




# Intergenerational Programs

Sub-Committee of the Civic Engagement Committee  
Multnomah County Task Force on Vital Aging



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## Intergenerational Programs

Subcommittee of Civic Engagement Committee - Multnomah County Task Force on Vital Aging

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### **Background:**

A sub-group of the Civic Engagement Workgroup for the Multnomah County Task Force on Vital Aging was formed in the fall of 2007. We were charged with exploring local and national intergenerational programs that can be considered “best practice models”.

### **Sub-committee Membership:**

Warren Fish, County Commissioner Jeff Cogen’s Office

Laura Sheppard, Morrison Child and Family Services

Mark Morley, Foster Grandparent Program, Metropolitan Family Service

Beth Jacobs, Older Adult Services, Metropolitan Family Service

Kris Forzely, Family of Friends

Judy Strand, Metropolitan Family Service (Chair)

Lourdes Meeuwsen, Administrative Assistant, Metropolitan Family Service

*You’ve heard a lot of talk about the coming “crisis” related to the unparalleled aging of the U.S. population. Instead of being viewed as a problem, the aging of the population is actually opening up opportunities for people to think and act differently – for the greater good, on higher ground- with regard to both our human and natural resources. The financial, social and health care issues raised by today’s elders and the aging baby boomers can be harnessed to create a viable future for generations to come. It is time to shift our vantage point about the aging of our nation, focus on our shared destiny, and build on our common concerns.*

Sustainable Communities for all ages: A Viable Futures Toolkit – JustPartners, Inc.

[www.justpartners.org](http://www.justpartners.org)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Our committee sees great potential in the ties between young and old in our community. The benefits are logical and are also supported through the results of work that is being done in the Portland area as well as across the nation. In many ways, we seek to rebuild a community structure with a natural variation in ages, similar to the families into which many of us were born. As we have created a more dispersed and complex society, natural ties in families and neighborhoods have not always been able to be maintained.

We also know that children and older adults require special attention due to areas of vulnerability, as well as areas of special talent and capacity. It may be that the unique blending of strengths and needs in these two generations is the kernel of creativity and potential brought forward by intergenerational connection. We know that there is something inherently hopeful and mysterious about the ties between young and old. Continuing to explore those ties may uncover new ways to address yet unsolved problems in our communities.

Our committee recommends steps that would help our community endorse intergenerational ties on all levels from removing barriers to natural connections to intentional focused needs based programs. In order to do so, we suggest the following guiding principles be considered:

1. **Systematically include viable and proven intergenerational programs in county directed social service structures.** The step forward in this case would be to include intergenerational programs as permanent aspects of key service systems. In order to do so, county leadership would build in expectations and funding structures in RFPs and county operated programs. (Examples include: SUN, county health care systems and juvenile justice systems).
2. **Use intergenerational approaches to community problem solving.** Examples are:
  - ∞ Senior Centers that could be developed into Intergenerational Centers.
  - ∞ Inter-generational expert panels formed for discussion of Tri-met Safety issues.
  - ∞ Task force and advisory boards to include required representation of “young” and “old”.
3. **Programs that reduce barriers for natural intergenerational connections.** Stipends for family care giving for an older person, coupled with adequate caregiver training. Stipends and support for grandparents raising grandchildren. Training issues include understanding the developmental needs of children and older adults, interpersonal communication in the care giving relationship, risk assessment and abuse prevention.
4. **Integrate lifespan awareness programs into school curriculum in health and development classes.** Inter-generational mentors could consist of teachers, community leaders.

## 5. Revise policies to assure inclusion of inter-generational viewpoints and needs.

In addition, we learned that the following aspects are important considerations when building quality standards into effective intergenerational work:

**Flexibility:** Older adults are often viewed as having time to offer their skills and presence when needed. As many are retired, they are able to bend their schedules to meet the needs of others. On the other hand, it is important to honor the fact that healthy older people are often interested in a variety of endeavors which could include spending personal time away from a commitment to the intergenerational program. In some cases, an older person may encounter times when they need to care for themselves due to health concerns or personal losses. Programs allowing flexibility to meet the older person's optimal scheduling needs may be more apt to draw and sustain talented older individuals.

**Infrastructure needs:** Intergenerational programs require staff that assure smooth program operation and ensure quality standards. Volunteer recruitment and support with a clear training and evaluation framework is key to a successful, outcome based program. Programs are not well supported without infrastructure that can handle human resource issues with volunteers and maintenance of positive partner relationships in cases where the program is housed at a school or organization whose primary work is other than intergenerational in nature.

