

Interages “The Latest in Intergenerational Programming, Internationally”

Meeting Minutes

September 29, 2010

Montgomery County Intergenerational Resource Center at Interages

On September 29, 2010, Sheri Steinig, Special Projects Director and Leah Bradley, Project Specialist at Generations United, shared information on “The Latest in Intergenerational Programs, Nationally and Internationally,” at Interages’ first 2010-2011 Montgomery County Intergenerational Resource Center meeting.



Sheri Steinig began the presentation by talking about some of the priorities and programs of Generations United, e.g., Shared sites and Grandfamilies. Generations United defines an intergenerational program as a program that **INTENTIONALLY** brings together generations to build relationships. The **PROCESS** is important, the product is not.

Intergenerational programs are defined by the direction of service: for example, older adults serving younger generations; younger generations serving older adults. Recent research on the benefits of intergenerational programs show participating older adults reported more physical activity and higher self-esteem. Youth participating in the programs were less likely to use drugs or have behavior problems. They also showed a higher level of social development, higher level language skills, and higher reading scores.

Leah Bradley and Sheri Steinig also spoke about several national and international trends in intergenerational programs. They indicated the trends are taking place in response to society.

- The first trend—**Families**—includes programs for grandfamilies, caregiver support, oral history, and preserving culture. A program started in Sweden by one man—Granddads—is now comprised of 1,182 men working in classrooms not as tutors or mentors but as supportive persons in youth’s lives.
- The second trend--**Health and Nutrition**—includes programs to address healthy eating and positive lifelong health habits by all ages. Intergenerational gardens are popular in building relationships and at the same time promoting healthy choices.
- The third trend--**Performing and Visual Arts**, includes intergenerational visual arts, dramatic arts, and other opportunities for youth and older adults to engage in activities

together. One example is Ages on Stages (Baltimore) which performs intergenerational, contemporary dramatic skits.

- The fourth trend--**Technology** includes use of social media and intergenerational efforts to help bridge technical knowledge gaps. Computer centers are being located in adult living environments, with youth providing technology assistance to older adults. Some senior centers are using Wii in concert with younger generations. Library open houses are making facilities and equipment available so that youth can help older adults on technology devices and applications.
- Lastly, **Shared sites**--another trend, involves co-location of youth and older adult programs. Shared sites are cost effective and provide easy opportunities for intergenerational engagement. Transportation sometimes required in programs to bring the generations together is not an issue when sites are shared. Generations United has undertaken a mapping project to identify shared sites across the country. Examples of shared sites are a kindergarten classroom in a nursing home and a senior center located in a school building.

At the conclusion of the Generations United presentation, attendees shared information on programs underway in Montgomery County. *Marion Entwisle* and *Ruben Rosenfeld* spoke about the *Intergenerational Center at Easter Seals*—a shared site facility for children up to age 5 and for adults with physical or cognitive challenges. *Jeanne Reilly*, Interages' SHARE program coordinator, spoke about Makeover Madness, a program in which Einstein High School cosmetology students provide salon services to older adults. *Mary Ann Larkin*, also of Interages, shared the experience of "going to the [older adult] volunteers" in Arcola Towers. The volunteers are visited weekly by students who attend Northwood, a school within walking distance. After the meeting many attendees stayed and shared more information about their organizations and possible collaborations.

The next Montgomery County Intergenerational Resource Meeting will take place on October 21, 2010. The speakers will be Lucy Vitalli and Pam Meador student service learning coordinators at Montgomery College and Montgomery County Public Schools, respectively. Please call 301.949.3551 to RSVP.