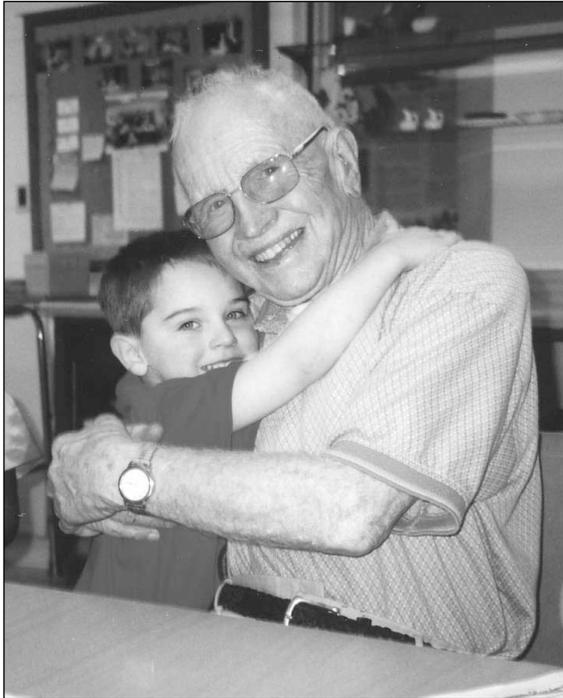# INTERGENERATIONAL SHARED SITES: Troubleshooting

Occasional Paper #2: *To Encourage and Expand Intergenerational Shared Site Development*

INTERGENERATIONAL SHARED SITES: Troubleshooting

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Acknowledgements:

About Generations United:

Generations United (GU) is the national membership organization focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. GU represents more than 100 national, state, and local organizations and individuals representing more than 70 million Americans. Since 1986, GU has served as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU acts as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration between aging, children, and youth organizations providing a forum to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.

The photographs in this report are from Generations United's annual Intergenerational Photography Contest sponsored by MetLife Foundation. Credit goes to Grace Preder, Vared David, Braden S., Molly Brown, Cindy Craig, and Juliann Joerres for the photos in the order they appear.

INTERGENERATIONAL SHARED SITES: TROUBLESHOOTING

Introducing and implementing intergenerational shared site programs is no small task. While there are numerous benefits to developing intergenerational shared site programs (outlined in Generations United's companion brief *Intergenerational Shared Sites: Making the Case* available at *www.gu.org*), there are also challenges - some real, some perceived. Developing a shared site often involves fundamentally changing the mission, vision, culture, or structure of an organization and in many cases the minds of the people affiliated with the organization. They can expand the services of your organization, launch partnerships between new agencies or cement existing collaborative relationships.

This troubleshooting guide is designed to provide assistance on dealing with some of the obstacles that may appear. Although there are a variety of types of intergenerational shared site programs, this brief primarily focuses on obstacles that may face planners of the most common models – child care integrated with adult day programs or skilled nursing facilities. Much of the information presented can be adapted for different shared site programs. The following sections highlight some of common challenges facing intergenerational shared sites, recommendations to address these challenges, and when available, suggested resources for further information.

Challenge: Misconceptions

The Issue:
There are often misconceptions about bringing children and older adults together. Parents, caregivers, administrators, and staff can have preconceived ageist and stereotypical attitudes and ideas. They may express concerns regarding health, safety, or comfort level with other generations. Families of young children may express that they are uncomfortable bringing their child to a place where older adults are and families of older people could feel that young children may be unsettling or bothersome to their family member.

Recommendations:

Issues such as misconceptions about the effects of bringing young children together with older adults and safety concerns related to infection control are examples of administrative concerns that can often be addressed effectively with appropriate training. Not only is training[1] for staff important, it is also important to prepare both older adults and children for intergenerational interactions.

Preparation for children could involve talking to the children about the project, reading children's literature with intergenerational themes, or conducting aging simulations. Some sites bring out wheelchairs, bandage joints, glasses that simulate cataracts or vision blurring and ask the children to participate in games to use those impaired abilities or simply bring the equipment around the children so they could get comfortable with them and even try them out. The walkers may turn into jungle gyms and the wheelchairs to cars but it has been reported that these activities can help children be less afraid. For older adults, the preparation may include some impairments representing the not yet developed skills of children (e.g., not being able to clearly express oneself or not being able to keep up with a grown up when walking).

