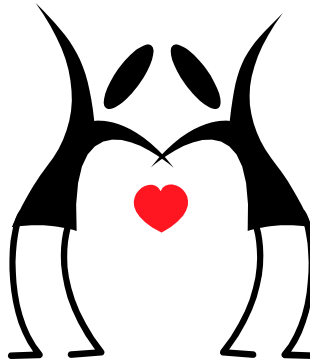


ElderConnections

June/July, 2005

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where aging is for everyone...
aging is *becoming*...
and the spirit is *ageless*

ElderConnections

is a bi-monthly e-newsletter dedicated to the promotion of positive aging, spiritual health and well-being of older adults and their families – offering information, resources, model ministries, stories, and humor! Visit our web-site at www.civic.bev.net/oam. Jan McGilliard, Editor

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From Generation to Generation

*I will sing of your steadfast love,
O Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim
your faithfulness to all
generations.*

*I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as
the heavens. (from Psalm 89)*



The Psalmist's words make the heart sing with their beauty and strength, proclaiming God's faithfulness and steadfast love to all generations. There is no greater potential for this proclamation than in our congregations, where folks of all ages gather for church school, worship, and fellowship. Yet the question remains... how well do we really know one another? Once we arrive at church, we typically go our separate ways to church school classes, join up again for part of worship, then separate again following the children's message for younger groupings of under 5's and "junior church."

Research shows that mature adults and young people have reciprocal needs and that interaction between the two can be mutually beneficial. The potential for building meaningful relationships across generations is great in the life of a congregation. There are basically three models for intergenerational exchange:

- Mature adults serving as mentors, teachers, helpers, and role models to young people
- Young people helping mature adults with chores and transportation
- Older and younger working together with a common focus of service, mission, or fun

Congregational life and mission shared across the generations is destined for greatness. The first step is to raise awareness about the benefit of shared ministry...and to look through a lens that considers all ages and stages of life. Here are a few ideas to get you started!



Mature adults serving young people...

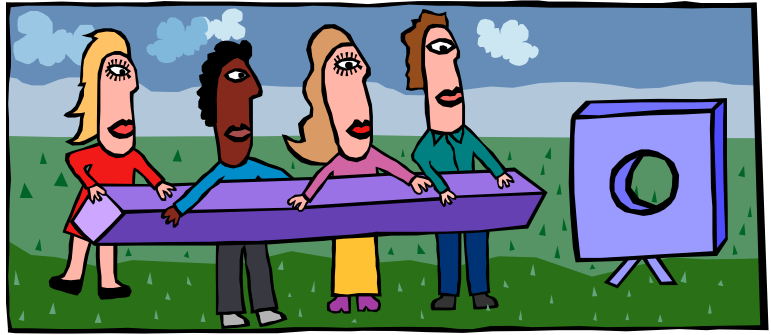
- Church school and Vacation Bible School teachers: create teaching teams involving young/mid-life adults with mature adults to offer children the richness of perspective and life experience while providing the mature adult with someone who can keep up with the energy levels of youngsters.
- Mature adults mentoring youth through confirmation
- Mature adults tutoring youth in after school programs
- Involve mature adults in Logos (or other mid-week) programs
- Involve mature adults in giving children's messages in worship
- Involve mature adults in child care and junior church activities (with other helpers to do the running around)
- Involve mature adults in sharing stories of their faith journey with young people
- Involve mature adults in sharing their growing up stories with young people
- Involve mature adults in teaching young people how to do things

Young people serving mature adults...

- Service activities such as leaf raking, gardening, odd jobs, transportation, etc. to give mature adults a helping hand with activities that have become challenging
- Involve youth in evaluating and addressing accessibility issues in the church
- Involve youth in visitation of older, more house-centered elders and those living in retirement communities
- Involve youth in gathering life stories of mature adults in the church
- Involve youth in congregational care and nurture activities related to elders

Wait!!! There's more!!!!!!

Older and younger working together with a common purpose...



