

O. Oral History, Interviewing, Storytelling

Through the Council for Jewish Elderly, a group of middle-school students spend time with elderly residents of an apartment building on Chicago's north side. Their project includes writing oral histories of the residents and then together developing a mural depicting the lives of the residents.

The Coles County RSVP participants visit the junior high-school social studies classes. They are interviewed regarding the Great Depression and World War II. Papers are written to summarize the interviews.

College students interview older adults as part of a health-education class at Illinois State University.

The Natural Story Teller at the College of DuPage brings adults and children together to teach basic storytelling skills, dramatic invention and readers' theatre.

Brimfield High School students interview senior citizens for a documentary, which is produced in conjunction with a banquet for older community residents.

P. Patient Simulation

Students at SIUC School of Medicine have the good fortune to examine older persons who have been trained to simulate specific diseases or conditions. The medical students learn to do a physical and take examinations through the involvement of such "patients."

Q. Social Clubs and Camps

The Senior Club in Benton, according to Brenda Stewart, is composed of senior citizens and high school students involved in projects and programs. ³We meet during the school year one time each month plus several additional functions, such as helping other civic organizations, sponsoring fund-raising events, making crafts, helping senior citizens, and generally enjoying learning about each other." When summer arrives the senior citizens and students have a camping experience for three days.

The Senior Citizen Day Camp in Springfield sponsored by the Boy Scouts and Lincoln Land

Community College uses the buddy system to match a scout with a guest from an area retirement or nursing home. They spend the day together establishing a working relationship performing scout activities.

Students and Seniors Promoting an Intergenerational Network (SSPINS) gives students and older adults an opportunity to interact. They meet for four sessions to discuss such topics as safety, oral history, international games and sharing experiences. The program is sponsored by the Chicago Department on Aging.

The Limestone Community High School in Bartonville has a daily lunch table for senior citizens. They also involve older adults in Christmas programs, crafts, and workshops relating to aging.

R. Drug Prevention

Beginning Alcohol and Addiction Basic Education Studies (BABES) is a Decatur program targeting preschool to third grade children. They learn and practice living and loving skills and make positive early decisions about the uses of alcohol and drugs. Older volunteers work puppets to tell stories about self-image and feelings, about decision making and peer- pressure coping skills, and about getting help and information.

Yorkville senior citizens through the Senior Services Association helped the Just Say No program by making hundreds of Fuzzy Wuzzy surprises for the students. They also participate in pen pal programs with grades five through eight.

S. Pregnancy Prevention

Peer Power is a school-age pregnancy prevention project of the Chicago Public Schools, funded by the Parents Too Soon Initiative through the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Harris Foundation. The goals of the project are to assist youths in becoming knowledgeable about and taking responsibility for their emerging sexuality, to assist youths in making decisions and establishing habits that will enable them to participate in positive life, work, and learning options that will benefit themselves, their families, and the society at large. Older volunteers from senior centers or the community participate in the skills enrichment and career guidance aspects of the program. ³Their involvement in the program has been rewarding and gratifying. The girls and the seniors have developed wonderful and useful relationships. They have the time, experience, patience, and knowledge to relate to young people in many ways,² commented Doris Williams, former coordinator.

T. International Students

Through Arm Chair Travel in Edwardsville, once each month, international students visit nursing homes and describe their countries.

U. Advocacy

Generations Exchange is a committee of teachers, senior citizens, senior-center directors, and community representatives who meet regularly to implement interaction between generations. The program targets kindergarten through eighth graders in the Palatine C.C. School District 15.

The Surrogate Parent Program, Illinois Youth Center at St. Charles, promotes educational advocates for parents unwilling or unavailable to participate in the special-education process. Surrogate parents read educational files, meet with students, observe students in the classroom, and help determine the best educational program for the student while incarcerated. John Kotaska commented, ³Experience has shown

that older volunteers and juvenile delinquents work well together.²

Through the Guardianship Program, at the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale Legal Clinic, individuals 18 and older can be appointed by the court to be guardians for aged disabled adults.

V. Delinquency Prevention

Attend and Win is a truants alternative program at the Eldorado Community Unit District 4. The program enlists older volunteers as mentors and tutors to assist students at-risk.

The Cook County Sheriff's Youth Services Department in an effort to develop and encourage meaningful roles for youth as one approach to juvenile delinquency prevention has designed and piloted a model intergenerational project. A group of youth offenders and another group of senior citizens explore the perspectives of old and young on a number of issues and identify a task or plan to accomplish jointly.

Positive Alternatives Project is a joint venture of Wright College and Chicago Police Department 15th District. Older volunteers tutor students, provide career counseling and serve as mentors. The program is a community education/crime prevention partnership offering young people alternative choices to gangs and drugs.

W. Arts

The Teaching/Learning Communities (T-LC) program is conducted by RSVP in five Chicago schools. Older Volunteers work with arts and crafts and reaffirm each child's value.

Seniors assist youth in workshops by teaching skills in art, sewing, livestock, family living skills, and nature through the Cooperative Extension Service in Paris.

X. Health

The La Salle County Public Health Department taps the skills of retired teachers to teach safety at the preschool level.

Illinois Intergenerational Initiative: <http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii/>