Barb and Sydney are great friends. Barb is an elder in a wheel chair, on oxygen, and blind. Sydney is a spunky four-year old. They are partners in an intergenerational poetry class. Barb remarked that Sydney is one of the few people who accept her just as she is. Sydney talks to her parents about the poetry sessions and her new friend Barb.

Intergenerational shared site programs often involve the two groups who are more susceptible to illness or infection than the general population – children and older adults. Concerns over heath of the participants are not unfounded, but do not have to hinder intergenerational exchanges. Establishing a system of continual health screening of children and older adults can help assuage concerns and protect the participants. Children and adult programs most likely already have a system in place for dealing with contagious illnesses and those individuals with symptoms should be isolated until they can be sent home and kept from participating in any activities. In addition, children and elders both should wash their hands before and after intergenerational activities. Both careful screening and hand washing can help keep the atmosphere healthy.[2]

Many concerns are also unfounded. Research has shown that pre-school children in an intergenerational shared site program with older adults with cognitive impairments either ignored or did not consciously appear to be aware of the cognitive limitations of the older participants.[3] This same study found that during the initial stages of the activities, some children expressed interest in wheelchairs, hearing aids, or other assistive devices and once explained; most did not revisit or dwell on those issues.[4] Effective marketing that highlights the benefits of the intergenerational activities, can help recruit

families supportive of interactions between the generations. Some sites have found success in keeping parents and caregivers appraised and involved with the project. Photos of the activities displayed in prominent areas of the building, newsletters, and various family days can increase family understanding of and commitment to the program.[5]

Resources:

There are a number of resources for preparing children, youth and older adults for intergenerational projects. The following are just some examples:

- *Walk In My Shoes* is an aging awareness program developed by the University of Illinois Extension. The full curriculum is available at *www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/wims/wimsproject.html.*
- Kaplan, M. & Hanhardt, L. (2003). *Intergenerational Activities Sourcebook.* State College, PA: The Pennsylvania State University. Provides examples of warm-up activities and icebreakers to use when bringing intergenerational groups together. Available at *http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/.*
- Bressler, J. Henkin, N., & Adler, M. (2005). *Connecting Generations, Strengthening Communities: A Toolkit for Intergenerational Program Planners.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning. This comprehensive resource provides information about implementing and strengthening intergenerational programs and includes a 13-chapter handbook; a cd-rom with more than 80 downloadable resources; and a 15-minute video highlighting five intergenerational programs. Available by visiting *www.templecil.org.*
- McCrea, J., Weissman, M., & Thorpe-Brown, G. (2004). *Connecting the Generations: A Practical Guide for Developing Intergenerational Programs.* Pittsburgh, PA: Generations Together, University of Pittsburgh. This guide is based on the core workshops that served as the foundation for Generations Together's Annual Training Institute. It includes chapters on developing goals, using a logic model, evaluation, recruiting, training youth and older adults, and program implementation. Available by visiting *www.gt.pitt.edu.*
- For a listing of children's books with intergenerational themes see Dr. Sandra McGuire's *Growing Up and Growing Older: Books for Young Readers -- An Annotated Bibliography of Nonageist Literature for Preschool – Primary*, available at *www.lib.utk.edu/refs/ccyal/research.html.*

Challenge: Participant Buy-In and Sharing Space

The Issue:

In the movies, the message "if you build it, they will come" does indeed come true. This is not always the case for shared sites. Many programs have struggled with sharing space and recruiting participants, particularly older adults, for intergenerational activities. Most of these sites have worked hard to plan quality activities to bring the generations together and still are faced with resistance.

