

Bringing seniors and children
together to change
each other's lives...



Interages[®]

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Program Report
2008-2009

Interages[®]

*a non-profit organization dedicated to
building bridges between generations & cultures*

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Wilma Rudolph

It took a lot of perseverance and courage to accomplish what she did because she had to overcome discrimination. At the time she was racing it was during desegregation and everyday she would wake up wondering if things would get thrown at her or if she'd be booed off the medal stand.

I learned that determination is key to living your dream and if you go through something hard you have to work through it. You have to work hard if you want something.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION:

Through discussions with participants in our Heroes on Stamps Program and the principle stakeholders, we believe we have achieved our goals and outcomes for the 2009 session. The goal of the Postal Museum is to provide a meaningful platform for students and adults to interact and reflect on National Postal Museum objects. Interages goal is to enable students and older adults to work on a project together that will provide both groups with new knowledge and opportunities to create and share together, thereby fostering the development of respect and understanding between the generations.

The Smithsonian National Postal Museum and Interages hope to bring the following outcomes to the students who participate:

- Build understanding across the generations
 - Help dispel myths and fears about aging and develop a respect for older adults as they work, learn and create together
 - Develop motivation to learn about historical figures as they relate to students' own lives
 - Help dispel negative stereotypes held by some adults about youth culture and attitudes

- Develop transferable skills
 - Conduct research on a computer; work in teams

- Gain knowledge
 - Learn about the history, heritage and heroes featured on stamps and how they were chosen to be on a stamp
 - Understand the history of mail delivery and compare how people communicated in the past and today

COMMUNITY IMPACT: Heroes on Stamps was well received by the 70 attendees at the reception that highlighted the results of the pilot program. The Smithsonian National Postal Museum would like this to be a model program that will be expanded through the county and beyond.

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Dear Friends of Interages:

Since 1986, Interages has been a leader of innovative intergenerational programming in Montgomery County. Interages mentoring and tutoring programs recruit, train and manage older adult volunteers, age 50 and better. Our volunteers have helped thousands of at-risk youth from hundreds of schools over the past 23 years.

Students exposed to positive adult role models learn from their knowledge and experience. Stereotypes and fears about youth and aging are dispelled when both generations communicate and work together. Sharing personal histories and life experiences improves understanding across generations. Direct involvement with children and youth helps older adults stay active and connected to their neighborhood and provides a sense of pride in giving back to the community. Involvement in meaningful work increases each participant's sense of personal fulfillment and self-worth.

Interages SHARE Programs (Students Help and Reach Elders) focuses on what people can do rather than on their limitations. The unique aspect of Interages SHARE Programs is that all activities require active involvement by students and elderly participants. SHARE benefits both students and frail and elderly adults. Students learn and experience compassion and the value of community service. Frail, isolated adults enjoy the attention and interaction of young people which reduces their sense of loss and isolation.

Interages had another very successful year thanks to our excellent staff, Board of Directors and older adult volunteers, the heart of our organization. Of course, our programs would not be possible without the support of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Montgomery County Public Schools, foundations, corporations and individual contributors. Thank you all so much! Your continued help has given us the ability to serve more county residents. During the 2008/2009 school year, 573 children and youth and 252 frail and isolated seniors participated in Interages' programs at 48 sites in Montgomery County. This year, 231 older adult volunteers donated thousands of hours totaling the equivalent of \$123,596 of in-kind support.

I am delighted to share our 2008-2009 Program Report with you. This report provides details on our participants, activities, major accomplishments, challenges and summary evaluations of individual programs. Our reporting and evaluation process provides valuable insight into what we are doing right and what we may need to improve or change in the future.

Please review this year's report and feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions. Your continued support for Interages is greatly appreciated.

Warmest Regards,
Carol Croll
Executive Director

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It was interesting learning that over 44 million stamps are made over a year. It was also fun taking a trip to the museum to tour and look at stamps.

5. Other things that you learned from this experience....

I learned that people in the past did so much to help us gain rights as American citizens. It also taught me that working hard can bring you to great opportunities.
I learned that the different cultures and people help make this country... it's the patience that we acquire for each other that perfects the accomplishments we've had or obstacles we've overcome.
Some things I learned were how to work as a team. The group and I once made a picture stamp of the person we pick. I am very glad that I was part of the Smithsonian.
I learned that people can triumph so much despite all of the hardships and conflicts in their life.
I learned that I loved history and was interested in learning about people that had lived in the past time a long time ago.
That we all can be heroes by doing every day things!!!

Selected reflections on what students learned about their hero:

Fr. Felix Varela

He was really inspirational. He really taught me a lot; he helped, touched and inspired a lot of people.
He's really inspirational, he helped lots of people and he cared for others.
He gave women education. He thought of others by providing women's education and giving orphan homes. Father Varela was never selfish and did all these things for others.

Sacagawea

I learned how hard her life was and how much she had to go through, like being captured and married off.
She persevered in helping Lewis and Clark. She had to raise a baby during her trip and had to carry it on her back.
I learned that she had to care for her family at the same time as leading the Lewis and Clark expedition. This shows that she was determined.

Booker T. Washington

I learned you have to work hard to get what you want and your rights aren't just handed to you. He really tried to change the world for everybody.
Even if you don't have a lot you can still make it into a lot – like how he took two shanty buildings in disrepair and turned into 100 buildings.



Highlights of the student's reflections:

1. Working with the mentors...

was fun because they helped us a lot if we needed help and they were really nice to us.

was really fun because they had a lot of stories about the people that I never knew. They were also very nice and were always up for she-nanigans.

was amazing. I met new people and they all did wonderful things.

Having them was a lot fun. I hope they come and see us again.

The mentors were nice and they were very helpful. It was great to work with them. I learned many facts from them.