**Incentives:** Understanding the range of incentives needed for a given program and older person is important. There is often a high degree of variability in what the older person expects or requires in order to participate in a program. If a program lacks the ability to offer "something" back to the volunteer in the way of a stipend, college credit, health insurance or other similar tangible item, the actual experience of participation in the program becomes the only reward. If this is the case, the importance of adequate infrastructure to offer appreciation through daily contacts and informal recognition avenues is even more vital.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** As with all human service programs, an intergenerational program should adapt service modalities to respond to the cultural needs and attributes of those involved. An example might be that one defines "older" differently in one culture from another – so that age restrictions need to flex to a culturally understood norm of "older". In some Latino cultures, one may be considered older in their 40's or 50's, for example. The cultural background of volunteers can also vary widely; for example, an African American person who is born in 1920 in the South and moved to Portland in 1965 may have different expectations, values and approaches to their work than a person born in 1940 in Europe, who migrated as a child during WW II and settled in NYC, retiring only recently and moving to Portland area. In doing intergenerational work, matching between the older and younger person should include some consideration of compatible personalities and respect for each other's cultural heritage.

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In summary, intergenerational programs respond to a variety of needs in our community while building a stronger more cohesive society. While youth can offer skills and assistance to older people needing help with chores or feeling safe in their homes at night, older people offer a lifetime of experience in a variety of fields to younger people looking for mentors. Historically, social service departments at national, state and county levels have competed for limited funds, which has sadly pitted young and old against one another. Viewing mutual needs and integrated solutions for needs of the two groups end the tug of war between the generations, and reveal yet to be realized intergenerational strength.

### **OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL MODELS:**

Our research led us to discover that there are many different types of intergenerational programs which fall into some broad categories. All appear to operate under the premise that the intergenerational connection is beneficial to both young and old, with many emphasizing the worth of the connection to their communities as a whole.

The projects of merit range significantly in their purpose and mission. We have chosen to divide our study results into broad categories which signify the continuum of possibilities for intergenerational work.

For the purpose of this report, we will use “L” for “local program”, “N” for models existing in other locations in the United States. The committee had an interest in reviewing international models; however, time limited our capability in this area.

#### **➤ Projects that support the natural relationship between ages/removing barriers to that connection:**

##### **New Columbia - Seeds of Harmony Community Garden (L)**

The program supports natural connections between biological grandparents and their grandchildren as well as cross-familial intergenerational ties. The garden’s harvest is shared by all, and supports the natural relationships between young and old while working on a common goal of gardening. The program is operated by Janis youth program.

##### **Article, “Young at Heart” by Patty Gayes, U.S. Catholic, October 2007 (N)**

Offers information about an intergenerational center combining resources, classes, etc. for both older adults and children. One compelling element of the story conveyed how a toddler who had come to know an older gentleman who was prone to grand mal seizures was able to see the signs foretelling the impending seizure so that assistance was at the ready.

##### **Health & Wellness Resource Center (N)**

Documented an event in Philadelphia combining the voices of older adults from a nursing home with those of elementary students of a music school. The 32 members of the Voice of Ages choir, ranging in age from 8 to 92 “become an ageless voice in song”. Benefits for seniors: remaining active and connected with advice from the coordinators on how to interact with youngsters; children were led through an orientation program to help them be comfortable

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around seniors, which included exercises to help them understand some of the sensory difficulties that afflict seniors. All program expenses are absorbed by the residential facility to help enrich the lives of participants and “counteract the total blanket of negativity the public perceives about the nursing home experience”. *Medquest Communications Inc., 2001*, Sandra Hoban, author

### **Intergenerational Spelling Bees (N)**

"How Do You Spell Friendship? An Intergenerational Spelling Bee" by Michael R. Connolly, Jr., The Clearing House; May 1993 As for the "Young At Heart" article,

See reference: <http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/freepubs/pdfs/agrs91.pdf>

### ➤ **Projects focusing on shared concerns or for mutual benefit of young and old:**

#### **New Columbia - Reach and Teach Pocket Park (L)**

Events are senior and youth together – an example is the “Hands are not for Hurting” project where young and old pledged not to use their hands against others in violence of any kind. The intergenerational group created a permanent art piece with their own hand prints for display in their local park.

#### **New Columbia - Safety Project (L)**

Another example is a project that teams of young and old are working on to promote traffic safety in their neighborhood. The project grew out of concerns voiced by the older people, who voiced distress about speeding cars. The intergenerational dialog led to a decision to access and install “slow down” signs. The younger people will physically erect the signs over their spring break, under supervision of their older neighbors.

#### **New York Foundation for Senior Citizens - Home Sharing Program**



The Foundation's free Home Sharing Program helps link adult "hosts" with extra bedrooms in their homes or apartments with appropriate adult "guests" to share their space. One of the matchmates must be age 60 or over. The program also serves adult "hosts" age 55 and over, who are interested in sharing with developmentally disabled adult "guests" capable of independent living.

The Foundation screens both parties, makes introductions and helps prospective hosts and guests gauge their compatibility for shared living. Once the host and guest agree to share living quarters, a "match" is made.

For more than two decades, the enthusiasm of participants in the Foundation's Home Sharing Program has run high. Home Sharing has also been gaining national recognition as an affordable housing opportunity that can provide financial relief as well as companionship. Both hosts and guests benefit from reduced housing costs and the possibility of companionship to offset the isolation and loneliness experienced by many living alone.

