



3950 Ferrara Drive
Wheaton, Maryland 20906

Dear Friends of Interages:

Interages had a great year! Many thanks go out to our excellent staff, dedicated volunteers, supportive Board of Directors, individual contributors, foundations, corporations, and our local government.

Our incredible staff has worked hard to successfully fulfill Interages' mission to build bridges across generations and cultures. During FY 2007, Interages' intergenerational programs served 584 children and youth with 179 volunteers donating thousands of hours totaling the equivalent of \$118,789 of in-kind support. Altogether, Interages offered programs at 37 sites throughout Montgomery County, Maryland.

Interages' programs have truly made an impact! The number of frail and isolated seniors whose lives were touched by the children in our SHARE Program increased to 233 this year. Our Bridges mentoring program is an important support to immigrant children as they adjust to living in the United States. Across Ages participants develop many positive life-skills from the experience of a mentoring relationship with an older adult. Makeover Madness has helped the cosmetology students grow professionally, as well as in their understanding, patience and compassion for elder seniors. Global Wizards' geography program provides geographic knowledge that is not typically part of the school curriculum. Dialogues students and their adult discussion partners develop relationships and a broader understanding of current events and life experiences. Grandreaders' impact can be summed up by one of their volunteers: "I enjoyed reading with my student and could really see the difference in her level of reading by the end of the year. I feel like we became a family during the year. This was a very positive experience!"

I am delighted to share our 2006-2007 Program Report with you. This report provides more detail on the participants, activities, major accomplishments, major challenges and summary 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. It also provides excellent ideas for creating new programs.

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

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Grandreaders

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Grandreaders is an intergenerational literacy program for second 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 include: 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 curricula we select from two web-based reading programs (Reading A-Z.com and ReadingTutors.com) and supplement with materials from our own resources. Our Program Coordinator manages the weekly sessions at these sites, providing materials and on-site supervision. At seven schools, 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) serves the lead role in running each site's weekly sessions. Interages staff assists with volunteer recruitment, training, and management, and visits regularly to provide opportunities for ongoing feedback and program improvement.

Feedback from an ESOL teacher at one of our sites illustrates the need for and success of the program. "The students need the one on one attention. It really promotes their love of reading." And about one of her students -- "Her confidence increased exponentially. This has been a great program for her. She is very shy about reading in front of her classmates. Reading with a supportive adult really helps."

PARTICIPANTS: For the 2006/07 school year, we had 104 tutors who served 114 youth. We had 10 Grandreader sites, 3 in-house and 7 Reading Together sites located across our county.

ACTIVITIES: Each site held weekly, hour-long tutoring sessions where tutors and students met one-on-one to complete specific lessons. These lessons included a shared, read-aloud book, some supported reading, and language activities to reinforce each lesson. At the three in-house Grandreader sites the curriculum is tailored to the reading needs of the students. Leveled reading books and follow-up instructional materials are obtained from two on-line services, Reading A-Z.com and Reading Tutors.com and also from our own resources. 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 where a professional children's storyteller (also a children's librarian) provided creative techniques and stories for Grandreaders to help them engage the children we tutor in reading. She also performed several folk tales for the 35 volunteers present.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: We opened a new site for the in-house Grandreader program at Greencastle Elementary School in the fall of 2006. Our main contact is the reading specialist and a new partnership has evolved with expectations to expand the program in the 2007-2008 year.

We utilized funds from a spring 2006 grant from First Book to continue to purchase and give brand new books to the children at our sites. To date, we've distributed 206 books. Having age appropriate books in their homes to share with their families is a tremendous benefit and motivation to read for the students.

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 high marks on evaluations from our school partners, who value the role our tutor volunteers play in the schools.

At two sites, we tested a more flexible tutoring model where individual tutors could meet with students at a mutually agreeable time each week, as opposed to meeting as part of a larger group session. This system worked very well for those tutors who were reliable self-starters, comfortable contacting the schools directly to check attendance and entering classrooms independently to pick up their student. Similarly, this worked best at schools where the teaching staff was knowledgeable and comfortable with the program. We hope to expand this option at other sites in the future.