2. The process of picking a hero...

Was really hard because there were so many great people that affected our life today which made it so hard to choose but I feel the one we choose was a really good choice.

Learning about my hero was fun because we wanted to choose someone who people didn't know a lot about.

There were many heroes' to pick from, but the one that stood out the most was Sacagawea. Through picking Sacagawea, I learned many traits that make her a hero.

3. Presenting at the museum....

was a really great experience because not many people can say that they presented at one of the Smithsonian's. Also the people that worked there were very supportive and even gave us a present at the end. I hope I can do it again next year.

was an awesome experience and I got to meet a lot of people that were in charge and helped with the event. When we first presented, I felt VERY nervous. But in the end, it felt very good that I presented.

4. Learning about the stamps....

Was great. I learned a lot of great stuff like the fact that 14,000,000,000 stamps are made a year.

was different because I never really thought about how important being on a stamp was. I didn't think about it with any significance. A stamp was just something you had to put on a letter and it had a pretty picture on it! J

was really cool because I always thought that stamps were something that was mandatory on a letter but now I realize the history behind the stamps.

was an experience that really... I mean really opened my eyes to all the things people did for us as Americans and people.

I learned many facts that I did not know. There were many guidelines that a person had to meet to be printed on a stamp.

INTERGENERATIONAL BRIDGES

Intergenerational Bridges is an after-school mentoring program for recent immigrant students enrolled in English for Students of Other Languages (ESOL) at their schools. Meeting weekly for 60-90 minutes in elementary, middle and high schools, Bridges pairs each student with an older adult mentor (age 50+) to achieve three objectives: to help students adjust to life in the United States; to develop students' English skills, and to boost students' self-esteem. Seven "traditional" program sites bring adults into elementary and middle schools to pair one-on-one with students. Two additional programs offer high school students the chance to share language-enhancing activities with residents in senior housing.

Participants: Bridges expanded upcounty this year to five new schools, thanks to a special one-year contract. In all, mentoring programs ran in four elementary, three middle, and two high schools, and involved 78 students and 78 trained, older adult mentors. Interages employed 1.5 staff members in Bridges, and one volunteer program coordinator (whose contribution allowed us to support an additional school site).

ESOL teachers were indispensable, as they selected students, provided advice on student needs, evaluated their progress, and in one case, participated in the session each week. The high school programs also counted on the collaboration of willing staff and residents at Arcola Towers and Waverly House senior housing. In the Gaithersburg area, Bridges partnered with Linkages to Learning, a program of Guide Youth Services, to facilitate the selection and evaluation of students and the link to teachers and parents.

Activities: Students and mentors chose from a variety of paired and group activities. Students talked with mentors about their week, some using the time to talk about their fears (e.g., swine flu, bullies) or family issues (e.g., job losses, new siblings). Together, they read books and magazines (Scholastic's *Action*, a teen magazine for below-grade readers was a big hit); they completed word games and worksheets on homonyms, how to count money, and Mad Libs to boost vocabulary, and grammar. Students learned new games (i.e., Scrabble, Boggle, Guess Who?) and made crafts (including Thanksgiving "gratitude trees" and paper doorknobs displaying their New Year's resolutions). Everyone shared their varied cultural traditions throughout the year.

Bridges provided frequent opportunities for students to gain confidence in speaking aloud, sharing what they read, conducting interviews of mentors about their lives, and acting out plays. Middle school students learned US history by acting out a play about Frederick Douglass; then, they visited his DC home and the Lincoln Memorial. For many elementary students visiting the Natural History Museum was their first time in downtown DC. Other students went bowling.

Weekly activities combined language enhancement with discussion of personal development. Students learned to set goals, reviewed materials on making good decisions about drugs, including polling mentors about their smoking histories to see the ills of smoking; and played a game about bullying which taught them how bystanders can play a big role in stopping the problem.

Musical Theater Center of Rockville, continuing our long-standing partnership that brings theater and dance lessons to the disadvantaged, provided a magic show and a highly entertaining improvisational acting class to our children and adults.

Major Accomplishments: Our lead accomplishment this year was launching four new programs. Three of these programs opened up county where we had had no previous Bridges program. Recruiting volunteer mentors in a new area was by far the biggest challenge, accomplished by holding open houses at senior centers, advertising in local papers and magazines, and reaching out to community groups, mainly through flyers and notices in their newsletters. We are very grateful to our adult volunteers who logged 1,375 hours of service over the last year. Four adults mentored more than one student at different sites. High school students earned 250 hours of community service.

Challenges: Even without the start-up of new programs, we find it challenging to boost *volunteer levels* at existing sites. Each year, it seems more difficult to increase the number of older adults (men, in particular) who are willing to commit to mentor a child through the school year. We were able to count on substitutes and staff to cover for them. Another major challenge this year was *inconsistent attendance* by students, especially at both high school sites. The Arcola/ Northwood program started the year with high attendance by both adults and students, but student numbers dropped off to a handful particularly after spring break. Some students left to find jobs and others to participate in a 3-month career program that ran concurrently. Attendance also varied greatly at the new Waverly/ BCC program which ran from March through May. Gaithersburg MS began in December and closed in March when too few students could attend, as most were required to attend after-school tutoring sessions; one student did walk to our Gaithersburg ES program after school to continue meeting with his mentor.

Evaluations Methodology: Teachers, mentors and students completed program evaluations. Teachers rated middle- and end-year student progress in three areas: social skills, English language, and self-esteem. Mentors rated their individual student's progress and also completed surveys regarding overall program activities and the affect of participation on their own quality of life. Students completed a revised pre- and post-program questionnaire designed to measure their attitudes toward older adults, as well as an end-year satisfaction survey on program activities. Note that very few students indicated problems comprehending the English in this new form (in past years, language was an issue).