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This program is funded by grants from the New York State Governor's Executive Budget, New York State Legislature, New York State Office for the Aging, New York City Department for the Aging, New York City Council Members and Borough Presidents, the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and the generosity of private foundations and donors

[nyfxc.org/service/home\\_sharing.html](http://nyfxc.org/service/home_sharing.html)

### **Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (L)**

Offers a companionship and mutual benefit program. The staff person interviewed stated: "when a caregiver needs a room to stay in and a senior needs someone to care for them, the program matches the two together ;the caregiver can help with "tasks like vacuuming, getting in and out of the shower and keeping track of her medication, in addition to simply keeping [the older adult] company. The staff person interviewed stated: "We have a tendency to lose intergenerational contact if we start moving seniors out".

The program serves roughly 60 homeowners and 100 home seekers at any one time. Program was funded in 2005 by a grant from the Portland Bureau of Housing and Community Development, and operates in Multnomah and Washington counties, possibly elsewhere. All must undergo background checks, - more info at [housing@emoregon.org](mailto:housing@emoregon.org) 503-225-9924.

### **Juvenile Justice Department in Multnomah County (L)**

Volunteer program pairing adults with juvenile offenders in the justice system. Has no formal intergenerational program, however, many older volunteers work with juvenile offenders.

Contact: Autumn Rae

### **University of Oklahoma (N)**

Pairs senior mentors with students – conference in Baltimore, MD, Feb. 2008 – Association for Gerontology and Education will showcase program.

## **➤ Needs focused on older and/or younger generation:**

### **New Columbia project (L)**

Program started over the course of the past two years. Core Elements include: Youth and Employment program – operated by senior volunteers. The seniors get free rent at New Columbia, in exchange for supervising the work of 13 – 15 year olds.

Examples of youth work:

1. Four youth work at the local community center where their work is supervised by older volunteers.
2. A team of youth do cleaning and chores for older residents at the older adult's residence "they sweep the doorways of the older adults, and this is a gateway into the senior's life". Older residents leave signs out to indicate chores for the youth workers to do for them. The team is led by an older volunteer.



3. Saturday group events – with six adult leaders (3 are 55 and older) do litter patrol and safety checks on the 182 acre property, and distribute regular newsletters to all residents.

## **Foster Grandparent, (L, N)**

Nationally, the program started in the late 60's as part of a poverty alleviation program (War on Poverty – Lyndon Johnson) In Portland; Metropolitan Family Service started their program which includes services in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties, in 1977. The program matches limited income seniors with special needs kids – up to age 21, through mentoring, supporting and tutoring.

Our local program consists of 54 Foster Grandparents (07-08) who work 15 – 40 hours/week, and receive transportation reimbursement, a meal, training – (with specific emphasis on health and wellness) and a federally approved stipend of \$2.65/hour. Social contact during trainings and at the work site is one of the key factors identified as important to participating older people – plus, working with kids whom they enjoy greatly. Foster grandparents must be at least 60 years old. 450 individual children are matched with foster grandparent in the Portland based program, with an additional 1,000 children benefiting from large group contact in classes, school events and less formalized contact.

Website information on MFS Foster Grandparent program follows:

Through Metropolitan Family Service, Foster Grandparent serves children in our community.

Foster Grandparent was established nationally in 1965 to benefit two traditionally neglected populations: low-income older adults and special-needs children.

### **Services**

- Tutoring in reading and math
- Mentoring
- Guidance through classroom activities
- Providing emotional and physical support

### **Last Year**

- 70 Foster Grandparents volunteered each week in Portland and surrounding communities
- More than 1,400 school children received academic tutoring and classroom support
- Over 52,000 hours of service were provided by Foster Grandparents in the tri-county area, meeting the critical needs of the community

### **Accessing Services**

Foster Grandparent has 39 community partners in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Volunteers serve in schools, childcare centers, children's hospitals, residential treatment centers, and other similar public and non-profit

### **CONTACT MFS**

#### **EMAIL**

[fgp@metfamily.org](mailto:fgp@metfamily.org)

#### **PHONE**

503.249.8215, ext. 17

#### **ADDRESS**

Metropolitan Family Service  
2200 NE 24th Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97212

### **MFS SUCCESS STORIES**

#### **Thelma, FOSTER GRANDPARENT Volunteer**

Nine years ago 71-year-old Thelma Bisaccio was grieving the loss of her husband and needed a reason to leave her apartment. She heard about MFS Foster Grandparent. Thelma called

immediately, signed up, took the training, and never looked back. Today she has her own rocker at Helensview High School, where she cares for babies whose student moms are working hard to graduate from high school.

For five hours a day, five days a week, Thelma rocks the babies, gives them their bottles, reads to them, talks to them, or gets down on the floor to play with them. She does everything that a loving grandparent would do. "The program gets me out into the community and makes me feel more useful. I wish I had found it sooner," Bisaccio says. "It keeps me going."

and other similar public and non-profit organizations.

### Community Partners

- Serve primarily low-income and special-needs children
- Provide on-site orientation and training for new Foster Grandparents
- Adequately supervise all Foster Grandparents
- Offer necessary information to aid in program evaluation and reporting
- Contribute a portion of the costs for volunteers to be placed at their sites

### Volunteers

Foster Grandparent provides opportunities for adults over 60 to remain active and serve the communities in which they live.