MAJOR CHALLENGES: We strive for consistently having the same Grandreader meet with the same child every week in order to establish a trusting relationship. Sometimes we are not able to achieve this because of attendance issues on the part of the child. The student mobility rate in the county is high and families move around frequently, especially in the population we serve. Therefore a Grandreader may have two or three different children in a year or may have substitute children if theirs is absent. Sometimes, Grandreaders are also absent due to illness or travel. These are issues we attempt to address on a weekly basis.

Since we operate during the school day, adequate space for the program is also an issue. Often there are not empty classrooms available for us to occupy. Space and scheduling continue to be a challenge during the administration of the annual standardized testing and several sessions were lost at our sites this spring due to this issue.

The program is beholden to each school's individual teaching and administrative staff. Year to year, we may find ourselves having to reeducate principals and reading specialists as staff is promoted or moves to new schools. In addition, ever-increasing focus on standardized testing results means students are less available to participate in school-day-based programming (even programming like Grandreaders, which closely follows and reinforces the MCPS reading curriculum). Therefore, our position remains somewhat precarious even in light of the overwhelmingly positive evaluations we receive from our current partners.

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.



Our effort to evaluate the effect of participation in the Grandreaders program on student reading ability is 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.

Program Sites 2006-2007 School Year



Children & Youth Program Sites:

- Bel Pre Elementary School
- Brookside Gardens Nature Center
- Brown Station Elementary School
- Cloverly Elementary School
- Covenant United Methodist Preschool
- Darnewtown Elementary School
- Eastern Middle School
- Edison School of Technology
- Fairland Elementary School
- Gaithersburg Elementary School
- Georgian Forest Elementary School
- Glen Haven Elementary School
- Greencastle Elementary School
- Highland Elementary School
- Kennedy High School
- Maryvale Elementary School
- Northwood High School
- Rolling Terrace Elementary School
- Rosemont Elementary School
- Silver Spring Boys & Girls Clubs
- Sligo Creek Elementary School
- St. Andrews Episcopal School
- St. Mary's School
- Weller Road Elementary School
- Woodlin Elementary School

Older Adult Communities:

- Arcola Towers
- Collingswood Nursing Home
- Manor Care of Potomac
- Mariner Health of Silver Spring
- Randolph Hills Adult Day Care
- Shady Grove Adult Day Care
- Sunrise Assisted Living Montgomery Village
- Sunrise Assisted Living, Rockville
- The Support Center Adult Day Care
- Winter Growth Adult Day Care

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION: 43 high school students and 57 adult day care program participants shared 196 hours of cosmetology training and services during the 2006-07 school year.

For students completing both the pre- and post-test on their attitudes about older adults, 62% scored the same or higher at the end of the program year than on their initial survey.

Anecdotal information from the reflections session confirms that students gained in awareness and appreciation for older adults. Students reported that they improved their skills in communicating with the seniors, and that they were able to have conversations and listen to them more effectively. Student self-reports indicated improved understanding of the special help that many seniors need, as well as increased compassion and patience for the older adults. For example, one student said "I feel more compassionate toward them (seniors) and know how to react to them." Another student reported that "I like and respect them (seniors) more now that I've interacted more often with them."



SUMMARY OF EVALUATION: As one representative sample of the personal comments we received from MCPS staff at our sites, a Greencastle teacher wrote "My student walked in on Mondays looking forward to Grandreaders on Thursday. It would be great to expand the program."

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

- High Frequency Word Recognition-3.0
- Reading Comprehension-2.9
- Motivation to read-3.1
- Enjoyment of reading- 3.0
- Confidence in self as reader-2.8
- Child's attitude towards the program-3.6

Overall, on a scale of 1-5 Grandreaders indicated that their child showed improvement (4.6), that they felt the program was valuable and that they will return next year (4.3), and that being a Grandreader has been a positive experience (4.8).

Results of the evaluation of Interages services were overwhelmingly positive, with 96% of our volunteers and teacher liaisons ranking our staff, materials, and program coordination at 3.5 or higher on a four-point scale. Chief concerns were for better space at those schools without use of a media center for Grandreaders; and better times for the program at one school where students met during lunch/recess each week.



