

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



Interages[®]

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**Program Report
2009-2010**

Interages[®]

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

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The evaluations done with the senior participants showed 100% are satisfied with our program; of that, 70% indicated they were "very satisfied". 100% of the adults also said the program improved the quality of their life; of that, 78% said our program improved the quality of their life "greatly" or "a lot". Many of the seniors returned each session to receive hair and nail services. In all, the students completed 118 senior "makeovers" while they gained helpful experience. This is an accomplishment that happened because Interages was able to bring these two groups of people together, the students and the seniors, in a meaningful and beneficial way.

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 to help them look and feel better. They have also enjoyed the company of the young women who attended to them. Our community is always improved when people are engaged in activities that help them grow and be happy.

INTERAGES STAFF

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while senior participants received cosmetology services and individual attention they enjoyed.

Through ongoing outreach efforts, we added two new senior care facilities to our Makeover Madness participants.

Major Challenges: It was a challenge to have enough senior clients for the students to work on. The facilities would occasionally cancel at the last minute or simply not bring as many people as they had committed to in advance. However, adding the two new centers helped our attendance considerably, especially at the last session.

This year we had some difficulty with the logistics of the seniors arriving and departing at roughly the same time as school buses were dropping off and picking up students. The front of the school becomes extremely congested at those times and the small buses transporting the seniors were unable to move, making the adults late for lunch and activities. The school provided an alternative entrance for the participants to use that worked out well.

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, 83% scored the same or higher at the end of the program year.

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. Students commented that they learned that seniors "have a lot to offer", "can teach us things", and "still love to interact with others". All students responded affirmatively when asked if they believed they made the senior happier at Makeover Madness. One of the teachers commented on her evaluation, "This is a great program for students. The students grow and learn a lot from this opportunity."

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Dear Friends of Interages:

Interages had a great year! Our incredible staff has worked hard to successfully fulfill our mission to build bridges across generations and cultures. Many thanks go out to our dedicated volunteers! In FY 2010 they clocked 6,039 in volunteer hours which equals \$134,254 of in-kind support. Also, thanks goes to the Interages Board of Directors, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Montgomery County Public Schools, and our many foundations, corporations and individual contributors. Thanks to all of you for believing in and investing in us to make our community a better place.

During the 2009-2010 school year with the help of 217 older adult volunteers, Interages was able to reach 428 at-risk students through its intergenerational programs. Also, 321 students of all ages regularly visited 206 frail and elderly adults living in assisted care facilities.

I am delighted to share our 2009-2010 Interages Program Report with you. This report provides more detail on the Participants, Activities, Major Accomplishments, Major Challenges and Summary of Evaluations of each program. Our reporting and evaluation process provides valuable insight into what we are doing right and what may need to change or be improved.

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

Warmest regards,



Carol Croll
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summed up the SHARE experience by saying, "I think it's the greatest thing. Those kids are fantastic!"

Written evaluations from teachers and staff at the senior facilities reflected enthusiasm for the program. One teacher wrote, "Our students always looked forward to going and always had a wonderful time. We made beautiful new friendships, learned many important things, and even accomplished some writing objectives."

Community Impact: As a result of this program, we believe the lives of the many senior participants 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 can feel useful and helpful.

MAKEOVER MADNESS – A SPECIAL PROGRAM OF PROJECT SHARE

Makeover Madness brings adults from senior facilities to the Thomas Edison High School of Technology for cosmetic services and friendly conversation with students.

Participants: 40 students from a MCPS high school worked with 74 seniors from 7 different senior facilities in a series of monthly two-hour sessions, totaling 236 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. "Makeover Madness" brings older adult clientele to these students for practice, to become more proficient in this field. As their level of proficiency improved in shampooing, haircutting, 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,

DIALOGUES ACROSS THE AGES

As in past years, we continued to experience some delays in program start times due to late-arriving senior participants. It is difficult for the staff at all facilities to have the seniors ready for the start of the programs. At times, senior attendance was lower than what we would have liked because of illness, appointments and staff not bringing them. Occasionally seniors were sleepy or unresponsive, a situation which was 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 funding for bus/van access for these "extra" activities becomes even more limited.

Evaluation Methodology: All but one of the groups attending more than once 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 regularly attending 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 and writing their responses, 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, 93% scored the same or higher at the end of the program year.