Volunteers earn a modest stipend while serving 15 – 40 hours per week, while children receive individual attention and direction from a caring, dedicated adult.

*"I feel like what I do makes a difference to the children."*

*"I like to do things that will benefit society."*

For more information about how to support or volunteer, contact Foster Grandparent at 503.249.8215, ext. 17 or [fgp@metfamily.org](mailto:fgp@metfamily.org)

## MFS SUCCESS STORIES



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Her area of the Child Development Center at Helensview High School cares for up to 12 babies, ages six weeks to nine months old. "I'm heartbroken when babies move on," she says. "But I just love to watch babies grow and progress each day."

The students of Helensview call her "grandma" and are grateful that she is there each day to care for their babies. Her supervisor Louise Jeffrey is grateful for the extra pair of hands that frees other workers to do more strenuous tasks.

Thelma has worked at Helensview High School, her fourth location with Foster Grandparent, for five years. During the summer months she works at the Police Activities League Youth Center (PALS) helping supervise children.

Thelma has an adult son and daughter, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren of her own.

## Experience Corps (L, N)

The Experience Corps program in Portland was started by Metropolitan Family Service as one of the first national demonstration sites in 1995. Experience Corps is a national model now operating in 20 communities across the country – and is primarily a mentoring model with a strong focus on one to one relationships between young and old, uses a team approach in high need elementary schools. The model has recently expanded into middle schools and after-school programs. Experience Corps is a best practice model, demonstrating academic and behavioral success.

EC Mentors must be 55 and older – and there is no income requirement for involvement. Mentors can receive a stipend when they volunteer 12 hours or more per week. The purpose of the program is increased wellness and engagement for the adults and improved academic and behavioral performance for the children. Currently, there are 50 mentors serving in the tri-county area, who serve 185 youth each year.

## Overview

Experience Corps is an innovative and award winning national service program that creates opportunities for older adults to take part in vital public and community service and is a signature program of Civic Venture.

Experience Corps members work in teams, create a critical mass, lead by example, and make a substantial commitment.

## Experience Corps Services

- Tutoring and mentoring
- Out-of-school academic support and recreational opportunities
- Family literacy and parent involvement programs
- English language tutoring for parents
- Read-aloud activities
- Music and art programs

## Last Year

- More than 45 Experience Corps members worked at 11 sites throughout the area
- Members provided more than 14,000 hours to children and families in need
- 87% of tutored students raised their performance by at least one grade level
- 80% of mentored students displayed improvement in classroom behavior

## CONTACT MFS

### EMAIL

[ec@metfamily.org](mailto:ec@metfamily.org)

### PHONE

503.249.8215, ext. 17

### ADDRESS

Metropolitan Family Service  
2200 NE 24th Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97212

## MFS SUCCESS STORIES



### Claire, EXPERIENCE CORPS Volunteer

When Claire Vireday first read about the Experience Corp program in the newspaper, she remembers thinking "Gee, that looks interesting!" It wasn't long before she learned more about the program and enlisted the help of her husband Pierre. As Pierre describes it,

at first he was "drafted" for the position, but it rapidly became a passion for him as well.

Claire and Pierre spend about 15 hours per week tutoring third graders at James John Elementary School. They focus mainly on reading and writing skills, but are willing to help with just about anything. Now that they're in their fourth year at James John, they enjoy spending time in the lunchroom to catch up with their former students. Claire feels this is a significant part of her work, since many of the kids come from unstable homes and benefit from her ongoing concern and support.

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Most Experience Corps members contribute at least 450 hours during a 12-month period through individual service and team projects.

Members are paid a monthly stipend through Experience Corps for 12 or more hours of service a week.

For more information about how to support or volunteer, contact Experience Corps at 503.249.8215, ext. 17 or [ec@metfamily.org](mailto:ec@metfamily.org).

MFS Experience Corps would like to acknowledge the generous support of Experience Corps National.



## RELATED LINKS

### Civic Ventures

Mobilizing the time, talent, and experience of older adults in service to communities.

[www.experiencecorps.org](http://www.experiencecorps.org)

## OASIS (L, N)

The OASIS tutoring program in Portland is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year. Volunteers, age 50 and over tutor/mentor a child (1-4<sup>th</sup> grade) one hour a week, one on one. They work with reading and writing skills. The goals are to increase the enjoyment of reading and help to raise self-esteem in children while providing meaningful volunteer opportunities for older adults. There are about 270 older adults that are involved in the program on a continual basis and about 300 children. OASIS volunteers register as RSVP volunteers to receive mileage reimbursement and program support through RSVP (MFS operates RSVP for Multnomah County).

Website information:

## Intergenerational Reading Tutor Program

The Tutor Program is a professionally developed reading tutor program, designed for older adults, age 50 and over to mentor young children in a participating elementary school most convenient for them. The school districts currently participating are Portland, Beaverton, Gresham, Reynolds, Sherwood and David Douglas and Vancouver.

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An OASIS tutor is a caring, consistent adult mentor in a child's life. OASIS tutors work one-on-one with their student for about an hour once a week. The program aims to promote the success and enjoyment of reading and writing as well helping to increase a child's positive self-esteem.