GLOBAL WIZARDS

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

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

The National Geography Standards (NGS) were established in 1994 to serve as benchmarks to teach geography, and Global Wizards uses these standards to develop its curricula. In addition, the curriculum also closely aligns with the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC), the guidelines utilized for teaching social studies in Montgomery County schools. A chart summarizing the overlaps between NGS, VSC, and Global Wizards provides necessary documentation to school staff or PTA members who wish to add Global Wizards at their elementary schools, and who need to demonstrate the commonality of the underlying basis for the program.

PARTICIPANTS: Global Wizards met at three elementary schools this year where 45 students in grades 2-4 participated. Eighteen (18) tutors logged 225 volunteer 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 and ideas. Learning geography allows students to use maps and become familiar with far away countries. Young students are curious and want to know about animals and their habitats and the lives of children in distant lands.

Examples of activities include one 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.

Bingo wins as a favorite game for students to play. Another favorite is Globe Ball, where mentors and students toss a ball printed with a world map and ask geographic questions of the catcher.

To learn about the Alps, students use a word search and look for special words that describe the highest mountain in Europe. Students may 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 own 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.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Since its launching in 2003 with curriculum for one continent, the Global Wizards program has expanded continuously. This year staff created and added materials for two more continents—Asia and Europe—to the curricula on North America, South America and Africa.

There is growing interest in Global Wizards. Volunteer enrollment increased this year. Interest from students at one site exceeded our capacity, with 25 students wishing to enroll in the program.

We made headway toward expanding our program sites into new/more schools. The MCPS Bulletin (the public school system's weekly publication) featured an article on Global Wizards in its March 26, 2007 edition. Global Wizards was also featured in the school system's annual report. These pieces generated interest in the program from 5-10 school officials. Also, we sent information packets to 35 potential schools.

The Mead Foundation awarded \$10,000 to Global Wizards to complete the curriculum with one final continent's program materials (a combination of Antarctica and Oceania), and to explore opportunities for publication of the base curriculum.

MAJOR CHALLENGES: Students within and across grade levels 2-4 demonstrate varying abilities and skills. Efforts are made by mentors and Interages staff to engage each student. While it can be challenging to accommodate everyone, all materials, activities and maps are prepared according to the level of the students' abilities and understanding.

At times, students may believe that geography and maps are static subjects lacking relevance to their lives. Global Wizards encourages them to understand that geography takes place every day, and they are encouraged weekly to look for news items that show events and discoveries around the world such as destruction of natural resources, new species of dinosaurs unearthed in Southeast Asia, or board games played by children in remote Chinese villages.

We are eager to add more sites for the Global Wizards program. We have met with several officials and discussed potential schools for fall 2007, but gaining a foothold at new schools continues to be slow going. Busy school staff, a lack of funding for after school activities buses, and a general lack of time and attention to spend on extracurricular subjects that do not directly contribute to core subject testing outcomes, all contribute to this challenge.



Makeover Madness - A Special Program of Project SHARE

PARTICIPANTS: Thomas Edison School of Technology offers a range of vocational education programs for high school students, providing technical skills training that prepares students for employment upon graduation. In the Cosmetology program, students learn all aspects of nail and hair care. 43 Edison High School cosmetology students worked with 57 seniors from four adult day care centers in a series of monthly two-hour sessions, totaling 196 hours of "makeovers" during the school year.

ACTIVITIES: Interages' Makeover Madness program matches older adult "clients" with cosmetology students, who are able to practice their skills in real life situations and gain proficiency in this field. The older adults benefit from individual attention and human touch, while receiving a haircut, manicure, and other cosmetic services. The students improve their skills in shampooing, haircutting, and manicuring, while they are also learning and practicing techniques to work efficiently and effectively with frail or disabled senior clientele.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Students and seniors were paired successfully so that the needs of both were 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.

In all, the students completed 88 senior "makeovers," with many of the older adults returning multiple times to receive hair and nail care from the students. In many cases, the same student/adult pairs worked together, developing ongoing relationships over these multiple sessions.

MAJOR CHALLENGES:

Ensuring enough senior adult clients for each session: At the end of December 2006, Shady Grove Adult Day Care closed and we were left with only three participating centers. We continue to contact potential senior adult facilities to join our program to increase the number of clients at each session, but this year we weren't successful in adding new sites.