PARTICIPANTS: Interages older adult volunteers participated with students from Rosa Parks Middle School. Our first program started with the help of our community partner, the Montgomery County Department of Recreation. They provided one of their Rec-Extra after-school programs for our pilot program. We were very fortunate that they selected the after-school Celebrations Club coordinator, Ms. Kimberly St. John, the Social Studies teacher from Rosa Parks Middle School. She led our first program and helped with the design and creation of the curriculum along with the Director of Education from the Smithsonian Postal Museum and Interages.

ACTIVITIES: During this six-week after-school program, students worked in small groups with guidance from Interages older adult volunteers to select and study an inspirational "hero" from history who has been featured on a US postage stamp. The National Postal Museum provided historical content based upon stamps in their Arago Collection, facilitated conversations and project development about "Heroes on Stamps" between the participants, and provided a tour of the Postal Museum for students and volunteers. At the end of the session, the groups joined for a reception at the National Postal Museum and shared the results of the students' research on a hero they would like to emulate.

CHALLENGES AND MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The challenges included those involved with starting a new program, finding participants, developing curriculum and making changes and refining plans over time. Working with our partners was a positive experience from the very beginning. Everyone was so excited about this program. We enjoyed collaborating together as we worked towards the finished project. The tour of the National Postal Museum, the presentation of the students and volunteers final project and the completed website about Heroes on Stamps on the Smithsonian Postal Museums website were major accomplishments.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: As a new program, we do not yet have fully defined evaluation criteria. I would, however, like to share reflections from Ms. St. John and selected student reflections in response to questions asked.

Teacher Reflection:

"Too often, students believe the perception that they are unreachable, not cool enough, and lacking of the right clothes, connections, etc. This is why heroes are so important. Heroes help us to realize that we can reach past extraordinary and, at times, tragic circumstances and obstacles to make a positive impact on the world. This project was such a rewarding opportunity because it allowed students the chance to experience and find their own hero to look up to for inspiration. It helped students realize the importance of character and choices above any material advantages."

Summary Evaluations: Across the eight content areas, mentors ranked students as achieving a score of 3.2 (out of 4) on overall learning and ability. These scores were similar across all content areas measured, as well as questions designed to evaluate student/peer cooperation, ability to complete tasks, and to follow directions.

Over 80% of student scores on the basic geography survey improved for those who completed both the pre- and post-program quizzes. On averages, scores increased 18% for those showing improved knowledge.

These scores demonstrated the ability of elementary students to learn and apply core geographic concepts. They can find countries using cardinal directions, they know that individual countries have a latitude-longitude “address”; and they begin to grasp the connections between location and climate, land forms, and culture.

Overall, volunteers were “very satisfied” with the Global Wizards program. They almost unanimously rated the effectiveness of the Global Wizards staff, program content/materials, and program logistics at the highest level (a 4 on a scale of 1-4).

Volunteers were asked to rate their current Quality of Life on a scale of 1-10 (1=absolute worst and 10=absolute best), and their average response was 8.2. With this number as a benchmark, volunteers were then asked to measure the impact of their participation in Global Wizards on their quality of life (from -1=decreased quality of life to +3=improved quality of life greatly). They rated the impact an average of +1.6 (halfway between “small amount” and “a lot”); they also rated feeling their lives enriched by participating in the program at an average of 3 (a lot) on a 4-point scale (with 4=greatly).

HEROES ON STAMPS

The Smithsonian National Postal Museum and Interages partnered to create an after-school program, “Heroes on Stamps,” using the award-winning **Arago** web site: www.arago.si.edu. This program teams middle school students with Interages older adult volunteers to study inspirational heroes from American history, all of whom have been featured on U.S. postage stamps. Our pilot program started in the spring of 2009.

Evaluation in the Arcola/Northwood program consisted of the pre-and post-program survey by students on their attitudes toward older adults and a user survey for adults and students. (Due to inconsistent attendance, evaluations were unable to be administered at the Waverly House program. Aging Awareness surveys were not given to students at Rosemont ES, which ran only 7 weeks, but teachers and mentors did report their progress according to program objectives. And mentors at Argyle MS provided group evaluations of the students, as the shortage of mentors resulted in frequent changes in pairings.)

Summary of Evaluation: Based on mid-term and final evaluations by *ESOL teachers* (and Linkages to Learning staff) for all six traditional mentoring programs, a large majority of students made progress over the year. They rated English improvement highest, with 93% of students achieving great (4) or much (3) progress on a four-point scale. Next, 85% of students attained great or much progress in social skills, and 83% in self-esteem. One of the teachers reported that his students “do not like to miss a session” and talked about Bridges enough that their friends frequently asked how they could get into the program. Another teacher mentioned how Bridges helped one student, “feel like he can take chances and have interpersonal successes that take longer to achieve in middle school”. “Bridges has been a constant and positive influence on her social and academic success,” wrote this teacher about another student.

Mentors tend to rate students more conservatively. In the six “traditional” programs, they ranked 76% of students as achieving great (4) and much (3) improvement in English skills; 76% of students at this level of improvement in social skills; and 79% in self-esteem. They also found positive signs to point out: “Z- [enjoys] sharing information about books he has read and thoughts he has on historical and scientific subjects.” Mentors working one-on-one often discover problems that may be hidden from classroom teachers, such as in this comment: “I am concerned...that she works on assumptions and is usually incorrect....She has a tendency to say that she understands, when she really does not.” Mentors satisfaction level with the program is high with a majority “strongly” agreeing—and all “agreed”—that the program is well run and uses appropriate program content.