Middle school students reflected that they learned a multitude of things from the SHARE experience including that older adults have interesting life histories, like to be listened to, are "normal" people, still feel young inside, can learn new things, are very kind, really enjoy being with young people, and look forward to the students' visits. One student, when asked if she feels differently now about older adults wrote that she now "shows more interest and concern along with care" for them.

Of the senior participants interviewed, 95% indicated that the program improved the overall quality of their life; of that 68% said the program improved their life "a lot" or "greatly". 100% of the seniors responding were satisfied with the SHARE program and of that 55% were "very satisfied". One senior enthusiastically

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 two decades. 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 2009, with 38 students and the director of the Leadership Training Institute (LTI), the school's signature program. Twelve Interages volunteers, who logged 135 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 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.

The group utilized a format of small discussion groups of two adults and 4-6 students each. 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." 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, the older adults involved with Dialogues are among Interages' most loyal volunteers, with 11 of 12 returning this year (and most returning for over 5 years). The program is noteworthy for the number of men involved as volunteers – representing over half the adults in the program (as opposed to Interages other programs where women are the significant majority).

This year, the LTI students wrote a feature article for their program magazine describing the history and ongoing involvement of Interages volunteers and the Dialogues Program at their school.

Major Challenges: Adding a new school for the Dialogues program was a major challenge this year, as it has been in previous years. Just as teachers rave or lament that a particular class is good or bad, the same holds true for students participating in 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 caring 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 14% on how students view older adults. Also, the score for positive adjectives describing older adults rose 12%.

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 1.25.

Community Impact: There are few opportunities in our community for diverse age groups 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 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.

suggested topic, an art or craft project, some movement activity, riddles or trivia questions to answer, and/or games to play. All 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 directly with each other.

Major Accomplishments: This year we expanded our SHARE programming at one assisted living facility to include a Saturday morning opportunity for students from the Leadership and Empowerment Action Program. This group of middle school students had the opportunity for service to the community as well as a chance to meet, get to know and form relationships with seniors.

One major accomplishment of SHARE has been 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.

Another accomplishment was the steady attendance of many of the seniors. There were two seniors who had nearly perfect attendance during the program and many seniors who only missed a few times. They really looked forward to being with the children and made an effort to be present.

Interages sponsored a SHARE workshop targeting youth group leaders and adult care facility staff, with the goal of expanding SHARE-type programming to additional sites (mainly other than schools – youth groups, scout troops, etc.) to address recent challenges we've faced in enlisting new schools to participate. Over 25 organizations attended the workshop, where we featured hands-on lesson plans and logistics details, as well as highlighting the benefits gained from offering this programming. Participants had time to exchange contact information with potential partners, and Interages is available for technical support as needed.

Major Challenges: The biggest challenge for this program this year, which affected our attendance numbers greatly, was the threat of the H1N1 flu. One nursing home dropped out of the program for this year when the management curtailed visits by all children. We could not find a workable replacement for that senior facility for the students who had planned to go there, and they weren't able to participate as a result. In addition, the one public school with long-standing involvement in SHARE also chose not to participate in the fall because of concerns over the flu epidemic. They also faced problems with scheduling and with locating funds to support bus transportation.

Overall this program was efficient to run. Volunteer teams scheduled themselves, covered for one another when absent, and kept staff apprised of any issues as they arose. We held two in-service meetings during the year to solicit feedback and make improvements as well.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: As a pilot program, we do not yet have fully defined evaluation criteria. We did poll our volunteers at year's end, and all of them reported a very positive experience, and all of them plan to participate again with the program next year if it continues. The Head Start office polled the schools and teachers involved, and all three sites gave this piece of the project high marks as well, indicating they would welcome us back.

COMMUNITY IMPACT: According to a US Department of Education report, "(t)he single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children." This program makes reading aloud a highlight of each week by bringing "Grandparents" into classes for this sole purpose. Children gain vocabulary and experience the joy of sharing good books. Adult volunteers embrace their time with the children, and reconnect with the public school system through this new generation.

PROJECT SHARE

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 all participants. Students encourage and work with the adults in all the activities at senior facilities.

Participants: One MCPS elementary school (involving one visit by each of six classes), one private school (involving two classes), one private preschool (two classes), one after-school youth center, the Leadership and Empowerment Action Program (L.E.A.P.—a program for newly adopted teens), one nursing home and two assisted-living facilities participated in Project SHARE this year. A total of 281 students and 132 frail and isolated seniors visited together during the year. The seniors involved in the program spent 606 hours with the children.

