

Voluntary Services Belfast (changed to Volunteer Now)
Belfast Metropolitan College, St Mary's College &
South Eastern Regional College

This project focused on identifying the benefits of befriending and also benefits of being a befriender. The VSB worker met with students from the above colleges and held 2 large head to head discussion groups and also a smaller workshop, debating the issue of intergenerational befriending. This led to the placement of volunteer befrienders with older people who would visit for a chat, a cup of tea and generally a bit of company. Interviews were recorded from both older and younger participants and a radio broadcast aired on Faille FM, which the Intergenerational worker also attended. A CD has been produced as part of the project and can be used as a future resource. The project was very successful in achieving its outcomes and has benefited both age groups, with the students gaining experience as a volunteer and the older people enjoying the socialisation.



Not everyone realises or appreciates that when you are older and not as mobile as you used to be, the days can be lonely and the nights even lonelier. I really look forward to the visits by my befriender, we chat and put the world to rights or at least try to.

I was previously unaware of the chance to befriend older people. I am thinking of studying social work and this would be a great way to get experience and learn about some of the problems and concerns older people have.