Recommendations:

Issues with sharing space primarily happen when a new program is incorporated into a space that has been inhabited by another program for some time. Change can be difficult and it is important for staff to model collaborative behaviors. In some cases, "resistance" from participants is really staff feeling territorial. Generally, when staff and participants understand the benefits of sharing space, they will be more supportive to the intergenerational program.[6]

It is also important to remember that not all older adults and young people will want to participate in intergenerational activities. Some older adults love to be around children, others do not. Some children may rather play in their classroom, than participate in a music program with their older neighbors. It is important to always offer choices for participants - the choice to participate, to watch, or to do another activity. Participation in activities by older adults and children must be voluntary and interaction between the generations should be encouraged, never forced.[7]

One of the benefits of intergenerational shared sites is that a child is as likely to identify a 6-year-old as a 76-year-old as a potential friend.

By providing diverse intergenerational activities, participants can find one that is a good match with their interests. Some older adults may prefer to rock babies and give them their bottles; others may want to read to a group of children or listen to a child practice reading out-loud; others may like art, music, theatre, or gardening projects with the children. No one activity will attract everyone in the site.[8] Research has also shown that interactions between older adults and young children in an intergenerational care setting are more positive when the older adults contribute to planning the activities[9] and played a meaningful role during them.[10] This is also true with younger participants. Although it may not be as realistic to have young children plan activities, it is important to get their input on what is being planned as well.

In addition to offering a variety of activities, it is also important to offer levels of interaction for the participants. One author termed it "real" and "virtual" accessibility for older adults to children and vice versa.[11] One successful project gave older adults the option to participate intensively in one-on-one relationships with children or simply observe the program from the periphery, with several options for involvement in-between.[12] This practice translates into environmental design features and activities that permit older adults and children to see each other living their everyday lives, perhaps through large, open play areas or common outdoor spaces; ensuring accessibility to one another's facilities; and including appropriate materials in both older adults' and children's settings.[13]

Resources:

The following two publications provide valuable information on recruiting participants and developing high-quality intergenerational programs:

- Bressler, J. Henkin, N., & Adler, M. (2005). *Connecting Generations, Strengthening Communities: A Toolkit for Intergenerational Program Planners*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning. Available by visiting: *www.templecil.org.*

- McCrea, J., Weissman, M., & Thorpe-Brown, G. (2004). *Connecting the Generations: A Practical Guide for Developing Intergenerational Programs*. Pittsburgh, PA: Generations Together, University of Pittsburgh. Available by visiting *www.gt.pitt.edu.*

Challenge: Staff Buy-In and Coordination

The Issue:

Staff issues are often cited as the most difficult challenges to overcome. Whether it is turf issues, reluctance to share resources, unwillingness to interact with participants of different ages, or concerns over time needed to do activities, staff can make or break the best intergenerational efforts. Program administrators repeatedly identified appropriate staff training and administrative and staff "buy in" to the intergenerational program as some of the highest priorities for programs.[14]

> "The days I come here are the best days of my week."
>
> – An older adult refelcting on his participation in the intergenerational program

Recommendations:

Staff working in intergenerational shared site programs are key to the program's success. These programs offer inherent opportunities for sharing and cross-training staff. Program staff need knowledge of lifespan development, knowledge and skills related to meeting age-appropriate developmental needs, and training in aspects of caregiving that are particular to the age group that is not their specialty.[15]

In successful programs, staff from the various program components fully embrace a shared vision of building intergenerational relationships among the participants. Many intergenerational shared site programs have combined staff meetings and trainings on a regular basis to increase joint-planning and the development of shared goals. Staff training can be delivered through monthly in-service training, monthly intergenerational team meetings to plan activities, quarterly intergenerational staff meetings, and attending conferences in other disciplines to name a few.[16]

Many programs report that the most critical staffing issue for the ultimate success of an intergenerational shared site program is the presence of an Intergenerational Coordinator.[17] The Intergenerational Coordinator generally focuses on facilitating planned intergenerational activities and informal interactions among participants; scheduling use of shared space, resources and equipment; coordinating staff meetings and

training; and building collaborative relationships among the staff of the various program components. The Intergenerational Coordinator can also strike the balance needed at some sites between the tendency for staff to overdo intergenerational interaction (planning too much time together) or just the opposite, not planning enough because "we're all here anyway, why plan anything...they see each other everyday." This position can be filled by one person, shared between two staff people (one from each program), or by an intergenerational team. The key is that there is a designated person or persons responsible for the intergenerational program.