The Tutors use a combination of reading, writing, phonics and communication activities. Many materials and books are provided. Tutors are also welcome to use the school libraries. Students who are matched with OASIS tutors usually do not qualify for other special services. They are children who are struggling; children who need extra individual attention. An adult who enjoys reading and working with children is a good candidate. Previous experience is not needed. OASIS provides tutors with training and materials.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Volunteer take the 6-8 hour tutor training and complete a background check. Tutors provide their own transportation to their assigned school. They tutor on the same day and time each week. The best tutors enjoy being with children and have the desire to make a difference. Previous teaching experience is not necessary. The training and the follow-up support meetings provide all the information needed to be a successful tutor and confident going in to the schools.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** Tutors work 45 minutes to one hour a week, one-on-one with a child in the school. Tutors may mentor more than one child, each child having their own separate time with their tutor.

**GENERAL DUTIES:** Tutors work in the school during school hours. Resources for the tutors to use are: the OASIS tutor manual, OASIS tutor curriculum packets, and books from the school library or home. A combination of reading, writing, and communication activities are used in a tutoring session. Within a lesson plan tutors are encouraged to be creative and flexible according to the interests of the student. An OASIS tutoring session is meant to be enjoyable for the tutor and the student. The children usually feel it is a special part of their week, when their OASIS tutor comes to school.

Contact: Colleen Shannon, (503) 833-3636 or (360) 487-3636

### **Partners in Time – Mt. Vernon, NY (N)**

Program pairs youthful offenders with older adults in adult care centers as an alternative to incarceration. This is a six-week program. Results were proven to be fantastic – Work centered on arts, crafts, writing autobiographies (seniors also shared how in their life experiences “they changed negatives to positives, and how they became content with themselves” – at the end of the program, offenders shared what they learned from the experience with elementary and high school students. Oftentimes the participants continued their visits past the six weeks.

*Medquest Communications, Inc. May 2005.*

- **Programs including older-younger ties, but not exclusively designed as “intergenerational”:**

**SMART (L)**

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SMART partners with hundreds of schools statewide to deliver proven literacy support to K-3 children. Teachers recommend students for participation in the program, which complements the school's curriculum.

Local SMART Coordinators recruit and train community volunteers to read once a week from October to May with two children. The consistent, one-on-one relationship gives children the attention, self-confidence, and skills to succeed in school and beyond. SMART further encourages children to read outside the classroom by giving them new books each month. This program is a well respected community model encompassing all generations in intergenerational work focused on literacy advancement for children.

Website information:



## **SMART: INSPIRING LITTLE READERS**



**VISION:** An Oregon where every child can read and is empowered to succeed.

**MISSION:** We engage community volunteers to read one-on-one with K-3 children who need literacy support.

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Participating children also receive new books each month to keep and read with their families.

Research shows that:

- ∞ 1 in 3 Oregon fourth graders reads below the basic level.
- ∞ Children need to learn to read by third grade so they can read to learn.
- ∞ Those who don't learn to read by third grade are more likely to struggle with reading as adults, drop out of school, and be less successfully employed.

But here's the difference SMART makes. A study by the Eugene Research Institute reveals that fifth graders who participated in SMART are 60 percent more likely to reach state reading benchmarks than are similar students who did not participate. SMART students develop reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension significantly faster and maintain these gains even after completing the program.

#### HOW SMART WORKS

SMART partners with hundreds of schools statewide to deliver proven literacy support to K-3 children. Teachers recommend students for participation in the program, which complements the school's curriculum.

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#### COMMUNITY FUNDING

SMART relies on financial and volunteer contributions from the communities it serves.


#### GET INVOLVED

In 2007-08, we plan to serve 11,600 children statewide.

[Volunteer](#) with SMART to inspire little readers in your community. [Donate](#) to help us deliver the literacy support they need. Together we can build brighter futures for Oregonians big and small.

#### **Family of Friends (L)**

Family of Friends recruits singles, couples and families to be matched in mentoring relationships



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Mentoring families welcome a child into their life a few times a month for a year. The mentor child is included with 6 through 9-year-old children in need of additional caring, safe mentoring relationships. in the natural everyday activities of the mentoring family.

Website information:

## Family of Friends

Family of Friends matches volunteer families with 6- to 9-year-old children in need of additional caring, safe mentoring relationships. The program is funded in part through a grant from the [Portland Children's Investment Fund](#).

Mentoring families welcome a child into their life a few times a month for a year. The mentor child is included in the natural everyday activities of your family. Simply set another place at the table, buy an extra ticket to a movie or play a game together. It's that simple. You just live your life! Your family becomes a mentoring family and a source of support while encouraging a child's positive growth and development.



### Why Do We Match Families With Children?

Our lives are busy. Few of us can afford the time away from our own family to spend time with another child. But, consistently including another child in our family's activities is something that enriches a child's life while teaching our own children compassion and service.