Last minute changes in participants: The adult day care centers commit to bringing a specific number of seniors in advance of each session, to allow for planning at the school. However, the centers periodically cancel at the last minute due to transportation issues, weather, or unknown factors. This can leave the program coordinators scrambling to double students with adults while striving to provide meaningful interactions between the adults and students. Coordinators must be flexible and willing to improvise.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: Attendance records: Interages and Edison High School staff tracked participant attendance at each session during the year. We are able to report the total number of unduplicated participants, along with hours dedicated to the program.

The students involved were given an "Aging Awareness" survey at the beginning of the school year, and again at the end of the program, to capture their views on senior adults. The survey was designed and tested for validity and reliability through Temple University's Center on Intergenerational Programming. Interages looked for positive changes in student awareness resulting from their experiences in the program.

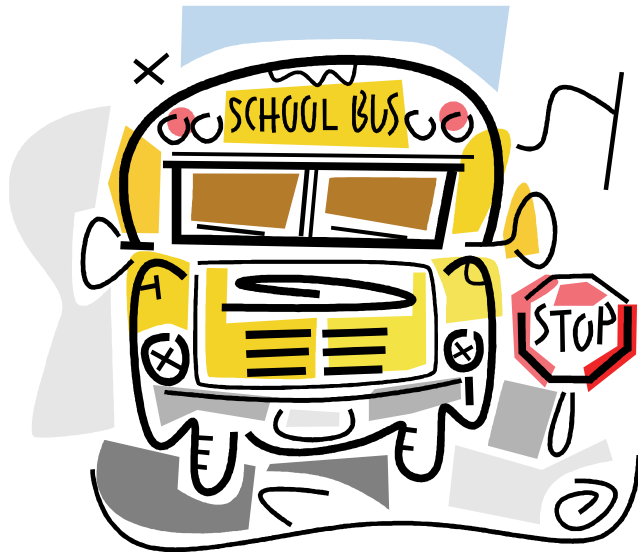
The Interages program coordinator facilitated a "Reflections Session" with student participants at the close of the program to discuss and share experiences

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION: Our goal was to realize positive changes resulting from students' experience in the program. For all students completing both the pre- and post-test on their attitudes about older adults, slightly more than half (55%) scored the same or higher at the end of the program year. We have found that the evaluation tool is not appropriate for this program. In the coming year, we will be working to find or develop a new measurement tool.

Sentence completion forms the second-graders filled out reflected clearly how much they liked the program and being with senior friends.

- When asked one thing they liked about being with a senior friend, the most frequent answers included: talking with them, making things with them (arts and crafts), helping them, and having fun together.
- When asked if they think or feel differently about senior adults after our program, 42% of the answers were affirmative. They said repeatedly that seniors are "very nice" and "fun," among many other positive comments.

Written evaluations from teachers and staff at the senior facilities reflected enthusiasm for the program. One teacher wrote: "My students look forward to their visits with their senior friends. They talk about them in a loving and caring way. It's important for students to see how they can make a positive difference in the life of a senior friend." Another said, "I think it was a wonderful, positive, very worthwhile experience for everyone!"



EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: Mentors play a vital role in the evaluation process since they work closely with 2-3 students for eight consecutive weeks. They are in a strong position to discern specific student strengths and weaknesses. Each mentor completes individual evaluation forms for each student they support. Mentors evaluate each student with whom they work on several measures, assigning a numerical value (with 1 for minimal and 4 for maximum) in various categories. These include each student's ability to understand 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; knowledge of the specific continent in regard to climate, natural resources, geographic regions, land forms, etc. Mentors also comment on each student's abilities to work with peers, follow directions and complete tasks.

Students complete a basic quiz on their first day, and again during the last meeting of each session to help capture their improved general geographic knowledge.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS: Across five content areas, mentors ranked students as achieving a score of 2.9 (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.

76% of student scores on the basic geography quiz improved for those tested both before beginning, and after completing the Global Wizards program.