- Mission trips for youth and adults of all ages, working and playing together as they strive to improve the lives of others
- Service projects (Habitat for Humanity, Food Pantry, Clothing Closet, Singing/playing music/taking well-behaved pets to retirement community residents...)
- Congregational care teams: ask a young person to accompany an adult as part of a team that provides assistance to individuals or families in need
- Develop a worship service (all aspects of worship) that intentionally involves all ages in leadership
- Intergenerational choir activities, especially during special seasons of the church calendar
- Involve older and younger in special music opportunities when adult choir is taking a break through the summer months
- Bake communion bread together, make Chrismons for Chrison Tree, create banners,
- Intergenerational travel and/or field trips for fellowship, study, fun
- Attend sports, concerts, movies together
- All-age retreats
- Involve youth in stewardship activities of the church
- Church-wide birthday party for all ages, talent show
- Prayer partners
- Create bulletin covers, devotional booklets together

FYI.....

Generations United: Resources for Real People

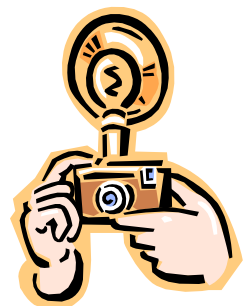
Generations United is a national organization that advocates for the mutual well being of children, youth, and older adults. It serves as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. Generations United provides a forum for those working with children, youth, and older adults to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.

And and opportunity....

Generations United 2005 Intergenerational Photography Contest!

Purpose:

- To capture the power and beauty of intergenerational relationships in action
- To convey the important roles that younger and older people play in each other's lives



Focus on: Celebration of diversity, emotional expression, humorous situations, intergenerational activities

Prizes: Grand prize is \$250 and a trip to Washington, DC to attend Generations United Annual Awards banquet; Second place: \$100; Third place: \$50

See below for further info.....

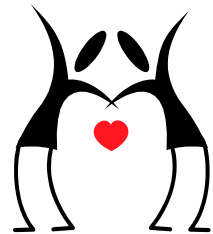
Eligibility: Contest is open to children and youth up to 21 yrs. and adults 50+ yrs. of age. Only amateur photographs may be submitted. Enter no more than three photos. Questions??? Phone Generations United at 202-289-3979, or dlent@gu.org.

Deadline: All entries must be postmarked to Generations United by **July 31, 2005**. Winners will be notified one month after the deadline. **Send to: Generations United, Attn. IG Photo Contest, 1333 H Street, NW, Suite 500W, Washington, DC 20005.** (See below for GU's website)

To read further about **Generations United**, visit their web site at www.gu.org. There you will find information on their upcoming conference GU's 13th Biennial International Conference, **The Intergenerational Current: Across the Life Span and Around the Globe** September 13 -17, 2005 at the Washington Marriott in downtown Washington, DC.

Resources

ElderConnections Workshops, Retreats, Presentations
Jan L. McGilliard, M.S.
Executive Director



From Bubblegum to Bifocals: Connecting the Generations

Keynote presentation or workshop

- For all who wish to explore the potential for and the promise of stronger connections across the generations
- Learn ways to strengthen congregational life, mission, and evangelism
- The power of partnerships through church and community

Tides and Seasons: The Ages and Stages of Life

Keynote presentation or workshop

- For those who wish to explore the Celtic way of inclusivity
- Spirituality and integration of the life span in the Celtic tradition
- The significance of interdependence

Adventures in Grandparenting

- For those interested in exploring the joys and challenges of grandparenting
- Grand Expectations: A model for intergenerational travel
- ABC's of organizing group travel for the ultimate intergenerational experience

Jan McGilliard has skills and experience in intergenerational programming and ministry, and is a certified Intergenerational Specialist (University of Pittsburgh). Now see Resources for Readers below!

Resources for Readers

Whoever Welcomes a Child: An Intergenerational Peacemaking Journey through the Gospel of Matthew, written by Kirby Lawrence Hill, Published (2005) by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program in conjunction with Mission Education and Promotion. PDS 70-270-05-004.

Generations of Faith: A Congregational Atlas, by Carl G. Eeman. Published by the Alban Institute (2002)

The New Face of Grandparenting, by Don Schmitz, published in 2003 by Grandkids and Me. Web site: www.grandkidsandme.com

Another Country: Navigating the Emotional Terrain of Our Elders, by Mary Pipher, published in 1999 by Riverhead Books.

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View my Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (marathon) page at:

http://www.active.com/donations/fundraise_public.cfm?key=tntvaJMcGill&I9.x=39&I9.y=8