Students overwhelmingly agreed with all positive measures of the program, such as whether they liked the activities, felt it helped them be better students, and whether they liked their mentor. “I would tell all my friends to come to the program because it is excellent,” a feeling shared by more than 80% of our students. “All the mentors were always listening,” reported more than one student. The surveys indicated what they liked most was “learning from their mentor” and playing games. Comparing the students’ pre- and post-surveys on aging awareness, the proportion of students who answered questions in the affirmative rose slightly over the year, from 91% at the outset to 92% at year’s end. When students were asked to circle (6 positive and 6 negative) words to describe older adults, they scored 90% positive words in the pre-test and 93% positive in the post-test.

The results indicate that students generally come into the program with a favorable attitude toward the older generation, and this attitude only improves over the year. A majority of students reported that they do interact with older adults outside the program, as well.

Immigrant mentors and students in the Arcola Towers/Northwood HS program reported unanimously that the program helped them with English. Students said, “they correct me,” “help me speak more,” and “help me talk with all people.” Students reported that they “learned that old people are helpful.” “I thought old people didn’t know the things that young people know,” and “Old people teach me things from life that are going to help me in the future.” While games and talking were listed as favorites, several adults indicated the need to read together more to help pronunciation, as well as for vocabulary.

COMMUNITY IMPACT: Bridges helps new immigrants integrate faster into school and community life in the United States by giving them an opportunity to gain confidence in speaking and understanding English in regular conversation. Parents indicated their appreciation for the opportunity that the program offers their children, especially in the after-school setting. Our older adult mentors report that their own quality of life improved by volunteering in the community and by helping a child. These mentors very much enjoyed the cultural sharing that took place with their students. Bridges participants create connections across generations and cultures that contribute to the vibrancy of Montgomery County.

DIALOGUES ACROSS THE AGES

As its name implies, **Dialogues Across the Ages** (Dialogues) brings together adult volunteers and high school students for small group discussions of current events, and allows both generations to share ideas, listen and learn from one another. Dialogues has been active in Montgomery County schools for almost twenty years. Throughout these years, the adults have opened doors to countless students and shared their memories of being young, struggling to meet obligations, and pursuing distant dreams. When students realize that they share the same concerns, they form a bond and the two generations begin their journey of weekly dialogues.

Participants: Dialogues met at John F. Kennedy High School in fall 2008, with 36 students and the director of the Leadership Training Institute (LTI), the school’s signature program. Thirteen Interages volunteers, who logged 125 hours, and the program coordinator also participated.

Activities: Dialogues sessions typically last for one and a half hours weekly for a total of eight weeks. Before beginning the group sessions, the Interages program coordinator presents an orientation session where students learn about

Major Accomplishments: With completed curricula for seven continents, Global Wizards has demonstrated for six years that students can learn geography. Reading about continents, looking for clues to solve map puzzles, expanding their vocabulary through word searches and playing various games have all increased each student’s knowledge.

It all began in 2003 when a world-wide survey showed that Americans between the ages of 18-24 were illiterate about their world. This study launched Global Wizards and since that time, reports continue to stress this fact. Recently, Rep. Chris Van Hollen observed in **The Washington Post** ((May 4, 2009), “we are now in a world where we have to compete globally. It is important for American students to understand the geography of the world they are living in.” He is one of 70 co-sponsors of a bill to provide funding for teacher training, research and development of instructional materials.

One new school, Cannon Road, was an especially robust site. They ran two consecutive sessions this school year at maximum student attendance, and 7 mentors worked with 30 students, several returning for a second round.

Major Challenges: While we completed seven sessions at four different schools, we faced two major challenges—funding and sustainability. It has been a daunting task to plan future Global Wizards sites and maintain sustainability with schools on a regular basis. It took years for the program to come to fruition, having a completed curricula along with a team of trained and dedicated mentors. Programs like Global Wizards will need the benefit of future bills aiming for geography funding if they are to remain viable in county schools.

Evaluation Methodology: Mentors are in a strong position to evaluate specific student strengths and challenges since they each work closely with 2-3 students for eight-consecutive weeks. They complete individual evaluation forms for students they support. These evaluations assign a numerical value (with 1 for minimal and 4 for maximum) to various measures of student learning, including: each student’s ability to understand similarities and differences between maps and globes; knowledge of cardinal directions, latitudes and longitudes; awareness of what constitutes a continent or a country; ability to use a map; and knowledge of the specific continent in regard to climate, natural resources, geographic regions, and land forms. Mentors also comment on each student’s abilities to work with peers, follow directions and complete tasks.

Students complete a pre- and post-program quiz about basic geography concepts to help capture their improved general geographic knowledge. Volunteers completed an evaluation of Interages staff, program content, and program logistics at each site. In addition, they rated the impact of their participation in the program on their lives.

GLOBAL WIZARDS

Global Wizards teaches geography, a subject currently often ignored in elementary schools. Wizards takes children on world adventures, learning how to use maps and find latitudes and longitudes; what is meant by hemispheres; and how to predict hot or cold during winter months, depending on specific latitudes. After this tour, students know about continents and oceans. Then, they take a close look at one particular continent.

Students enroll voluntarily in this after-school enrichment program, and meet one hour per week for eight weeks during fall, winter, and/or spring terms. Older adult volunteers work with 2-4 students in small groups with an Interages program coordinator providing materials, a brief introductory lesson, and overall facilitation.

The National Geography Standards (Standards) were established in 1994, to serve as benchmarks to teach geography. These Standards also closely align with the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC), the guidelines utilized for teaching social studies in Montgomery County schools. Global Wizards uses both (Standards and VSC) to develop its curricula. The structure of Global Wizards builds on geographic concepts week by week where elementary students begin to grasp the fundamentals of geography.

Participants: Global Wizards met at four elementary schools this year where 64 students in grades 2-4 participated. **Nineteen** adult volunteers logged 280 hours working with students. Several guests also visited.