### Who are the mentored children?

The children are referred to the program by their families or caregivers who believe the children's lives will be enriched by additional, caring relationships. They hear about Family of Friends from schools or other agencies that serve children. The needs and wants of the child will be matched with a mentoring family's ability to meet them. Extreme care is taken to make sure this is a safe, positive experience for everyone involved.

### How do I learn more?

Please contact Trillium's Family of Friends program at 503-813-7724. If you want to be a mentoring family, applications must be completed, references checked, training completed and a home visit conducted.

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Portland Hope Meadows is an intentional Intergenerational Community as Intervention designed to provide permanent, adoptive homes for children living in foster care who are ready for adoption; support for families wanting to adopt children; and a safe, meaningful living environment for seniors who want to continue contributing to the lives of others. The three generations live in an intentional neighborhood with the expectations that the residents support one another. The seniors become grandparents to the children and mentors to the families providing wisdom and respite. The living environment includes apartments designed to house the seniors, houses designed for the families, an Intergenerational Center designed to provide space for afterschool activities (i.e., homework assistance, arts and crafts, cooking, music), celebrations, a small library and a kitchen. Additionally, social services provided by Portland Hope Meadows will be provided to the residents to assist in addressing transition issues and/or emotional issues. Sources for building the community will come from a variety of sources including but not limited to financing with banks, private foundations, and fundraising. Sources for operating the property and program element of the organization will come from the revenue of the real estate, a potential Department of Human Services contract, grants, and private fundraising. Hope Meadows is an innovative and effective model proven to work in another community. It is in a formation stage in our community at this time. It holds a promise of meeting multiple levels of needs in our community for three generations, and has a positive track record nationally in doing so. Hope Meadows brings together older adults and the middle aged adults collaboratively work to support older foster children by providing a permanent family and home to them. The program offers housing for the two older generations in response to their commitment to the child. The idea of reciprocity in this program model is similar to the New Columbia model, and both are neighborhood based.

Website information:

Hope Meadows is a unique residential community – a five-block small-town neighborhood where neglected and abused children who have been removed from their biological parents for their safety, find a permanent and caring home, as well as grandparents, playmates and an entire neighborhood designed to help them grow up in a secure and nurturing environment.

Hope Meadows is a place where children, adoptive parents and surrogate grandparents develop supportive relationships capable of healing the hurts of abuse and neglect - a place where three generations care for and learn from each other.



**View from the IGC.**

Photo © 2006 by [Alex Harris](#).

**Project Linkage (L)**

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Project Linkage became a program of Metropolitan Family Service in 1986. It was originally established by *Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon* in 1980. Project Linkage has been a vital resource for older adults and people with disabilities. Project Linkage connects approximately 1,000 clients with community resources and volunteers each year. Last year, 175 volunteers contributed more than 8,000 hours of service. Clients are typically age 60+, and while there is not an age guideline for volunteers—this program tends to attract volunteers age 16-50.

### Website information:

Metropolitan Family Service's Project Linkage coordinates more than 300 volunteers throughout the year who provide assistance to older adults and people with disabilities.

### Services

- Transportation – NE, SE
- Shopping – NE
- Yard Work– NE
- Friendly Visiting – NE
- Home Repair – NE
- Telephone Reassurance – Portland metro

### Volunteer

Metropolitan Family Service assists more than 1,000 older adults and people with disabilities each year through Project Linkage. We screen and interviewed volunteers before beginning service and provide on-going training to ensure safe, friendly service to clients.

Project Linkage has served older adults and people with disabilities in the community since 1980.

### Accessing Services

#### Services are Provided to

- Older adults, who are 60 years of age or older, and lack adequate resources
- People of all ages who have disabilities that prevent them from using other transportation options
- Individuals who reside in **Northeast** Portland, I-5 to 82nd Avenue, and Burnside to the Columbia River, or **Southeast** Portland from the Willamette River to 82nd Avenue, and Burnside to the Clackamas County border.

Prior to receiving service, all clients register with Project Linkage. This can be done over the phone. We ask for basic information that helps us provide service, and for information required by our funding sources. All information is kept confidential. Clients may decline to answer any of the questions, and still receive assistance. After registration is completed, you are welcome to phone in service requests at any time Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### Donate

We request donations for service, and donation envelopes are available from the office and volunteers. Donations are important to maintaining services, and make it possible for Project Linkage to respond to the thousands of requests we receive each year.

Project Linkage, with the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is a member of the Faith in Action national network.

For more information about how to support or volunteer, contact Project Linkage at 503.249.0471 or [plink@metfamily.org](mailto:plink@metfamily.org).

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## ➤ Lifespan Awareness projects

### **Senior Learning Communities (N) Resource: Rahima Baldwin Dancy**

Incorporating life-long learning by creating senior housing on or near college campuses (Indiana University, University Commons in Ann Arbor, Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, CA) and integrate intellectual growth, creative development and physical wellness. Intergenerational factor evolves as communities are surrounded by younger college-age people. Most are for-profit, with the school only lending its name and facilities, making the cost range from \$100,000-500,000.

