

# FULL OF LIFE



## Generating success – intergenerational activities for schools

Schools are based right at the heart of their local community. Many already make the most of opportunities to bring their pupils together with older people who live in the community, allowing knowledge, experience and energy to be shared across all ages.

UK Older People's Day took place on 1 October 2008 as a celebration of older people in all of their diversity and richness. The day provided an opportunity for young and older people to take part in activities which bring them together and enable different generations to learn from each other. To promote this we adopted the theme of 'intergenerational practice' – encouraging activities which promote closer relationships between people of different ages.

The benefits of intergenerational activity for children and young people are many. Think about the impact grandparents have on those children who are lucky enough to have them; many take great interest in their grandchildren's lives and act as a confidante and friend. But the grandparents benefit greatly from this contact as well, for example by keeping up to date with the latest trends or just generally enjoying a more youthful view of life. Bringing activities into your school that involve older generations can help children experience these benefits, whilst also having a positive impact on the lives of older members of the community.

### What are the benefits of intergenerational activity?

Intergenerational activity is the name to describe activities, programmes and projects that consciously seek to bring young and older people together. Many of these already happen without the label being attached, but what is important is the intention of bringing the young and old together.

Children and young people benefit from intergenerational activity in a variety of ways. Engaging with different groups of people who they would not usually mix with (such as older people) can encourage them to become active and involved citizens. Working across generations can address the negativity felt by adults towards younger generations, and combat some of the negative perceptions that younger people have of those they see as old. A long term intergenerational relationship can provide young people with role models who can motivate and encourage young people to fulfil their potential.

There are benefits for older people too. Engaging with young people can help them remain active as they age, learn new skills, continue to feel valued by society. This can help tackle increasing isolation and loneliness experienced by many older people.

And just as important, it can be a fun way of meeting new people by sharing and learning together.

To find out more about intergenerational practice visit:

- [Beth Johnson Foundation Centre for Intergenerational Practice](#)





promoting a sense of personal identity, self worth, well-being and empowerment. Year 7 pupils, who are most at risk of failure, are targeted in order to improve their literacy skills and academic achievements, promote pupil self-confidence and self esteem, facilitating a successful transition from primary to secondary school.

The school works in partnership with organisations such as North Tyneside Council, Age Concern North Tyneside and Living History North East to support a wide programme of intergenerational projects; Cranes, Boats and Trains was such a project involving all of these partners. The students of the school, together with Age Concern volunteers, were part of an oral history project, learning about oral history techniques, and interviewing workers from the Tyne shipyards; a DVD was produced as a culmination of their work.



The project aims to develop a sustainable community-based initiative that brings older and younger people together, and to play a part in addressing issues of social fragmentation across generations.

### **Grassmoor Primary School Allotment Project**

Year 5 pupils take turns caring for their school's allotment under the experienced eye of members of the Grassmoor Allotments Society; the project is co-ordinated by a multi-agency partnership team.

Sessions were delivered in the school setting on healthy eating, drugs awareness and first aid, and during ICT sessions an exhibition of the project was put together as a presentation to capture the whole experience. Parents and children from the Grassmoor New Street Tots group also gave a helping hand, growing their own runner beans from seed in the allotment. The outcome was that new friendships were made in the community whilst taking part in a healthy lifestyles project delivered through positive activities.

The school and the allotments society are fully committed to ensuring children continue to reap the benefits of growing and eating their own food. The project will start afresh with new pupils each September and has been incorporated into the school curriculum. It will be supported by the partnership.

### **Haywood Engineering College**

Haywood Engineering College is a Comprehensive Foundation School for 11-16 year olds which became involved in intergenerational mentoring in 1999, as part of a Year 7 project, co-ordinated by the Beth Johnson Foundation until 2002.

The school embedded mentoring into its whole school approach to learning and set up a team that supports its volunteer mentoring initiatives. This includes the intergenerational mentoring programme which enables students to work with older mentors who help with adapting to life at Haywood, supporting the development of their interests and aspirations, careers and further education opportunities.

The positive experience of being involved in intergenerational mentoring has led the school to be actively involved in other intergenerational projects linking with the Federation of Stadium Communities and Age Concern North Staffs on projects that deliver, most recently, on media studies and citizenship elements of the curriculum.



## Age Apart Age Concern Oldham

Age Concern Oldham delivers a range of intergenerational projects across Oldham; throughout the course of a year they work with around 110 local primary and senior schools.

**Age Exchange** looks at participants' own life-stories including recent events in history. Students enhance their communication & ICT skills, along with their understanding of 'the past', as they examine periods in history such as the Second World War and school life pre-1940s, changes in technology and families. Older volunteers work one-to-one with a younger person recalling life memories to them and they produce a personal 'life story' book as part of the project.

The young people show an improvement in their school work and attitude, and once the project finishes, older volunteers are invited back to school for harvest festivals, Christmas concerts, presentation evenings etc.

**Growing Up** examines the real life differences in 'growing up' in Oldham. Older people are interviewed by a small group of young people about playtime activities, school life, family links and their diet as they grew up. The session looks closely at life as a child some fifty years ago and gives young people a wonderful insight into that era as well as a greater understanding of social and environmental changes. Personal items such as birth certificates, photographs, school reports etc are used to promote discussion.



## Building Bridges in Leeds

Building Bridges, a Leeds community project, was commissioned in 2003 to build better relationships between old and young. The project aims to promote better understanding and break down stereotypes by bringing children from Leeds primary schools together with local older people using Circle Time.

Through games and discussions, local older people and pupils at schools get to know each other, share problems and memories, and talk together about their community. 'Building Bridges' is now part of Leeds Healthy Schools Programme. Education Leeds has trained more than 50 primary schools to use 'Building Bridges' in their own areas.

A toolkit has been adopted and republished by a national educational publisher and the project won a Euro cities innovation award in Gdansk, Poland in November 2007 for addressing demographic change and inclusion. A secondary schools' toolkit, Building Bridges 2 is to be launched in November 2008.

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## Web addresses

There are a number of websites mentioned throughout this document. To make it easier for those wanting to print this information, we have listed the full website addresses below in the order in which they appear.

Beth Johnson Foundation Centre  
for Intergenerational Practice

[www.centreforip.org.uk](http://www.centreforip.org.uk)

Age Concern – Together we can make it happen

[www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/Documents/  
Intergen\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/Documents/Intergen_booklet.pdf)

Gardening with schools

[www.centreforip.org.uk/Libraries/Local/67/Docs/  
Gardening\\_schools\\_Eng\\_final.pdf](http://www.centreforip.org.uk/Libraries/Local/67/Docs/Gardening_schools_Eng_final.pdf)

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment  
in Education

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/  
AD6343FE3EF01D9FC86617FE11940A48.pdf](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/AD6343FE3EF01D9FC86617FE11940A48.pdf)

Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice

[www.scotcip.org.uk](http://www.scotcip.org.uk)

Wales Centre for Intergenerational Practice

[www.ccip.org.uk/](http://www.ccip.org.uk/)

RSVP

[www.csv-rsvp.org.uk/site/home.htm](http://www.csv-rsvp.org.uk/site/home.htm)

Images courtesy of the Valuing Older People, Positive Images of Ageing team at Manchester City Council

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UK Older People's Day

Celebrating the contribution older people make to society