Activities: At each of our programs the participants enjoyed a wide range of activities together: songs to put everyone at ease, a time for conversation on a

GRANDREADERS

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 own "in-house" program with materials we select from a web-based reading program, and supplement lessons with materials from our own resources including trade books. Our Program Coordinator manages each weekly session, providing materials and on-site supervision.

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 a curriculum provided by MCPS, and a school staff member (a teacher or reading specialist) plays a more direct role in running each site's weekly sessions. Interages staff assists with volunteer recruitment, training, and management by visiting regularly.

Participants: For the 2009/10 school year, we had 115 tutors who served 127 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 and lessons written by Interages staff. The seven RRCKRN sites use "Reading Together," a structured, comprehension-based program purchased by MCPS. Each "Reading Together" kit 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 featuring a music teacher who gave a presentation about keeping students engaged through positive feedback

and playful teaching, as well as basic information presented by Interages staff about the tutoring process.

Major Accomplishments: From a generous First Book grant we received in December 2009, we were able to give away 300 books to students. Students at our in-house sites and elementary level Intergenerational Bridges programs each received a total of six books for the year. Many of our RRCKRN students also received one or more books because low prices at the First Book Marketplace allowed us to purchase an unexpectedly large number of books using the grant funds.

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: Each year, staffing transitions and classroom schedule changes at the start of the school year can leave us scrambling to adjust our program times and volunteers. This year was no exception. At one in-house program site, on the first day we were greeted by a lively group of high-level readers (instead of the below-grade group we'd anticipated) because of a larger-scale intervention for struggling second grade readers occurring in the school. We quickly shifted our program to serve third graders who needed help, and were able to adjust lesson planning accordingly.

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. Each time a new principal takes the reins at a school, it may become necessary to defend the value of the Grandreaders program since it can be perceived as a loss of instructional time. At some schools the program is permitted only during lunch or after school, neither of which is ideal for student performance.

Evaluation Methodology: At the end of the school year, classroom teachers 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.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN/HEAD START READ-ALOUD PROGRAM

This collaborative pilot program harnessed the resources of Montgomery County Public Schools' Head Start administration, three elementary schools' classrooms, Montgomery College's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instructors, the Twinbrook Public Library, and Interages volunteers to bring books, reading, and ESOL classes to immigrant families with children at Bel Pre ES, Georgian Forest ES, and Twinbrook ES. Funded by the Barbara Bush Family Literacy Foundation, this pilot effort provided evening ESOL classes for parents, library reading "fiestas" to families, and read-aloud volunteers from Interages during the school day for pre-K and Head Start students.

Participants: Three public elementary schools hosted Interages volunteers in their pre-kindergarten and Head Start classrooms throughout the school year. Eleven volunteers contributed 286 hours reading to 120 students weekly at Bel Pre, Georgian Forest, and Twinbrook ES. (In addition, Montgomery College teachers offered four hours per week of ESOL classes in the evenings to parents of the children. Twinbrook Library provided Literacy Fiestas one Saturday per month designed to bring together the entire family around books and reading.)

Activities: Throughout the school year Interages read-aloud volunteers visited each pre-kindergarten and Head Start classroom at the three participating schools to read picture books to small groups (3-5 students per group) during class reading time. Staff visited public libraries regularly to select new read-aloud books to deposit in each participating classroom for use by volunteers.

Challenges and Major Accomplishments: Interages was one piece of a larger team effort under this pilot grant, and as with any new undertaking, the group needed to fine tune roles and responsibilities. Specifically Interages and the pre-kindergarten/Head Start teachers at each site worked to identify convenient read-aloud schedules across classrooms that would allow volunteers to maximize their involvement during weekly visits. This worked well in 5 of the 6 school sessions, and volunteers, teachers, and students all reported a very positive experience.

Reading to small children brings joy to many people, older adults included, and this program really "sold itself" in terms of volunteer recruitment. Early in the school year we had sufficient volunteers in place to staff all three pilot sites, and were able to replace two volunteers (who dropped out due to health issues) in a timely manner.

among the student population – some students had a stronger command of English, but needed support with social interactions or motivation; others had lower levels of English ability, but were extremely enthusiastic participants. Meeting these diverse needs in a single program represents a challenge for Bridges.