ACROSS AGES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Across Ages mentoring program builds relationships between older adult volunteers and at-risk children ages nine to twelve. Program goals include promoting the healthy growth and development of vulnerable youth, and preventing, reducing or delaying their involvement in substance use/abuse and other risky behavior(s). There are four components to the Across Ages Model Program (originally developed at Temple University): 1) intensive intergenerational mentoring; 2) social skills (problem solving) curriculum; 3) community service; and 4) monthly family activities.

Desired outcomes for Across Ages youth are: (1) Significant improvement in knowledge about and reaction to drug abuse, (2) significant decrease in substance abuse, (3) significant improvement in attitudes toward school and the future, (4) significant improvement in attitudes towards adults in general and older adults in particular, (5) improvement in self esteem and well-being, (6) enhance the problem solving and decision making skills of targeted students, and (7) strengthen relationships with adults and peers.

PARTICIPANTS: In 2006/07, Interages hosted Across Ages at three sites: Highland Elementary School, Weller Road Elementary School, and the Silver Spring Boys and Girls Club. A total of 52 children and 26 adult mentors participated in this after school program, and 32 children completed the entire year.

In addition, a summer program was held during July 2006 at Highland ES and Weller Rd ES. A total of 10 children participated in the summer program with 10 senior mentors.

ACTIVITIES:

Social Problem Solving Module (SPSM) (Weissberg: 1990): The children participated in 27 weekly lessons focusing on developing effective problem solving skills. The SPSM lessons cover the following topics: Introduction to problem solving, Coping with stress, Acknowledging feelings, Setting goals, Solutions, Consequences, Making a plan, and Mastering problem solving.

Mentoring: Older adults (age 50+) are recruited and trained, and spend 1-2 hours each week in one-on-one contact with the youth. Youth have an opportunity to form lasting relationships with significant adults who can provide guidance, nurturing and support. This year 26 mentors participated, with an active cadre of 20 per month.

Family Activities: Each month the children, their families, and mentors are invited on a family day trip. Family Day trips provide a time and place for mentors, children, and their families to spend time together. The following is a partial list of trips taken this year: the Maryland Science Center, the National Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, the US Naval Academy in Annapolis and ferry boat ride on Chesapeake Bay, the Decatur House, and Mount Vernon.

Community Service: The children participated in ongoing community service projects at Arcola Health Services (nursing home) and Brookside Gardens Nature Center. They also participated in various off-site community service projects that benefitted the National Institute of Health's Children's Inn and the Greentree Shelter for homeless families.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The top three accomplishments for the year were:

Recruiting 11 new volunteers and sustaining 15 returning volunteers. Recruiting volunteers is a challenge every year, and this year we recruited more volunteers than in any prior program year.

Increasing parent involvement. Parent participation at Highland Elementary School, in particular, was impressive. Across sites, the majority of parents at all locations participated in at least one family outing this year, a significant improvement over prior years.

Having three sites, each with a two-day per week meeting format, which involved additional staffing to cover duplicate sessions on Thursdays each week. We elected to consistently provide twice weekly sessions for the students based on feedback and evaluation outcomes from the 2005/06 program year, which demonstrated that the students gained more from the curriculum, and developed stronger relationships with their mentors and each other in the twice weekly format.

MAJOR CHALLENGES: Parent involvement and participant recruitment at the Silver Spring Boys and Girls Club (SSBGC) were the two most significant and ongoing challenges throughout the program year. Although we were successful in increasing our numbers of participants at SSBGC, attendance and parent involvement remained a challenge throughout the year.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: The Across Ages program is reviewed by a professional evaluator, Marge Rosensweig. Marge has evaluated the program for the past 4 years. She manages the evaluation process, which includes: choosing and fine tuning the evaluation materials, evaluating the pre/post surveys, parent and volunteer customer service surveys, and developing our annual program evaluation report.

Quantitative data focusing on outcomes were collected through administration of pre- and post-program Across Ages surveys, as well as a Youth Survey developed by Public/Private Ventures that attempts to measure the quality of mentor-mentee relationships.

Qualitative data were collected through a Parent Satisfaction Survey and a Mentor Satisfaction Survey distributed at the end of the year.