Activities: The activities for Global Wizards vary from week to week and site to site since children develop their skills at different rates. The program uses games, puzzles and special maps to teach geographic concepts that allow students to use maps to become familiar with far away countries.

One example is an activity that helps students learn the location of a place by pairing two students with geographic coordinates for lines of latitude and longitude. Working with their respective coordinates, students pinpoint the exact location. Another favorite is Globe Ball, where mentors and students toss a ball printed with a world map and ask geographic questions of the catcher. The questions become more challenging as student knowledge grows. To learn about the Alps, students use a word search and look for special words that describe the highest mountain in Europe. Students read about the Silk Route, a trade road that stretched across Asia thousands of years ago. After discussing trade, imports and exports, students and mentors shift to the present and search their clothing tags for items imported from different countries. Students complete this activity by creating a chart that shows the number of items manufactured in each continent.

the qualities attributed to older adults, life styles that determine longevity, brief biographical information about the volunteers and the format for the weekly meetings. Students also complete a pre- and post-program Aging Awareness questionnaire.

This year, the group returned to the format of small discussion groups of two adults and 4-6 students each. The LTI director and the program coordinator observed that last year's meetings with two large groups made it difficult for quieter students to participate in the discussions.

Each week, volunteers rotate and a student moderator leads the structured discussion sessions. Prior to the initial session, the students select the topics to be discussed. The first session usually begins with a neutral topic such as "Changes in Families and Individual Responsibilities." This fall, students and older adults examined topics such as patriotism, fast foods and obesity, same-sex relationships, euthanasia and assisted suicide, internet and video games, and outsourcing. Through the years, teachers have observed how the life experiences of the volunteers provide students with alternate avenues for solving problems, and how openly and without reservations the students share their personal experiences, concerns, and ideas with the adult volunteers.

Major Accomplishments: Our continual involvement at Kennedy High School for over a dozen years validates the success of Dialogues. In addition, Interages volunteers and staff supported the LTI students' efforts to raise money to help needy organizations. Volunteers purchased cookbooks and attended International Night, a fundraising event that showcases the students' talents in singing, dancing, acting and performing various skits.

Major Challenges: Adding a new school for the Dialogues program was a major challenge this year, just as it has been previous years. We made repeated efforts to return to Winston Churchill High School since the staff there had offered much praise for last year's spring session, but were not successful.

Just as teachers rave or lament that a particular class is good or bad, the same holds true for students participating in the Dialogues. The group's tone changes each year, depending on whether students may or may not want to spend eight weeks in discussion groups. Much credit goes to the sensitive volunteers who through humor, patience and careful observation find ways to draw reluctant students into the group.

Evaluation Methodology: Staff, volunteers and students evaluate the program. The written evaluations capture opinions about the program's content and structure, as well as allowing participants to make suggestions for future meetings. In addition, the student participants complete an Aging Awareness questionnaire designed to measure their beliefs and views on older people. They complete the questionnaire prior to beginning the Dialogues program, and again at the end of their eight-week participation.

Summary of Evaluations: Student scores on aging awareness questionnaires showed improved understanding and impressions of older adults as a result of participating in Dialogues. The pre-post questionnaire shows an increase of 15% on how students view older adults. Also, the score for positive adjectives describing older adults rose 11%.

Volunteers rated their satisfaction with the Dialogues program as 1.2 (with 1=very satisfied, 2=satisfied, 3=not satisfied, and 4=very dissatisfied). Similarly, they felt the program needed little to no improvements—on a scale of 1-3 (with 1=no change needed, 2=yes, a little improvement needed, and 3=yes, needs lots of improvement) their average response was 1.5.

Community Impact: There are not many opportunities in our community for groups of varying ages to interact with one another for an extended period of time. Dialogues Across the Ages allows students and older adult volunteers to voice their opinions and to help dispel negative stereotypes that both generations may hold. Dialogues is unique because the program continues for eight weeks and gives everyone ample time to get acquainted, explore life styles and interests and tackle controversial issues. Students leave the Dialogues program with fond memories of older adults who offered suggestions, knowledge, and understanding—just to have someone listen makes this a valuable experience to many. Similarly, adult volunteers consistently report their very positive impressions of the students they meet. The director of the LTI program concludes, “I enjoyed it as always! Thanks again.”

GRANDREADERS

Program Overview: Grandreaders is an intergenerational literacy program for second and third grade children. Classroom teachers, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) staff, and/or Reading Specialists at each school site select children who, based on overall reading scores, need extra support to develop reading and English language skills and to bring their comprehension skills up to grade level. Senior adult tutors meet weekly with the same child throughout the year to enhance their reading experience through a variety of reading and language arts activities. Expected outcomes are: improved language skills; the ability to read more fluently with better comprehension; development of a caring intergenerational community of older adults interacting regularly with children; and reinforcing positive self-esteem in both the children and volunteers.

Interages offers two versions of our Grandreaders program. At three schools we utilize our “in-house” program with materials we select from a web-based reading program (ReadingA-Z.com) and supplement lessons with materials from our own resources including trade books. Our Program Coordinator serves as the lead in

In addition, as part of the post-test, the students were given adjectives to describe older people. As a whole, the words students chose were 77% positive. This is very similar to the results obtained at the time of the pretest, indicating to us that participating students generally already had positive regard for older adults at the beginning of the SHARE experience. That said, regular interactions with very frail elderly people did nothing to dampen this regard, indicating that students were able to distinguish between the adults’ physical and mental limitations and their ongoing value as people.

At the end of the year, sentence completion forms the second-graders filled out reflected strongly how much they liked the program and being with senior friends. When asked to state one thing they liked about being with a senior friend, most often they enjoyed talking with them, being together having fun, and making arts and crafts.

Middle school students reflected that they learned a multitude of things from the SHARE experience including that older adults have a lot of wisdom, are not all the same, are “regular” people (like the students), enjoy kids, have an interesting life history, and can be “cool”.