Students' evaluations reflected their understanding that Bridges was a place to learn English. Asked what they learned in the program, their replies included: vocabulary, pronunciation, and reading. One student also mentioned, "how to respect people's opinions." The "best" things they listed about Bridges were having fun, making friends, having a friend/mentor who cares about you, and the field trip. Asked if they would recommend Bridges to their friends and why, the answers were overwhelmingly "Yes, to learn English, make new friends, get help, and have fun."

Students were also asked about their comfort level in working with older adults. The results were very positive. Asked six yes/no questions about their relative ease in working with older adults, 90% of responses reflected positive views. Similarly, asked to circle words that describe "older people" from a list of 6 positive (i.e. "kind", "wise") and 6 negative (i.e. "tired", "sick") adjectives, students chose 80% of the positive descriptors and very few negative ones.

Immigrant mentors and students in the Arcola Towers/Northwood HS program reported unanimously that the program helped them with English: they said they had the chance to "have long conversations," and "speak, listen and read English." One student reported gratefully, "When you don't understand, adults do everything to make you understand." All the participants indicated they came to know the other generation better in the program: "I didn't know older adults had patience to talk and play with kids," and "they showed me how to take problems calmly, try to understand them." One adult wrote, "I came to realize how anxious students were to master English and how committed they are to the program."

Community Impact: Bridges is designed to help new immigrants integrate successfully 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. Bridges provides "an opportunity to share myself, learn from others and broaden cultural understandings," a common theme heard at the 20th reunion. Bridges participants create connections across generations and cultures that contribute to the vibrancy of Montgomery County.

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.

We did receive testing data from three schools. At the first school where student data was provided to us, the students' reading levels increased by an average of just over seven levels. All but one student achieved at the grade-appropriate target level at the end of the year; all had begun the year significantly below grade level. At the second school the average increase was just under six levels, with all students achieving on-grade level reading and all but one advancing beyond their grade level. At the third location the average gain was just under 4 reading levels; all but two students advanced to at least on-grade-level, with several advancing beyond grade.

Students also completed an evaluation of the program. We asked them how much they liked the activities and their tutors; whether they felt the program made them better students, whether the program was fun; and if they would recommend the program to a friend. A post-program Aging Awareness survey attempted to measure their feelings about older adults and what words they would use to describe older adults.

Summary of Evaluations and Surveys:

Classroom Teachers: The teachers evaluated their individual students' improvement on a scale of 1-4, (minimum improvement to maximum improvement) in several areas with the following results:

High frequency words	3.0
Reading Comprehension	2.8
Motivation to Read	2.8
Enjoyment of Reading	3.3
Confidence in self as reader	3.2
Does this child look forward to Grandreaders?	3.7

Teacher comments included, “Very beneficial, the student has shown wonderful growth.” “[Student] really enjoyed this opportunity and improved greatly!” “As a second language learner, [Student] has come a long, long way in comprehension!” and “Please tell [tutor] that when I tested [student] he soared above the others in his group—I’m so proud of him!”

Volunteers: The volunteers evaluated their individual students on overall reading skills and behaviors. Their feedback was very positive — student interest levels were rated very willing or enthusiastic (3-4 on a 4-point scale) in reading, listening, retelling, and reading back sentences. Energy for writing was rated slightly lower, but Grandreaders is primarily a reading and comprehension program with writing as a secondary goal.

All but one of the volunteers declared themselves “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the Grandreaders program. 93% percent of the volunteers felt the program improved the overall quality of their life, with 64% noting it improved their quality of life a lot, and fifteen percent feeling their life was improved greatly. Virtually all intend to return to the program in the fall.

Students: The students evaluated the program as well, with 98-100% of them reporting that they liked the activities and their tutors, and that the program was fun and made them better students. Only 80% of the respondents said they would tell a friend to join the program (note that in several cases students interpreted this question to mean that the friend would have replaced them in the program – when clarified, those students changed their answers to “yes”). Representative responses, when asked, “What did you like most about the program?” included enjoyment of reading, playing games, and learning new words.

We attempted to measure students' attitudes toward older adults using a simple Aging Awareness questionnaire at the end of the program year. The students overwhelmingly chose positive responses regarding their opinions of older people. When asked to circle words that they would use to describe older people, almost all selected positive words, with several also selecting “tired”.

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.

