

# BRIDGING THE AGE GAP

Promoting Mutual Health Benefits

For the Young and Old

Through Intergenerational Community Programs

*A report on a Funding Initiative Sponsored by the Archstone Foundation*

(Inside front cover)

The Archstone Foundation (formerly the FHP Foundation) was established in 1985 as a grantmaking foundation. As we enter the new millennium, we are concentrating our limited funding on programs that meet the needs of the elderly. This focus will allow us to serve as a catalyst for positive change, at a time when we face unprecedented challenges in dealing with the emotional, physical and mental health of seniors. Additionally, it facilitates us in fulfilling our mission -- to contribute toward the preparation of society in meeting the needs of an aging population. We have been presented with a tremendous opportunity to draw upon the wisdom and experience of elders for the betterment of society. This report, "Bridging the Age Gap -- Promoting Mutual Health Benefits for the Young and Old" was produced to share our findings with our audiences and encourage duplication of these successful programs.

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## FOREWORD

The Archstone Foundation's "Bridging the Age Gap" initiative began with a vision of a better world: one where youth work literally hand-in-hand with the elderly, exchanging energy and strength for wisdom and experience in an atmosphere of caring respect. The vision is not new. This was the way of our ancestors that innovators in the social services field are trying to revive. But the old machinery is rusty. The once natural connections between the generations -- within families and within communities -- have broken down. What are the practical steps toward repairing the links between the young and the old?

We put out the question and answers have come back -- three years in the making -- from two very different organizations in two very different communities. Their findings offer optimism and guidance.

The Archstone Foundation is pleased to share this substantive, real-life picture of how intergenerational programming can work in every community. It is our hope that the information contained in this report will benefit other nonprofits and all organizations serving the young and the old.

Joseph F. Prevratil  
President and CEO  
Archstone Foundation

## SUMMARY

The Archstone Foundation created the “Bridging the Age Gap” funding initiative to encourage the development of prototype programs demonstrating concrete strategies for bringing youths and elders together, with the goal of obtaining mutual understanding and support.

The three-year initiative began in 1995, supporting two different agencies -- one in an urban area and one in a rural area -- as they embarked on intergenerational social experiments. Both agencies reached out to local schools, senior organizations, and other community groups to create supportive networks for their programs. These included multi-layered activities fostering education, communication, confidence-building, and fun for participants. By monitoring interactions and attitudes of participants during the course of the program, the agencies gleaned practical strategies and social insights toward bringing youths and elders together for mutual benefit. These lessons will be of great value to schools, senior service centers, civic groups and funders that recognize the potential for encouraging similar programs in other communities.

The Archstone Foundation is gratified by the innovative approaches of the grantees and the production of data confirming our theory: that youths and elders experience positive changes in their attitudes and quality of life when brought together in a mutually-supportive context. The data compiled is both measurable and anecdotal. The significant conclusions of these programs fall into two primary categories:

**SOCIOLOGICAL** - The programs demonstrate the potential for youths and elders to give one another much needed support and understanding. Despite fractured families and the prevalent state of alienation often experienced by and between seniors and teens, attitudes change when different generations are brought together in a non-threatening, structured routine that allows for meaningful connections. Mutual teaching and comfort often flow from these connections in surprising ways. These sociological findings were confirmed by tests and evaluations that prove the benefit of programs able to help participants identify and overcome barriers in cross-generational relationships.

**STRATEGIC** - The programs produced practical ways to implement the goal of connecting people from different generations. From their experiences we find key elements that intergenerational programs must address to be successful:

- helping participants recognize prejudices and attitudes that cause alienation;
- educating youths about aging issues;
- educating seniors about the challenges youths face today;
- fine-tuning communication skills;
- choreographing schedules to accommodate limits imposed by transportation schedules, competing demands, and other outside factors;
- developing meaningful activities that are engaging to both generations;
- finding ways that the knowledge of seniors can help youths and vice-versa;
- encouraging self-esteem by providing recognition of each participants' offering;

- motivating other community agencies to participate in and benefit from the programs;
- creating records of the work completed - both for participants and to inspire others;
- evaluating progress of the programs.

We believe that as programs such as the ones detailed in this report become more common, society will benefit greatly by increased exchange of human resources between youths and elders.

## BRIDGING THE AGE GAP

A Report on the Archstone Foundation's  
Three-year Funding Initiative  
Supporting Innovative Community Programs  
Uniting Elders and Teens for Mutual Benefit

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SECTION I  
INTRODUCTION  
A BACKGROUND ON INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS

Unlike cultures from other parts of the world, elders in our society are often segregated from younger generations. In other societies, elders play important roles in rearing children, inculcating moral values, instructing in the social graces, instilling a sense of responsibility, and interacting with young people. They are vibrant and intimately involved in their community, and are a valuable resource for the molding of the future generations. But in the United States, our elders have become isolated from their families -- because of migration away from harsh weather, children relocating for employment purposes, or they have simply survived their family members and network of friends. They are no longer allies of the young. These seniors, especially the isolated and infirm, suffer from deprivation of the most basic contact, from verbal communication to intimacy.