Of the senior participants interviewed, 94% indicated that the program improved their overall quality of life; 84% said the program improved their life “a lot” or “greatly”. 100% of the seniors responding were satisfied with the SHARE program and of that, 63% were “very satisfied”.

Here are some comments seniors made about their SHARE experiences:

“It gives me a boost!”

“I love little kids. I’d like to be with them all day and all night!”

“They listened to me!”

“I get to understand young people more and more.”

“I like their freshness. They’re healthy and full of life. For a few minutes, I feel young again.”

Written evaluations from teachers and staff at the senior facilities reflected enthusiasm for the program. One teacher wrote, “I really enjoyed the interactions between my students and the seniors. I know my students became more comfortable as the weeks went by, more sensitive, understanding and aware.”

Community Impact: As a result of this program, we believe the lives of the many senior participants at have been enriched by the presence of and interaction with children. Besides enjoying the activities, many of the seniors feel they are being helpful to the children by working with and teaching them. The children have the opportunity to learn about seniors and feel they are contributing to the lives of the seniors. Understanding grows between the two generations, and everyone may feel useful and helpful.

Many of the older adults had noteworthy attendance this year. Two seniors had perfect attendance throughout the program year and many others only missed 1-3 times. They really looked forward to being with the children and made an effort to be present.

We were pleased to successfully arrange for the participation of all groups from the previous year. The group of teens from a youth center made more than twice as many after school visits as last year.

Major Challenges: At all the sites, it continues to be a challenge to coordinate the timely arrival of some senior participants when the program is scheduled to begin. It is difficult for the staff at all facilities to have the seniors ready for the start of the programs.

At times, senior attendance is lower than what we would like because of illness, appointments and other demands on staff time. Occasionally some seniors were sleepy or unresponsive, which could prove difficult for the students to work with. Involving everyone in a large group and planning for a huge range of abilities is also always a challenge.

Identifying new schools to join the program continues to be difficult, as most public schools currently do not release students from class time to participate regularly in activities. In addition, transportation for children and seniors is a major challenge to SHARE's potential expansion as gasoline prices rise and bus/van access for these "extra" activities becomes even more limited. At the same time, we have a growing list of adult care facilities interested in hosting SHARE programs. We are exploring ways we might address this mismatch between supply and demand for the program in future years.

Evaluation Methodology: All groups completed a survey at the beginning and end of the program to reflect their views about senior adults. Our goal was to realize positive changes resulting from students' experience in the program. A "Reflections Session" was also held with each group of students at the close of the program year to share feelings, thoughts and opinions about the SHARE experience.

Senior adult participants in our SHARE programs completed an evaluation survey orally, with Interages staff interviewing them individually at the end of the program year.

Summary of Evaluation: For all students completing both the pre- and post-test on their attitudes about older adults, more than half (62%) scored the same or higher at the end of the program year.

At seven of our sites, the Grandreaders program overlaps with a similar, Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) system-wide reading program called the Ruth Rales Comcast Kids Reading Network (RRCKRN). At these sites, tutors implement the "Reading Together" curriculum provided by MCPS, and a school staff member (a teacher or reading specialist) plays the lead role in running each site's weekly sessions. Interages staff assists with volunteer recruitment, training, and management by visiting regularly.

Participants: For the 2008/09 school year, we had 111 tutors who served 125 youth. We had 10 Grandreader sites, 3 in-house and 7 Reading Together sites.

Activities: At the three in-house Grandreader sites the curriculum utilizes leveled reading books and follow-up instructional materials we obtain from an on-line service, Reading A-Z.com, and also from our own resources including trade books. The seven RRCKRN sites use "Reading Together," a structured, comprehension-based program for second graders. It provides books, tools and techniques for tutors and students to share with an emphasis on reading comprehension and fluency.

Interages offered initial tutor training in the fall, and a mid-year in-service meeting featuring a talk on second language learners and reading by Patrick Redding, ESOL teacher at Sligo Creek Elementary School.

Major Accomplishments: From the generous First Book grant in May 2008, we were able to give away 122 books to our in-house sites. This allowed each of the children to have a total of four books each for the year. In addition, we distributed 164 books (two books per child from Interages; MCPS funds provided another two books per student) at the seven RRCKRN sites, for a total distribution of 286 books for the 2008-2009 school year. Having age appropriate books in their homes to share with their families is a tremendous benefit and motivation to read for the students.

One volunteer generously donated \$1000 to purchase trade books for use in the three Interages in-house programs. Several titles were purchased in time to use this school year to supplement the computer-generated books used at these schools. Other titles are being purchased for the 2009-2010 school year to further enhance the program.

Across all 10 Grandreaders sites, school staff members are impressed with the commitment and reliability of the Grandreaders and appreciate their efforts. We have received excellent feedback from our school partners, who value the role our tutor volunteers play in the schools.

Major Challenges: We faced a dilemma on the first day of the program at one school, where our liaison works for the Linkages to Learning program (and is not a school staff member). Due to staffing transitions, the school inadvertently overlooked the Grandreaders Program during the planning process and did not allow time in the second grade schedule for the program. When we realized the students were all third graders, we decided to adjust our reading materials to accommodate these older children for this year. Although this added an unexpected “preparation” to the program coordinator’s workload, the program ran well and there were a sufficient number of third graders identified who needed extra help and attention.

Schools face ongoing pressure to reach ever-higher reading levels in annual standardized test scores to achieve federal performance requirements. As a result, gaining access to students during the instructional day can be difficult. Two long-time Grandreaders schools shifted our tutoring sessions to lunch/recess, and after-school, respectively, and several volunteers were vocal in their disapproval of this shift. We worked diligently to address concerns, make adjustments, and offer more “fun” opportunities (acknowledging holidays with word searches and small prizes to offset missed recess, for example). At year’s end, volunteers noted that while they still weren’t happy with the changes, their tutees/children did very well in the program.