An ongoing challenge in Bridges is the need for additional volunteers. Interages participated in Fox News’ on-air telethon for mentoring month (January), and WUSA Channel 9 News featured Bridges on its “Fridays Heroes” segment (April) to help increase community awareness. <http://www.interagesmd.org/interagesinthenews.html>

Teacher referrals were more varied this year, as some students were referred to the program to learn how to prepare and organize themselves for school, not just for language help. As a result, some mentors found it difficult to work on language skills, when students had very short attention spans, wandered around the room, or needed cajoling to read before playing. This situation may improve from increased involvement of students in goal-setting and in planning activities, as well as additional coaching for mentors in the art of compromise. Interages staff tested this method by soliciting student input into planned activities at one elementary school site during the spring, and we will explore expansion of this planning method for 2010-11.

Evaluation Methodology: Teachers, mentors and students completed program evaluations. Teachers and mentors rated middle- and end-year student progress in three areas: social skills, English language, and self-esteem. Students completed a questionnaire designed to measure their attitudes toward older adults, as well as an end-year satisfaction survey on program activities. Evaluation in the Arcola/Northwood HS program consisted of a post-program user survey for adults and students and the student survey on attitudes toward older adults.

Summary of Evaluation: Based on mid-term and final evaluations by *ESOL teachers* for four of our traditional mentoring sites, all students showed improvement over the year. Using a scale of one to five (with 5 being highest and 1, lowest), teachers rated 100% of students in the top half of the scale (3, 4 or 5) in improvement in English. 97% of students received a rating of 3, 4 or 5 in improved self-esteem, and 95% scored 3, 4, or 5 in social skills. One long-time teacher of Bridges’ students described the strength of the program as its ability to provide personalized attention to shy students, and to the newest students with little or no English.

Mentors are more conservative generally in rating student improvement. Using the same 5-point scale, mentors in three “traditional” programs rated 87% of students in the top half of the scale (ratings of 3-4-5) in English skills by year’s end; 91% of students at this level of improvement in social skills; and 78% in self-esteem. Mentors reported the most helpful activities with students included reading and having structured activities to choose from, followed by talking, arts and crafts, and games. Mentor comments illustrate the diverse strengths and needs

public performance at Olney Theater.)

Responsibility and Service: To honor the 20th anniversary of the Bridges' program, students and mentors completed various projects. Argyle MS participants created their own African drums and performed at the event. Eastern MS students/mentors designed and filmed a 3-minute orientation video for future new ESOL students, with help from Musical Theater Center's staff. The Rolling Terrace ES group raised over \$100 toward the renovation of a school courtyard by selling flower pots they painted. Gaithersburg ES students pulled weeds at their school. A total of \$50 was raised from all programs toward the Pennies for Peace Campaign to build schools in Afghanistan.

Field trips: Elementary students/mentors went bowling and middle school students/mentors toured the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

Major Accomplishments: Bridges' 20th Anniversary celebration and reunion was the biggest event of the year. Every program site was involved in preparations for the March 24th event at Eastern MS. Over 100 people attended, including current and former participants, their families, and school and county officials. Students spoke about what the program has meant to them and provided original music and video entertainment. Numerous local and state officials read proclamations congratulating Interages on this achievement.

We successfully continued Bridges programming at two of our 2008-09 expansion school sites despite funding constraints. At Gaithersburg ES we maintained the group through Linkages to Learning, and at Argyle MS we increased enrollment numbers (especially among mentors). Both schools were eager to continue Bridges, and we were thrilled to be able to reorganize staffing and resources to support these sites in their second year.

The Smithsonian National Postal Museum's "Heroes on Stamps" pilot collaboration with Interages expanded this spring to include our two middle school Bridges sites. Students and mentors completed the "Heroes" curriculum, spent a Saturday visiting the museum, and presented their final projects at an evening gala event before family, mentors, and staff at the museum.

Major Challenges: Bridges' two newest program sites continued to face start-up challenges at the outset of their second year. At Argyle MS, miscommunication between staff and teachers led to more students being invited into the Argyle MS program than mentors; students' spotty attendance further inhibited consistent pairings, particularly in the spring when several students dropped to play on school teams. At Gaithersburg ES, where student attendance was nearly 100%, there was some difficulty in recruiting enough mentors. However, the program was fully staffed by the midpoint of the year.

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.

"My tutee told me Thursdays were her favorite school day because of tutoring. She said she felt 'special' and that she feels she is a better reader now."