## ➤ Summarizing our strengths – Multnomah County:

Our county has a number of well respected programs, with some showing positive outcomes. Efforts at **New Columbia** represent a trend towards meeting mutual and community benefit, including broad mutual goals such good nutrition, healthy environment and safety. As it is a new program, outcomes are yet to be determined, however, the project shows great promise and is well utilized by young and old. The **New Columbia** model is unique in our community, as it utilizes a full range of intergenerational approaches that move beyond a traditional mentoring role, and seek to identify a collective concept (environmental health), mutual needs (employment for youth and housing for older adults) and shared discussions of general needs of the community in intergenerational dialog.

**Metropolitan Family Service's Foster Grandparent program**, a long standing intergenerational program in our community is changing as our societal needs change. Many are aware of "grandparents" who soothe children in the hospital, offer respite to families with children with special needs, or offer assistance in the classroom. Though these vital roles continue, new needs in our community have drawn Foster Grandparents to act as advocates, tutors, coaches and community organizers.

**Experience Corps**, another program of **Metropolitan Family Service**, offers mentoring to children and using a team model, and receives local support through the Children's Initiative fund. Outcomes are positive for academic and behavioral indicators for the children mentored by the program. A Northwest Health Foundation grant is funding expansion of the model to Clackamas county, as well as training and focused evaluation related to mentor health and well-being for the program. Results from the research will be available over the course of the next two years. In addition, MFS is piloting new roles in **Experience Corps** for retired professionals, particularly teachers and principals, with funding from the Gates foundation. It is anticipated that retired educators and administrators will add a needed leadership function for **Experience Corps** teams.

**OASIS** offers a national intergenerational tutoring model serving a large number of children in our community in the specific area of literacy. The program appears to draw in a high number of volunteers and to be well received by schools and children involved, although outcome evaluation is not part of this program at this time.

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## ➤ **Mixed Population Programs:**

Though not solely focused on the link between two specific age groups, there are many programs in our community that lend themselves to inclusion of intergenerational ties across many generations. Our committee suggests that it may be helpful to track data on intergenerational successes in our mixed population programs to see if there are approaches used within these programs that are effective in meeting specific needs in our community.

Many organizations link older adults with children; we have only touched on a few in this report. A number of district centers connect their older participants with nearby schools, for example. We have not captured the many informal inter-generational programs that exist in our community.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

At a local level, we do not see current programs that support lifespan awareness where younger people learn about developmental stages throughout the lifespan in an effort to better prepare themselves for aspects of aging they will someday face. Such awareness at an early age may help increase interest in geriatric professionals in varying fields, and help address the distinct deficit of qualified physicians, psychologists, mental health professionals, lawyers and care givers with the ability to meet the true needs of older people.


We also did not find evidence of intentional forums or work-groups consisting of younger and older generations, which could open up new thinking and create honest dialogue among the generations to reveal positive solutions for community issues such as safety concerns, transportation needs, environmental problems, health care access and how to better respect cultural diversity in our community.

As well, there is room to create spaces for young and old to come together in community centers, “normal” mutual spaces for all generations such as shopping areas, restaurants, exercise programs, cultural events, classes, etc.

We have also not yet built formal programs for older mentors/coaches in fields beyond educational support mainly for elementary level literacy and math tutoring. There will be a large number of retiring professionals ready to pass on their knowledge base as they retire from full time jobs and offer something meaningful to the community. A coaching program across disciplines with a purposeful intergenerational connection could be a way to prepare young professionals while also responding to the older persons’ quest for generativity as they reach the developmental stage where they want to give back to society.

In looking at national trends, the focus is on health and the environment as a way to expand our thinking about intergenerational connection. Building communities that are healthy and supportive for all ages, and using the combined strengths of young and old to achieve this goal appears to be critical at this time in our society.





In summary, on a local and national level, the potential of the intergenerational connection has not been fully realized. As with many social service programs, use of outcome measures is not yet standard in all intergenerational programs. Sharing evidence of outcomes achieved through intergenerational programs will help build the bridge to community endorsement and fiscal support in this area. So far, success has been proven primarily in mentoring programs.

If we are able to 1) expand and better support our best practice models (such as Experience Corps) and 2) add outcome measures to promising practice models (such as New Columbia's program) and 3) seed innovation models not yet piloted in our area (such as lifespan awareness models and shared community centers) we would build some momentum in creating a more intergenerationally connected community.

## APPENDIX:

### Summary data on local projects:

New Columbia – (John Keating, Housing Authority of Portland/ New Columbia Director)

Age requirement? Not for older adults – kids have to be at least 12 for work program

Incentives? Rent subsidy and youth are paid.

How many older people are involved? 12

How many younger people involved: 30 – 40

Episodic on on-going programs? Both

Why do you do this program? Addresses multiple needs with one approach... intergenerational programming is working well to do this – it engaging seniors and they in turn offer more adult contact to kids who need more responsible adults in their lives.

How do you evaluate your program? By gathering outputs – not outcomes.

Do you have an outside evaluator? No.

Retention rate of volunteers – too early to tell (only 2 years old)

How much does your program cost?