Staff and administrative buy-in often comes with time. Many successful programs have reported that they have included intergenerational programming in their staff job descriptions and are very clear during new staff interviews and orientation that all staff are expected to participate and embrace the intergenerational aspect of the program. The opportunity for staff to work together to develop, implement, and evaluate the program all helps to develop buy-in.

Many administrators may need to see the benefits of the program before they will get fully behind it. The companion piece to this document entitled *Intergenerational Shared Sites*: *Making the Case*, highlights many of the benefits of these types of programs and may be a helpful tool in building the case for your intergenerational program. Research has shown that administrators are much more likely to provide intergenerational activities in their sites if they had positive attitudes toward intergenerational exchanges in general. Younger administrators, those with greater experience with intergenerational exchanges, and those with more meaningful contact with older adults reported being significantly more likely to provide intergenerational services in their facilities. Education and training of administrators can be an important variable in changing administrators' attitudes and, eventually, behaviors. [18]

Resources:
More information on staff development and training for intergenerational programs can be found in *Chapter 4: Staff Development, Training and Retention* of the publication *Under One Roof: A Guide to Starting and Strengthening Intergenerational Shared Site Programs* available on the web at *www.gu.org*. There are also intergenerational staff training opportunities including Generations United's biennial conference. More information on this and other types of trainings are available at *www.gu.org*. In addition, there are local and national opportunities for staff to learn about children's and aging issues. Two of the largest events are the Joint Conference of the American Society on

Aging and National Council on Aging (*www.agingconference.org*) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children National Conference and Expo (*www.naeyc.org*).

Challenge: Quality Intergenerational Activities

The Issue:
Many co-located intergenerational programs struggle with developing high-quality intergenerational activities. Staff may be committed to bringing the generations together but are unsure what to do once they get them together in the same room.

Recommendations:
The most successful activities are flexible and focus more on the process - the interaction between the generations - rather than the product. Activities should be designed to allow for as much spontaneous interaction as possible and be driven by the interests of the participants. The completion of a specific activity or project is less important compared to facilitating a process that fosters relationship development and communication.[19] Activities should be planned jointly by child and adult staff who together develop the activity plan.

Activity plans can include:
- the name of the activity,
- recommended ages for children,
- ability level for older adults,
- goals/objectives (including an intergenerational goal),
- description of activity,
- time requirements,
- needed materials,
- needed space/room set-up, and
- any special considerations.[20]

An intergenerational goal is "one that cannot be accomplished in any other way except through an intergenerational activity."[21] Examples of intergenerational goals are: relationship building, communication, teamwork, etc. Activities must be engaging and developmentally appropriate for both children and elders to be successful in fostering communication and relationship building.[22] By working jointly together in planning activities, staff can ensure that the activity is age appropriate for the children and physically appropriate for the older adults.

The optimal number of participants in an intergenerational shared site activity is one adult for each child. Smaller group sizes help to facilitate building relationships. With younger children (under 2) the optimal numbers are 6 children and 6 adults and 8-10 children and the same number of seniors with children 3-5.[23] Elementary and older chil-

dren can be grouped in much larger numbers and include the whole class. One challenge when involving large groups of children/youth is ensuring adequate numbers of older adults to maintain a one-to-one or small group (2-3 students per older adult) ratio. When bringing together young children with older adults who suffer from dementia, it is often best to do so with small groups of children because high levels of stimulation may be difficult for the adults.[24]

In addition to small groups, the frequency and consistency of interaction plays a critical role in building relationships. The ideal situation would include the same groups of children and older adults in activities on a regular basis. Many sites strive for weekly interactions and some even for daily or multiple times per week. Activities typically last 20 to 30 minutes, although older children and children and older adults who have developed relationships may require longer sessions.[25] Like with all relationships, meaningful interactions between children and older adults do not happen overnight and take time to cultivate.[26]

Research suggests that certain activities may prove more successful in building relationships. Routine, "family-style" activities that were popular with both older adults and children, including conversation, music, reading and cooking, were among the most appropriate and successful activities for adult day care center adults and preschool aged children.[27] Also, less structured activities such as throwing a ball, playing ring-toss, or peek-a-boo under a tarp have shown to promote high levels of spontaneity and interaction among children and elders in a co-located child care/adult day care. [28] Other factors can affect the quality of activities. Environmental factors such as time of day, outside noise, and seating must be taken into consideration for successful activities.[29]

As discussed earlier, it is very important that participation in the activities is voluntary. Children and older adults must volunteer to participate in the program and be given an optional single-generation activity should they wish to not participate.