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 public elementary school, two private schools, one private preschool, two nursing homes and two assisted-living facilities participated in Project SHARE this year. A total of 233 students and 164 frail and isolated seniors visited together during the year. The seniors involved in the program spent 880.25 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 suggested topic, an art or craft project, some movement activity, riddles or trivia questions to answer, and 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 senior adults helping and working with each other.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The program succeeded 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 asked to do together as a team. Many became free with their hugs for each other.

There was steady attendance throughout the year for many of the seniors. As compared with last year, the overall number of senior participants remained constant, but overall participation hours increased significantly (from 728 in 2005/06 to 880 in 2006/07). The adults really looked forward to being with the children and made an effort to be present.

We added a new SHARE program site through a successful pairing between a private school and an assisted living facility within walking distance of the school. Kindergartners and middle school students alternated making weekly visits.

MAJOR CHALLENGES: At all the sites, we encountered delays in setting up for our programs. Often, the residents were not there at the time the program was to begin. It appears to be difficult for the staff at all facilities to have the seniors ready for the start of the program. In addition, the facilities had difficulty preparing the room for the program with enough chairs and tables.

During sessions, some of the senior adults were sleepy or unresponsive, which understandably proved difficult for the students to work with.

Group size and diversity of abilities are always challenges for Interages staff working to plan activities that involve everyone and can accommodate a huge range of abilities. Staff continued to test new program ideas, some more effective than others

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: All the student groups completed an Aging Awareness survey at the beginning and end of the program year designed to reflect their views about senior adults. Students at one school also responded to sentence completion forms to capture more anecdotal feedback. In addition, 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. Teachers completed written evaluations summarizing their impressions of the program's effectiveness for their students' learning.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Being at Kennedy High School for over a dozen years validates the success of Dialogues. Further, the fact that senior high school students actually enjoy meeting with older adults on a regular basis deserves recognition. The LTI students hold an annual “International Night” event to raise money for non-profit community groups. This year the students selected Interages as a recipient from this event. Their generous donation of almost \$900 will help fund our programs.

MAJOR CHALLENGES: A major challenge is to keep each student engaged and focused. Lively discussions can only occur when everyone comes prepared to share ideas and questions. Some students comment on the lack of participation of their peers. When shy and quiet students find it difficult to participate, it often becomes the responsibility of the volunteers to draw such students into the discussions.

Volunteers need to know how to balance active participation with their role as moderator and encourager. Sensitive topics challenge individual beliefs and life styles. Both generations need to take great care to listen attentively when opposing viewpoints are discussed, a difficult goal to achieve when sharing strong feelings.

Efforts to run a spring session for Dialogues were unsuccessful. It has been difficult to find additional sites for the program as schools continue to limit “extracurricular” activities during the school day.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: Staff, volunteers and students evaluate the program. Each group completes an anonymous, written survey at the end of the program, answering questions about both program content and structure. In addition, the student participants complete an Aging Awareness survey designed to measure their beliefs and views on older people. They complete the survey prior to beginning the Dialogues program, and again at the end of their eight week program participation. Lastly, students are required by their teachers to maintain a journal of their experiences in the program. These journal entries are frequently made available to Interages staff, and serve as anecdotal feedback on program topics, volunteers, and the experience more generally.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS: Student scores on the aging awareness tests show improved understanding and impressions of older adults as a result of participating in Dialogues. One section of the test measured what students know about older people. The average score increased from 54 in September, to 68 in December. The second part of the test asked more subjective questions rating how students felt about older people. The average scores here increased from 56 to 70.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION: Quantitative data indicated modest improvement in all constructs examined, including attitudes towards school, future, and elders; attitudes towards/knowledge about older people; sense of self; sense of well-being; problem-solving efficacy; and frequency of substance abuse in the past 30 days. Adult mentors, children, and parents of participating children all reported a high degree of satisfaction with the mentoring relationships and with the program overall.

Among the final evaluation findings, Ms. Rosensweig summarizes that “judging from the quantitative and qualitative data compiled, it is clear that Across Ages met most, if not all, of its process objectives...Many researchers and practitioners assert a presumed program effect if a Model Program targets an appropriate audience and is implemented with high fidelity. If that is the case, then Across Ages/Interages is effective as it meets those criteria and achieves the same outcomes found by program developers. Outcome data are collected, nonetheless, and though results are modest, data support that notion and comport with developers’ findings.”