\$45,000 for a modest youth employment

In-kind includes \$24,000 (rent subsidy) and staff time (estimated \$20,000 in staff time)

Where do you get your funding? Wherever we can find it – through other agencies like the Urban League – BHCD funds through them, - Housing Authority, New Columbia proceeds, City of PDX Parks and Rec supports us - \$20,000 – hope they will again. Grants that are time limited – like BlueMoon – Just Partners project (\$10,000)

What is your reach across cultural groups? We have reached three groups – we have 7 languages at New Columbia.

What would improve your program? More parental involvement.

Cost of program – per 52 kids and youth served --- (estimating \$90,000 with \$20,000 staff time to coordinate programs) 1730/per individual youth or older person served.

Foster Grandparent program (Mark Morley, Metropolitan Family Service Program Coordinator)

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Age requirement? 21 or younger for youth – 60 and up for adults

Other requirements? Older adults must work at least 15 hours/week and meet low-income guidelines in order to participate. Ability to work with children and have skills that match site requirements.

Incentives? Stipend, transportation allowance, a meal, regular training, volunteer recognition event annually

Why do you do this program? To involve, empower and improve the financial well being of seniors and use their talents and resources to improve the engagement and well being of youth.

How do you evaluate your program? We look at outputs and outcomes. We count the number of intergenerational pairs and their service hours, etc. for outputs. Outcomes are determined through the establishment of individualized workplans consistent with various settings for educational settings, for example, we seek to improve a child's learning skills and outcomes are observed and recorded. For the mentoring workplan, there is a focus on improved emotional, social and behavioral goals.

Do you have an outside evaluator? No – we produce the tools, and the site supervisors administer them (not MFS employees).

What is your retention rate? It ranges from 3 to 15 years, with a few outliers in either direction.

How do you retain volunteers?

The program itself meets needs in two main areas – the need for “purpose” and the need for financial assistance.

How much does this program cost on an annual basis? \$300,000 - \$315,000

What funds the program? State allocation, private donors, smaller grants, site contribution (small), in-kind support from sites and local businesses, private donors \*\*\*\* FGP used to be primarily supported by UNITED WAY --- lost funding when UW changed allocation model away from core service funding – currently, FGP is running a significant subsidy due to lack of stable funding.

Cost of program per child– for 450 individual kids currently served - \$666/child  
With consideration of an additional 1,000 kids benefiting from group  
Contact with older adults - - cost is \$214/child

What is your span of cultural reach in this program? Our agency did a diversity audit recently, and found that our foster grandparents are quite diverse – with approximately 28% African American, 10% Latino 2% Eastern European and 60% Euro-American/Caucasian

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Children served include: 40% or more Latino, 15 – 20% African American and a small percentage of Eastern European. Rest Euro-American/Caucasian

What would improve your program? More flexibility in income requirements for volunteers; more staffing to provide stronger volunteer support; the ability to adapt the model to changing needs of aging foster grandparents (transportation resource and lower number of hours); more outreach to attract Hispanic volunteers.

Experience Corps (Jessica McClaren, Metropolitan Family Service Program Associate)

Age requirement? Youth – 8<sup>th</sup> grade and younger. Adults – 55 and older.

Other requirements? Regular screening, background check, interview, aptitude to work with children, benefit from training and meet program goals.

Incentives? If meeting income level requirements and working at least 12 hours/week, can access stipend. Regular training, support of team, annual recognition, work itself.

Why do you do this program? To improve health and quality of life for adults and to help children succeed socially, emotionally and academically.

How do you evaluate your program? Through collecting output and outcome measurements – outcomes: Academic and behavioral measures for children – and quality of life and wellness measures for mentors. In addition, we are gathering information from the site staff re: mentor performance.

Do you have an outside evaluator? We have an independent evaluator for the adult measurement aspect – the rest is done on site, under our direction.

How do you retain volunteers – what is your rate of retention? 85% from year to year – with an average of 6 years – with a couple outliers in either direction.

Cost of program? \$250,000 (without special grants for health and professional volunteer development– Gates/NWHF) with grants - \$350,000 Number of mentors: 50 Number of children: 185 - (last fiscal year – 06-07) Cost per child: \$1,315/year

Diversity? Mentors are from mixed socio-economic groups, and vary in cultural background – majority are Caucasian, with 24% African American. The children are quite varied in their cultural heritage.

What would you like to add to your program to improve it? More training on human resource approaches to dealing with volunteers.

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## OASIS

Age requirement? Volunteers must be 50 or over. Children are in 1 - 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Incentives? On-going monthly tutor support groups and lots of appreciation. Turnover of about 60 volunteers each year, with 270 volunteers involved always.

How many older people are involved? 270.

How many children are involved? 300

Episodic or on-going program? On-going.

Why do you do this program? To increase reading skills and self-esteem in the children, and to provide meaningful volunteers opportunities for the older adults.

How do you evaluate your program? Through informal comments from teachers, principals, teachers and tutors.

Do you have an outside evaluator? No.

How much does your program cost? N/A

Where do you get your funding? Legacy Health System, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon and Macy's Foundation.

What is your reach across cultural groups? Program is predominantly white, lower through middle class.

What would improve your program? Flexibility in scheduling with the schools.