- Grandreader volunteer at Sligo Creek Elementary School

HEROES ON STAMPS

The Smithsonian National Postal Museum and Interages partnered to create and implement an after-school program, "**Heroes on Stamps**," using the museum's 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, and we expanded to additional schools in Spring 2010.

Participants: Interages older adult volunteers participated with students from four public middle schools. Two program sites were layered into existing Intergenerational Bridges sites (Eastern MS and Argyle MS) including 20 students and 18 adult volunteers, and two new schools tested the program (Gaithersburg MS and Redland MS) representing 25 students and 6 adult volunteers. Three teachers consulted to run programs at their sites, and one Bridges coordinator offered the program at Argyle MS. These coordinators received training and materials from the Director of Education at the Smithsonian Postal Museum and Interages.

Activities: During this eight-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 U.S. 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 expanding a new program - finding participant schools and students at those schools; refining curriculum; and making changes to engage a more diverse student population in this second year. Working with our partners was a positive experience, and also brought communication challenges as each site worked somewhat independently to address specific student differences across schools.

In particular, implementing the program with Bridges’ program students (who are learning but not yet proficient in English) required flexibility and additional materials at an appropriate level. Their final projects were full-group efforts that avoided placing individuals in an unwanted spotlight at the closing event. This tapped the creativity of all involved and the results were quite positive.

Transportation to the museum offered another challenge, and our partner schools rose to the occasion by helping sponsor a school bus to bring participants into downtown Washington D.C. twice. The tour of the National Postal Museum, the presentation of each school’s final projects and the completed website about Heroes on Stamps on the Smithsonian National Postal Museum’s website were major accomplishments.

Evaluation Methodology: As a pilot program, we do not yet have fully defined evaluation criteria. Our volunteers and program facilitators are providing feedback to the Director of Education of the National Postal Museum. This information will be used as they refine the Heroes program to make it available across the country.

Community Impact: Heroes on Stamps provides students and volunteers with a group research project experience, with the flexibility to adjust project content and scope to the varied levels of each group’s abilities. Students visit Washington, D.C. and the Smithsonian, a first for many, and have a unique opportunity to present their own material to an adult audience. These experiences strengthen students’ knowledge and build self-esteem, while building greater understanding of all students’ potential in the eyes of their families and the wider community.

INTERGENERATIONAL BRIDGES

Intergenerational Bridges (Bridges) is an after-school mentoring program for recent immigrant students enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes 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. Five “traditional” program sites ask adults to come to elementary and middle schools to pair one-on-one with students. One additional program offers high school students the chance to earn student service learning credits while sharing language-enhancing activities with residents in senior housing in an open group format.

Participants: Mentoring programs ran in 3 elementary, 2 middle, and one high school this year, and involved 69 students and 64 trained, older adult mentors. Interages employed two part-time staff members and one volunteer program coordinator in Bridges. ESOL teachers were indispensable to Bridges, as they selected students, advised on student needs, evaluated their progress, and in one case, participated in the session each week. The high school program also counted on the staff and residents at Arcola Towers senior housing. At Gaithersburg ES, Bridges partnered with the Guide Youth Services’ Linkages to Learning staff.

Activities: Students and mentors chose from a variety of paired and group activities to build vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and confidence:

Talking: Pairs discussed the week’s events, classes, friends and family.

Reading: Pairs shared books, plays, and magazines including Scholastic’s *Action* (a magazine for pre-teen/teen below-grade readers) A “First Book” grant provided students at 2 schools with 6 new books each, to read and keep as their own. Weekly themed worksheets included activities to complete.

Games: In pairs and larger groups, participants played language-enhancing games like *Guess Who*, *Boggle*, *Scrabble*, and *Mad Libs*.

Sharing cultural traditions: Around U.S. holidays and history-themed months (e.g., African-American, Asian, Women), students read worksheets and shared what they learned. Also, Eastern MS students researched/wrote articles on their countries for their own newsletter, distributed to families and posted at school.

Personal development: Groups discussed goal-setting, conflict resolution, and bullying behavior. Middle school participants were treated to the 8-week “Heroes on Stamps” program provided by the Smithsonian National Postal Museum (see “Major Accomplishments” below). The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange led workshops at several sites in advance of a performance of *Still Crossing*, a piece designed around immigrant experiences (one student and a mentor took part in the