Evaluation Methodology: At the end of the school year, classroom teachers, school coordinators, and Grandreaders were asked to evaluate the program overall, and as it affected the individual student(s) with whom they worked directly. Overall program measures included effectiveness and organization of Interages staff, program content/materials, and program logistics. For individual student evaluations, each form included a ranking of the child’s improvement in several areas. The criteria were given numerical values to indicate the improvement of the child and the degree of achievement of our overall goals.

Our efforts to evaluate the effect of participation in the Grandreaders program on student reading ability are necessarily limited, for two reasons. First, student confidentiality rules mean that individual test scores are not available to Interages staff. We cannot access information on before-and-after reading levels for participating students. Next, improvements in student reading ability may be the result of many influencing factors, including classroom work, at home support, and other specialized services students may receive. Teacher comments indicate that the Grandreaders program definitely contributes to improved reading among the student participants, and anecdotal feedback from the tutors supports this finding. The Grandreaders Program is, nonetheless, one factor among many influencing this outcome.

Students, also, completed an evaluation of the program and an Age Awareness Survey. The evaluation measured the students’ feelings on whether they like the activities, did they feel it made them better students, whether the program was fun,

Community Impact: The students are better trained to go out into the community and work effectively with all kinds of clientele as a result of their experiences. Their opportunities in Makeover Madness have helped them grow in understanding, patience and compassion as well as professionally. The senior adults have been treated with respect and courtesy and have had the pleasure of cosmetic services and a personal touch to help them look and feel better. They have also enjoyed the company of the young people who attended to them. Our community is always improved when people are engaged in activities that help them grow and be happy.

PROJECT SHARE

Program Overview: Project SHARE (Students Help and Reach Elders) enriches the lives of health-impaired seniors in nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, and adult day care centers by linking them with children from pre-school through high school in a number of interactive ways. SHARE focuses on what people can do rather than on their limitations. The program works towards dispelling negative age-related myths and stereotypes and raising the self-esteem of both young and old participants. Students encourage and work with senior participants in all the activities at senior facilities.

Participants: One MCPS elementary school (three classes), two private schools (five classes total), one private preschool (two classes), one youth center, two nursing homes and two assisted-living facilities participated in Project SHARE this year. A total of 214 students and 194 frail and isolated seniors visited together during the year. The seniors involved in the program spent over 900 hours with the children.

Activities: At each of our programs the participants enjoyed doing a wide range of activities together: songs to put everyone at ease, a time for conversation on a suggested topic, an art or craft project, some movement activity, riddles or trivia questions to answer, and/or games to play. All of the activities were designed to encourage everyone’s involvement and to stimulate interaction between the students and their senior friends. Activities were planned to make everyone feel comfortable and capable of participating. The emphasis was always on students and their senior friends helping and working with each other.

Major Accomplishments: This program has been very successful in getting the students to feel comfortable engaging in conversations with the seniors. The students became more confident and the level of sharing grew considerably through shared experiences and the numerous tasks that the students and seniors were required to do together as a team. Many became free with their hugs for each other.

It was a challenge to have enough senior clients for the students to work on. The facilities would occasionally commit to bring a number of seniors and then cancel at the last minute or simply not bring as many people as they had committed. Sometimes they scheduled other activities at their centers at the same time and then were unable to attend the Makeover Madness sessions.

Evaluation Methodology: The students involved were given a survey to complete at the beginning and the end of the program to reflect their views on senior adults. We were looking for positive changes resulting from their experience in the program. A "Reflections Session" was held at the close of the program to discuss and share experiences.

Summary of Evaluation: For students completing both the pre- and post-test on their attitudes about older adults, 78% scored the same or higher at the end of the program year. In addition, the students were given adjectives to describe older people as part of both the pre- and post-test. On the pre-test, 59% of the words chosen by students were positive descriptions; at the post-test, 65% of the words were positive.

From talking with the students during the Reflections Session, the program coordinator believes much learning took place. The students shared that they learned how to communicate more effectively with seniors, gained an understanding of the special help that many seniors need and grew in compassion and patience. They learned to work quickly to serve their senior clients efficiently. When asked how they feel differently about senior adults at the end of the program student answers included feeling more comfortable around seniors, learning they enjoy being with older adults, and knowing how to treat them. One student summed it up with the comment "I think working with seniors was a fun opportunity for getting to know older people."

The evaluations done with the senior participants showed 100% are satisfied with our program; of that, 64% indicated they were "very satisfied". 100% of the adults also said the program improved the quality of their life; of that, 79% said our program improved the quality of their life "greatly" or "a lot". Seniors commented that the students were friendly, did a fantastic job, and had good attitudes towards them. One happy client said, "Every time I go back (to the day care center after a session) I look like a whole new person."

Many of the seniors returned to each session to receive hair and nail services. In all, the students completed 97 senior "makeovers" while they gained helpful experience. Interages was able to bring these two groups of people together, the students and the seniors, in a meaningful and beneficial way.

would they tell a friend about the program, and whether they liked their tutors. The Age Awareness Survey measured their feelings about older adults and what words they would use to describe older adults.

All evaluation results are shown as a percentage of the total responses for a particular category.