Finally, be sure to evaluate all activities. Ask participants what they liked and why. Ask staff to complete an evaluation form after each activity and review these forms with the intergenerational planning committee. Activities should be reused, modified, or discontinued based on this feedback.[30]

"You can't just throw [children and elders] into a room and think intergenerational programming is going to work, it takes tremendous time and effort, it requires a special group [staff] that is willing to make the effort"

– Facilitator at a shared site[31]

Resources:

Although there is no existing activity guide for intergenerational shared sites, there are a number of publications that provide information on successful intergenerational activities.

- Epstein, A. & Boisvert, C. (2005). *Let's Do Something Together: A Guidebook for Effective Intergenerational Programs*. Ypsilanti: MI: High Scope Educational Research Foundation. Working in partnership with Generations Together in Dexter, MI, High/Scope identified five key components of effective intergenerational programs. The key components are presented in this guidebook along with tips, application ideas and examples. Available from High/Scope at *www.highscope.org*.
- Friedman, B. (2005). *Connecting Generations: Integrating Aging Education and Intergenerational Programs with Elementary and Middle Grades Curricula*. Washington, DC: Generations United. This book presents step-by-step lesson plans for intergenerational programs with children. The lessons are targeted to grades 4-5 but each provides suggestions on how to adapt the lessons for grades 2-3 and grades 6-8. Available from Generations United at *www.gu.org*.
- Generations United has developed general information on activities for intergenerational shared site programs in *Chapter 6: Curriculum Development and Intergenerational Activities* of the publication Under *One Roof: A Guide to Starting and Strengthening Intergenerational Shared Site Programs* available on the web at *www.gu.org*.
- Kaplan, M. & Hanhardt, L. (2003). *Intergenerational Activities Sourcebook*. State College, PA: The Pennsylvania State University. This sourcebook provides both introductory activities for young people and older adults to do together and more in-depth activities designed to help them get to know each other better and explore common interests. Available at *http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/*.
- St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care. (2002). *Caring for Generations: A Guide for Creating an Intergenerational Day Service Center*. Milwaukee, WI: Author. This guidebook provides an overview of the development of the center and includes a number of successful activities. Available from the author at *www.stanncenter.org*.

Challenge: Dealing with Loss and Grief

The Issue:

Intergenerational shared sites may also face issues around loss and grief. Sometimes a participant gets sick and has to leave the program or dies. Depending on the type of intergenerational shared site, you may be more likely to deal with the loss of older adult participants. There are programs that involve children with chronic illnesses that also may be more likely to experience loss. Staff at many shared sites are unprepared themselves to deal with loss and grief and also ill-equipped to help the participants deal with the loss. Even if the participants are prepared for the possibility, the death of a friend is

still shocking, scary, and sad. This can be particularly true at shared site programs where participants see each other regularly and form strong bonds.

Recommendations:

You cannot shelter younger and older participants from loss, but you can help them to understand the lifecycle and facilitate the grieving process. Children and adults react to death and loss differently. Very young children have little understanding of the finality of death. Preschool children tend to see death as temporary and reversible. Children between five and nine begin to think more like adults about death, yet they still believe it will never happen to them or anyone they know. Children over nine and teenagers have an adult understanding of death as permanent and a part of life.[32] Mechanisms for dealing with loss need to be developmentally appropriate for children. But even when taking age and developmental level into consideration, an individual child's reaction to loss will be as unique as every child.