INTERGENERATIONAL BRIDGES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Intergenerational Bridges is an after-school mentoring program for recent immigrant students in English for Students of Other Languages (ESOL) programs. 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 acclimate to life in the United States; to develop students’ English skills; and to boost students’ self-esteem. Three “traditional” program sites bring adults into elementary and middle schools to meet with students. A fourth program site brings high school students to a senior citizen apartment building to meet with adult residents for shared activities.

PARTICIPANTS: This year, Bridges hosted programs in four public schools: two elementary, one middle and one senior citizen apartment building adjacent to a high school, involving 48 students and 38 older adult mentors. At two the elementary school sites, experienced volunteers served as partial site coordinators, allowing staff to spread across more sites and serve more students. Teachers at each school were indispensable to the program. They selected students, facilitated communication with parents, provided advice on student needs, evaluated their progress, and in one case participated in the session each week.

ACTIVITIES: Student/mentor pairs chose from a range of paired and group activities. Pairs read and completed weekly worksheets covering vocabulary building (fire safety, emotions, weather, etc.), holidays, geography, peer pressure, bullying, and goal-setting. They also enjoyed talking, reading, homework, crafts, music, dance, exercise, and language or logic games such as Scrabble, Monopoly, chess, and puzzles. This year, students wrote articles about their countries of origin. From these articles, a volunteer produced newsletters that we distributed to participants, parents, teachers, and principals. Field trips included the National Zoo and the College Park Aviation Museum, a local gem. At Arcola Towers (the senior citizen apartment building), adults (some immigrants themselves) and students talked, read and played to improve each other’s English while sharing cultural activities and life stories.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS: We consolidated the Arcola Towers/Northwood High School program as a viable intergenerational model for language enhancement and service learning. This site offers high school ESOL students the opportunity to visit older adults in their apartment building, and earn service learning credits for their participation.

This year, adult and student attendance stabilized, and the SaYes Foundation (part of the Corporation for National & Community Service) awarded Interages a small grant to purchase engaging ESOL materials, sponsor a field trip during fall 2007, and conduct outreach to share the site's success with potential future sites.

Experienced, energetic volunteers accepted increased responsibility by sharing site coordinator responsibilities with our staff at the two elementary schools, allowing more programming without increasing staff time. In one case, this was the volunteer's third and final year in this expanded role. In the other case, the volunteer expressed interest in expanding her coordinator's role in the coming year.

Collaboration with community organizations enriched our program: 1) The Musical Theater Center provided dance workshops that involved mentors and students who would not otherwise have this opportunity. 2) At the invitation of one of our mentors, a descendant of a Comanche chief (Ron Parker) shared his cultural and family history in stories and music. 3) Businesses contributed in-kind items to enhance field trips and training meetings, including Doña Azucena Restaurant, Jerry's Pizza, and Kentucky Fried Chicken. 4) The National Student Lunch Program sponsored after-school snacks at Eastern MS.

Volunteer mentors contributed 1060.5 hours with students in the program at four sites

MAJOR CHALLENGES: All programs experienced mentor shortages. This year a number of long-standing volunteers moved away or had to drop out for health and other reasons. As a one-on-one program, Bridges can reach the target number of students only by attracting new volunteers.

Staff resources remain limited. In order to grow, we will need to recruit and train at least one additional volunteer willing to serve as a coordinator for one program site.