Summary of Evaluations and Surveys (based on percentage of responses received):

Teachers:

The teachers evaluated improvement on a scale of **1-4**, (minimum improvement to maximum improvement) in the following areas:

High Frequency Word: **1=0%; 2=19%; 3=50%; 4=31%**
Reading Comprehension: **1=0%; 2=44%; 3=44%; 4=12%**
Motivation to read: **1=0%; 2=0%; 3=50%; 4=50%**
Enjoyment of reading: **1=0%; 2=0%; 3=37%; 4=63%**
Confidence in self as reader: **1=0%; 2=12%; 3=44%; 4=44%**
Child's attitude towards the program: **1=0%; 2=0%; 3=19%; 4=81%**

School Coordinators:

100% of school coordinator responses rated all aspects of our program staff, content, materials, and on-site logistics as strongly agree or agree (on a scale of 1-4 with 1 as "strongly agree"). Among several comments, specific coordinators noted: "Excellent support given concerning availability of volunteers and response to needs;" and "The program ran smoothly and efficiently. The students looked forward to meeting with their special Grandreader each week!"

Volunteers:

The volunteers evaluated on a scale of **1-5** (strongly agree being **1** to strongly disagree being **5**) in the following areas:

Overall improvement in child's reading skill: **1=45%; 2=45%; 3=10%; 4=0%; 5=0%**
Felt they will return next year: **1=66%; 2=26%; 3=4%; 4=1%; 5=3%**
Being a Grandreader was a positive experience: **1=84%; 2=14%; 3=1%; 4=0%; 5=1%**

Volunteers described student behavior in the following areas using these words:

Reads: **Enthusiastically=52%; Willingly=37%; Reluctantly=11%; Refuses=0%**
Writes: **Enthusiastically=24%; Willingly=59%; Reluctantly=16%; Refuses=1%**
Listens: **Enthusiastically=52%; Willingly=48%; Reluctantly=0%; Refuses=0%**

Retells: **Always**=45%; **Usually**=47%; **Sometimes**=8%; **Never**=0%
 Draws: **Always**=38%; **Usually**=51%; **Sometimes**=10%; **Never**=1%
 Sentence Writing: **Always**=36%; **Usually**=49%; **Sometimes**=13%; **Never**=2%
 Sound of Words: **Always**=22%; **Usually**=51%; **Sometimes**=24%; **Never**=3%
 Read Back Sentences: **Always**=49%; **Usually**=44%; **Sometimes**=7%;
Never=0%
 Draws: **Always**=38%; **Usually**=51%; **Sometimes**=10%; **Never**=1%
 Sentence Writing: **Always**=36%; **Usually**=49%; **Sometimes**=13%; **Never**=2%
 Sound of Words: **Always**=22%; **Usually**=51%; **Sometimes**=24%; **Never**=3%
 Read Back Sentences: **Always**=49%; **Usually**=44%; **Sometimes**=7%;
Never=0%

98% of volunteer responses rated all aspects of our program staff, content, materials, and on-site logistics as very positive or positive. Among several comments, specific volunteers noted: "Great program—can't wait till next year"; "Teaching materials were very well thought out. Program ran beautifully." Specific recommendations for improving the program focused primarily on program content (suggestions for book titles and activities) and program logistics (tutoring location, time of day for the program). Many of these fall outside the purview of Interages' staff, as we rely on our school partners for meeting space and tutor schedules, but we share these ideas with school staff during our planning meetings.

Students:

The students evaluated the program with positive or negative responses in the following areas:

Liked Activities: **Yes**=98%; **No**=1%; **Not Sure**=1%
 Made You a Better Student: **Yes**=99%; **Not Sure**=1%
 Fun Program: **Yes**=98%; **No**=1%; **Not Sure**=1%
 Would Tell a Friend to Join: **Yes**=85%; **No**=10%; **Not Sure**=5%
 Liked My Tutor: **Yes**=100%

We attempted to measure students' attitudes toward older adults using a simple Aging Awareness questionnaire administered at the beginning and again at the end of the program year. In many cases we have only the pre-survey or only the post-survey responses (some students moved, others were absent on the day of the survey, and some were added during the year); the responses are inconclusive as a result. Still, for responses received from students completing both pre- and post-surveys, overall student "positive" impressions of aging increased by 9% between the start and end of the year. In addition, on the survey students selected from among listed words to describe an older person, and we coded these as positive or negative. At year's end, the number of positive words they selected had increased by 25%.

Community Impact: The Grandreaders program is popular with students, volunteers, and teachers alike—it's the easiest Interages program for recruiting adult volunteers; schools regularly contact us with requests to participate; and kids are smiling and eager to greet their Grandreaders and get to work each week. Children improve their reading skills and enjoyment, and receive a boost to their self-confidence from the regular, individual attention of a caring adult. Truly, everyone wins.

In addition to the direct benefit to participants, the program provides opportunities for community members to visit public elementary schools regularly. These volunteers often become advocates for a particular student, a school, and even the school system overall. Community involvement in education and youth helps ensure a strong education system.



Makeover Madness - A Special Program of Project SHARE

Participants: 39 students from a MCPS high school worked with 53 adults from five senior facilities in a series of monthly two-hour sessions, totaling 194 hours of "makeovers" during the school year.

Activities: Thomas Edison High School of Technology offers a range of vocational educational programs providing technical skills training that prepare students for employment upon graduation. In the cosmetology program, students learn all aspects of nail and hair care. The Interages program called "Makeover Madness" brings clientele to these students to practice on and become more proficient in this field. As their level of proficiency improved in shampooing, hair-cutting, and manicuring, the students also learned about the frailties and needs of seniors and how to work efficiently and effectively with senior clientele.

Major Accomplishments: The major accomplishment of this program was the successful pairing of students and seniors so that the needs of both are met. Students had an opportunity to service senior clientele and learn about how to do this, while senior participants received cosmetology services and individual attention they enjoyed.

Major Challenges: At the beginning of this program year, the school informed us it was no longer able to provide the materials for free as costs kept increasing. It was agreed that Interages would supply funds to pay for materials for hairstyling and manicures and that any chemical treatments would be paid for by the individual requesting them.