Preparation of staff is key to helping to cope with the loss or death of a program participant. Staff from both the children/youth and older adult programs should be trained jointly on this issue and clear procedures when dealing with the loss of a participant should be established. Knowing that the children's program is prepared for dealing with issues of loss and grief, can help quell parent's concerns when considering an intergenerational setting or permitting their children's participation in intergenerational activities.[33] The following provides tips on helping children, youth, and older adults cope with loss.[34]

Supporting Children and Youth:

For many children, this may be their first experience dealing with death. Communicate honestly with young person keeping in mind the age and developmental level of the child. Keep statements simple and concrete, such as "Miss Maria was very sick and died yesterday. She won't be coming back here and we all miss her." Choose your words carefully and avoid language like "loosing someone" or "going to sleep." These metaphors may be interpreted literally by children and cause fears or confusion.

- Let them know it is all right to be sad and to express their feelings. Inform any counselors or social workers you have on staff of the loss and reach out to them for guidance and support. Continue to check in with the young person after the death to see how he or she is doing.
- Encourage children to talk about the person and remember the good things about them and fun they had together. Tell the young person that he or she was among the last new friends the older adult ever made and that this is a gift the young person gave to the older adult.
- Communicate with the parents of the young person. If the older adult participated in a group program, consider sending a note to all participants' parents notifying them of the loss. Discussions of death from a theological or religious viewpoint should be left to the children's family.

- If the young person was working on a project for or about the older person, such as an oral history, drawing, or story, encourage them to complete the project and present it to the older adult's family.
- Be honest without being disturbing when answering questions about the participant's death. See if there is something you can share about the adult's death that is both honest and uplifting, such as "She died peacefully," or, "He had his family with him."
- If feasible and appropriate, make arrangements for the young person to be matched with a new older adult as soon as possible.
- Consider holding a memorial service for the older adult. It may include planting a tree or flower in their honor or reading a story or poem about them.

Supporting Older Adults:
Be aware that the structured support your would offer young people, may be perceived as patronizing by older adults. Yet because the death of a child may be especially painful, older adults may need extensive informal support from staff and from other adults.

- Let older adults know that you or if available a staff counselor or social worker are free to talk with them.
- Volunteer to accompany the older adult to the child's funeral.
- Check in with them a few weeks following the funeral to see how things are going.
- Leave it up to the older adult to determine if and when they are matched with another child.
- Again, consider holding a memorial service for the child.

Intergenerational programs should all include some discussion of lifespan and death and dying. It is also beneficial to include older adults of all ages and levels of ability in your intergenerational activities, especially if you are co-located with an older adult program that primarily serves a sick or frail population. Children should have the opportunity to learn about the different ways we age. This will help address stereotyping of all older adults as sick or frail.

Resources:
There are a number of books that deal with loss and grief and have been used in intergenerational settings. The following are some children's books that deal with the subject:

- *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* by Tomie DePaola. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1973.
- *Tough Boris* by Mem Fox. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1994.
- *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown. New York: Young Scott Books, 1965.
- *My Grandson Lew* by Charlotte Zolotow. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* by Judith Viorst. New York: Antheneum, 1971.

- *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf* by Leo Buscgalia. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1982.

For older children and teens, the following books may be helpful:
- *Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, a Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson* by Mitch Albom, New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, New York: HarperCollins, 1952.
- *Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers: How to Cope With Losing Someone You Love* by Earl A. Grollman, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993.
- *When a Friend Dies: A Book for Teens About Grieving & Healing* by Marilyn E. Gootman & Pamela Espeland, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 2005.

High/Scope developed a workshop to help staff help themselves and the children cope with the loss of an older friend. For more information contact High/Scope Education Services at 734-485-2000, ext. 218 or visit *www.highscope.org*.

Challenge: Funding

The Issue:
One of the most common challenges expressed by administrators of intergenerational shared site pro-grams is funding. AARP's survey of shared sites identified this as the top challenge.[35] Even though funding was identified as a top challenge, over 50% of programs indicated that their ability to attract funding was increased by the existence of their shared site program.[36]

When raising funds for your shared site be sure to think outside of the box. ONEgeneration in California has developed a number of strategies to attract community support and revenue including a One-Mile Intergenerational Walk, Intergenerational Fashion Show and Farmer's Market.