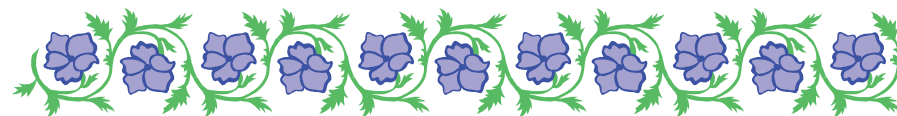
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: Teachers, mentors and students completed individualized program evaluations. Teachers rated individual students' mid- and end-year progress (on a scale of 1-4) in three areas: Social Skills, English Language, and Self-Esteem. They also rated Interages' staff and program. Mentors rated their individual student's progress and completed questionnaires regarding specific program activities. Students completed a pre- and post-program "Aging Awareness" survey designed to measure their knowledge and attitudes about older adults, as well as an end-year survey on the activities they enjoyed. Evaluation in the Arcola/Northwood program consisted of Aging Awareness surveys (pre and post-program) for students and an overall program participant survey for both adults and students.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION: Teachers all indicated great satisfaction with the program as it is currently designed and implemented. Based on mid-term and final evaluations by teachers in the three traditional Bridges' programs, a substantial majority of students improved over the year. 81% to 92% of students (depending on the school) improved in all three areas. Teachers rated English improvement highest, with 80-100% of students having achieved "3-much" or "4-great" gains by year's end. Teachers commented not only on language improvements, but attributed the students' greater comfort level in speaking out, social growth, and maturity to regular meetings with mentors: "Her increased comfort level [in English] is evident in her body language and facial expressions;" "A ___ is a star! She will be one of the two presenters at 5th grade promotion;" "Bridges is his favorite thing to do in school;" "It is very difficult to see how much she knows because she is shy. When the mentor and she are working together, there is a connection and a level of understanding that teachers are seldom able to see in class."

Mentors tended to rate the students more conservatively overall. Still, mentors rated 61-76% of students with "3" and "4" level improvements in all areas. Their comments included: "evident progress in self-esteem;" "he volunteered in group games, speaks up;" "doesn't volunteer a lot of information, but enjoys the activities and her reading has improved;" and "she doesn't enjoy school, but does seem to enjoy our after-school activities." After three years, one mentor reflected "I've learned that patience and dependability pay off with children.... She taught me to wait for her and what a payoff!"

While older students frequently mentioned "talking" as a favorite activity with their mentors, younger ones mentioned playing games as their favorite. "Bridges is awesome," one student wrote. On the aging awareness post-test, students' scores improved over the year, demonstrating that they learned more about how older adults live and that they are more positive about interacting with adults. Comprehension of the test itself for some ESOL students remains an issue, however.

Participants in the Northwood HS/Arcola Towers program reported that they improved their speaking skills (13 of 16 responses): "I can speak more fluently without getting nervous." "It helped me speak, listen and read, and now I pronounce those words a lot better." Sharing and celebrating each other's cultural background was the second favorite activity after "talking." High school students' aging awareness scores, already high at the start, increased over the year: "I thought that most old people couldn't take care of themselves, but now I know that is not true." "I thought it would be hard for the younger generation to communicate with the older generation, but really it isn't."



DIALOGUES ACROSS THE AGES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: As its name implies, *Dialogues Across the Ages* brings together adult volunteers and high school students in structured discussion groups, and allows both generations to share ideas, listen and learn from one another. This long-running program has been active in Montgomery County Public Schools for almost twenty years. Throughout these years, the adults have opened many 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 with 49 students in the school's Leadership Training Institute (LTI) participating. Adult participants included the LTI lead teacher, the Interages program coordinator, and 18 adult volunteers who contributed 167 hours.

ACTIVITIES: Dialogues sessions last for one and a half hours weekly for a total of eight weeks. Shortly before beginning the group sessions, the students learn about Dialogues during a two-part orientation session, one with Interages staff and another with school teachers. These meetings outline 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 completed an Aging Awareness pre-test. Students comment that they find the orientation helpful.

Volunteers and students participate in structured sessions, where they break into individual groups of two volunteers and 6-9 students. Each week, volunteers rotate and a student moderator leads the discussions. Prior to the initial session, the students and school staff select the topics to be discussed. The first session usually begins with a neutral topic such as "Changes in Families and Individual Responsibilities."

More challenging topics—the war on terrorism, racial equality, reasons for war, the meaning of success, and the responsibility of the media—are tackled during subsequent weeks. Young adults facing decisions about work, school, financial responsibilities and relationships learn from various sources. Teachers often observe how the life experiences of the volunteers have provided students with alternate avenues for solving problems. Teachers also comment about how openly and without reservations the students share their personal experiences, concerns and ideas with the older adult volunteers.