While shared sites may open the door to new funding sources, the barriers to finding funding are real. There is no road map of proven ways to raise money for intergenera-tional programs. Although no major foundations have specific intergenerational pro-gram areas and most do not even mention the word in their funding guidelines, local and community foundations are beginning to offer some support. The Westchester Community Foundation in New York has developed a program to fund intergenerational initiatives in their county. The Arizona Community Foundation funded the "Communities for All Ages" initiative across the state of Arizona. Finally, Grantmakers In Aging has taken the lead in educating foundations about the benefits of and opportu-nities for funding intergenerational efforts.[37]

Recommendations:
Funding is not an issue unique to intergenerational shared sites. Most non-profit organ-izations face the continual challenge of raising money. But this can be more manage-

able and your funding more stable if you have a diverse funding base. Your intergenerational shared site needs multiple sources of funding to ensure its continued viability. Becoming too dependent on one funding stream is sure to cause problems. For example, dependency on grants leads to the ever-constant research and write cycle. As soon as a grant is awarded, the cycle starts all over again. In another case, relying too heavily on individual donations can lead to problems if there is a shift in the economy or a donor finds a new interest or passes away. In the world of funding, variety will make you stronger.

Your fundraising mix will also change depending on whether you are beginning a "capital campaign" to raise money to build a facility or securing on-going support for intergenerational programming at a shared site already in operation. Common sources of funds for shared sites include: individual donors, community/family foundations, government grants/cooperative agreements, corporate foundations, fee for service and related business income, government reimbursement for services, bequests and tributes, and special events. Although not a possibility for all sites, a number of programs have maximized resources through donated property and/or utilities.

Resources:

Generations United has developed general information on fundraising for intergenerational shared site programs in *Chapter 2: Funding and Partners* of the publication *Under One Roof: A Guide to Starting and Strengthening Intergenerational Shared Site Programs* available on the web at *www.gu.org*. This chapter includes a listing of possible government sources for funding. For more information on a financial analysis of one intergenerational shared site program see *Financial Analysis and Considerations for Replication of the ONEgeneration Intergenerational Daycare Program* by Carolyn D. Hayden of the National Economic Development and Law Center. You can request a copy from ONEgeneration at (818) 708-6625.

Challenge: Conflicting Licensing Requirements

The Issue:

There may be conflicting licensing regulations for the different children and adult programs at shared sites that can make it seem impossible to have them in the same building. Intergenerational shared site programs and facilities must abide by regulations at the federal, state, and local levels. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Inspector General's report revealed that regulations by the Administration on Aging (AoA) and the Administration on Children and Families (ACF) sometimes conflict. The study revealed differences in fire safety codes, immunization requirements, facility sanitation standards, nutritional requirements, and licensing standards regarding staff/participant ratios and staff certifications.[38] In addition, state and local licensing requirements can vary considerably by state.

Recommendations:

It is important that you verify specific applicable regulations in your area. You may find that some codes are in direct conflict with one another when addressing child care and elder care facilities, or that compliance may make it difficult to provide an environment conducive to fostering intergenerational relationships. Codes typically do not address intergenerational uses, and providing both functionality and compliance may require careful negotiations with code officials.

Many people believe there is an aura of confrontation around permitting and licensing. If approached appropriately, this is generally not warranted. The people working within these agencies can be incredible informational resources for you. A meeting with licensing personnel and the architect early in the project, whether required or not, may help you avoid substantial disappointment and potential loss of time and money later on. You will be miles ahead when working with an intergenerational project if you can work with these officials as your project develops, educate them about your goals, and help them develop a vested interest in your success. These professionals are just as concerned about the health and welfare of your participants as you are, and are usually willing to help you problem solve to meet your project's goals.[39]

Many licensors will be unfamiliar with intergenerational shared site projects. If you encounter resistance by a child care or elder care licensor, it may be useful to meet with a licensor from a neighboring region who has experience with intergenerational programs to discuss their experiences and thoughts on the project. Be sure that your architect is aware of the relevant licensing requirements for child care and elder care projects. It can be helpful to take your project documents to the various agencies for informal review at different phases of development, even if not required. Finally, it is important to note that the building and licensing code minimums for physical space in children's and elders' programs in most jurisdictions are usually well below acceptable good practice standards and thus, are not generally "target" standards.[40]

Resources:

Generations United has developed general information on licensing for intergenerational shared site programs in *Chapter 3: Facility Design and Building* of the publication *Under One Roof: A Guide to Starting and Strengthening Intergenerational Shared Site Programs* available on the web at *www.gu.org*.

Each state has it own licensing requirements for child care and skilled nursing care. Many states also have licensing requirements for adult day care. The departments that

oversee the licensing differ from state to state. Visit you state's website to find the appropriate agencies. The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services publishes the child care licensing regulations by state at their Administration for Children and Families' National Child Care Information Center's website at *http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/cclicensingreq/ratios.html.*

It may be helpful to talk with other shared sites to learn more about how they addressed any licensing issues. To find other shared site programs either in your state or around the country, visit Generations United's on-line intergenerational program directory at *www.gu.org.*

Challenge: Insurance and Risk Management

The Issue:
Like all service facilities and programs, intergenerational shared site programs provide services that hold them liable for a wide range of risks. Since the cost of liability insurance is often linked to age-specific risk determiners, programs serving both the young and old may be subject to high rates. The high cost of coverage may leave some programs to operate assuming substantial financial risks, while discouraging others from even getting started. Still other programs may be prepared to take on the additional insurance costs, but find that sufficient coverage is not available.[41] In addition, many administrators may wrongly perceive the risks of bringing the generations together to be too great. There is a common misbelief that one or the other generation may be a libility or safety risk.

In addition to insurance issues, there are other risk management practices that are diffi-fult to fulfill in some shared sites. For example, one common requirement is background checks for employees and volunteers working with the children or older adults being served. These requirements are obviously important, but some state regulations and local interpretations of these regulations may limit a program's ability to provide services or conduct intergenerational activities with large, fluid populations of older adults. Most states require that all volunteers working with children receive background checks. This poses budget problems for some programs, especially in states where fingerprint back-ground checks are required and can cost as much as $96.00 per person.[42] Multiply that by the 60 older adults in an co-located child care/adult day care program and you have an expense of nearly $6,000.

Recommendations:
Insurance is one strategy for dealing with risks. In reality, most nonprofits do not have the funds available to cover the costs of all risks. Therefore it is important the establish a comprehensive risk management strategy to protect your clients/participants, volun-teers, staff, and agency. Many shared site administrators mitigate risk by ensuring that participants are always supervised by their own staff during the activities and maintain-ing or exceeding mandated staff ratios.

Directors of shared site programs should be aware of the language of their state's regulations and the varying ways it has been interpreted. In states requiring checks for volunteers, shared site advocates have protected their vulnerable clients and encouraged intergenerational interaction by arguing that dependant older adults engaged in intergenerational activities are not defined as volunteers and, therefore, not subject to background checks. Other states have overlooked the requirement when older adults, who have not received background checks, are under constant supervision by qualified staff during their interaction with children.

Resources:
Visit the Nonprofit Risk Management Center's website at *http://nonprofitrisk.org* for information, tools, and tips on developing a comprehensive risk management strategy.

Conclusion
We have presented information here on some of the challenges you may encounter developing a shared site, but we know that there are other issues individuals and organizations face. Many of those issues are unique to one community or one type of program (e.g. child care in a skilled nursing facility or after-school program in a senior center). There is much work to be done to further expand our knowledge on how best to address these issues, to learn from other's experiences, and to develop high-quality programs.

We need to connect shared sites to share lessons learned, to help solve problems, or just to support one another. For too long, we have been working in isolation. Generations United is committed to assisting the growth of intergenerational shared sites as a means to address the country's growing dependent care needs and to encourage age-integrated communities. We will do this through publications, conferences and trainings, technical assistance, and our web-based resource center (www.gu.org) which includes a directory of programs, on-line chats, message boards, and other valuable resources.

Although at times the challenges to bringing the generations together under one roof may seem daunting, they all can be overcome. It is believed that there are currently over 300 intergenerational shared site programs in the United States and a number of programs in other countries. These programs have all successfully faced obstacles and gone on to develop vibrant age-integrated communities. Most of the challenges facing intergenerational shared site programs can be addressed with thoughtful planning, preparation, training and passion.

Somehow, we have to get older people back close to growing children if we are to restore a sense of community, a knowledge of the past, and a sense of the future.

– Margaret Mead

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