Teenagers from environments and backgrounds that have deprived them of relationships with older individuals are estranged from the aging process. Without contact with the senior population, young people lose respect for their elders, negatively stereotype them, and become fearful of contact with them. For these youth, the old become useless, bent and wrinkled, and ugly, comical or tragic. Disrupted or dysfunctional nuclear family life creates the propensity for young people to become involved in criminal activity -- often activity that is initiated against seniors. Seniors often become the victims of muggings, robberies, and malicious actions perpetrated by juvenile delinquents. Especially vulnerable to becoming involved in these actions are teenagers from disadvantaged, inner-city communities, where many families are headed by young, single mothers without a senior actively involved in their day-to-day life.

Seniors can serve as role models to children in their efforts to explore and build necessary developmental skills for scholastic achievement and self-esteem. They can share their rich experiences and their own talents in a wide array of areas. In the process, awareness of the aged improves and attitudes change.

Many of the challenges we face can be addressed by bringing young and old together, resulting in mutual health benefits to both groups. For the old, these intergenerational programs can provide a sense of linkage to the community. For the young, programs can provide them with the opportunity to draw on the knowledge and life experience of the seniors within the context of a non-threatening, non-judgmental relationship, allowing for a unique interchange between young and old. For both, intergenerational programs can improve participants' ability to develop strong, caring relationships with the other generation.

## SECTION II

### GOAL OF THE INITIATIVE: MUTUAL HEALTH BENEFITS FROM YOUTH/ELDER CONNECTIONS

Our funding initiative was a journey for us -- one that explored the possibility of bridging the gap between the young and the old. Unlike programs designed to bring obvious aid to a specific need, the Archstone initiative sought ways to restore to people's lives something they did not necessarily see as missing -- the comfort, confidence and joy derived from meaningful interaction with those on the opposite end of the age spectrum. We embarked on this journey hoping to discover innovative, unexpected solutions to problems faced by youths and elders.

Archstone Foundation (formerly the FHP Foundation) requested proposals in early 1995 to support intergenerational programs providing mutual health benefits for the young and old. This "Bridging the Age Gap" funding initiative represented a major opportunity to add valuable research, experience and observations to the body of information in the 20-year-old field of intergenerational programming. Although the theories are in place, we needed practical blueprints for putting those ideas to positive use.

The goal of the initiative was to make progress toward a better American society where seniors serve as role models for youths, and young people derive benefit from the wisdom and experience of the elderly while providing respectful companionship. We envisioned seniors encouraging young people in their development of skills, self-esteem, scholastic commitments and sense of social responsibility. The hoped-for corollary benefit to seniors was their valuable inclusion in mainstream society with an outlet for -- and appreciation of -- their wisdom and life experience.

The goal intuitively makes sense and indeed has been a reality rather than an ideal in most cultures over the millennia; it was also a reality in our own society before the Industrial Revolution began scattering families and eroding villages. Despite a growing consciousness of the value of multi-generational connections, it is the norm for teenagers today to grow up estranged from elders and, therefore, ignorant of and often hostile toward the aging process. Elders frequently are sidelined, segregated even, into places where their contact with youths is minimal. As a result, mutual suspicion and disrespect has evolved into a state of alienation.

The problems are obvious in our daily lives. Youths negatively stereotype seniors as 'out of it,' mentally dull, and useless; seniors see teens as alien, surly, and dangerous. This mutual de-humanization paves the way for hostile actions. Seniors call on authorities to disperse seemingly-dangerous groups of youths. Youths target elders for theft, muggings and malicious mischief. The most vulnerable seniors are those most frail and isolated. The most vulnerable teens are those who live in poverty without adequate adult supervision and no guidance from trusted elders. In short, those who suffer most from hostile alienation between the generations are the ones in greatest need of the benefits to be found through connection.

It was the intention of the Archstone Foundation's Board of Directors to support intergenerational programs offering supervised contact between teens and the elderly in a safe environment in hopes of achieving benefits for both young and old. A pool of

funding in the amount of \$200,000 annually for up to three years was made available to award to one or more projects.

Table 1.

*Benefits for the elderly:*

- greater involvement in the community
- developing caring relationships with youths
- relief from depression and isolation because they have something to look forward to
- an opportunity to share their histories and experiences
- validation for their lives by influencing a future generation
- getting assistance with chores, transportation and shopping
- playing a mentor role by teaching specific skills
- in some cases, getting out of the house and perhaps earning some money
- developing relationships free of role restraints they have as parents or professionals
- receiving the joys of conversation, touch, and entertainment that comes from regular contact with another individual

*Benefits for youths:*

- exercising community responsibility and good citizenship
- improvement in confidence and self-esteem
- learning practical, vocational and life skills
- receiving support in dealing with crises involving family, school and peer groups
- having an older advocate to help them gain access to the mainstream community
- breaking down stereotypes and myths about elders
- learning to know and respect a senior as an individual
- learning about the psychology and physiology of aging and death
- developing a caring relationship and sharing personal information with an elder
- feeling the satisfaction of brightening an older person's life
- involvement in a constructive activity that will be a deterrent from potentially harmful or criminal activities

We recognized that many of these hoped-for potential outcomes would be found in individual experiences that could only be recorded anecdotally. But potential grantees were asked to create an evaluation component with measurable objectives against which benefits could be compared for the elderly and for youth. The initiative also called for an outline of specific activities, anticipated problems and solutions, and a plan for data collection.

In the following pages we will review the development of the programs by the two successful grant applicants and their progress in meeting the goals listed above. We

will also highlight the lessons learned -- lessons that should benefit schools, senior centers and other agencies working with the young and the old.

SECTION III  
THE PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS, THEIR CHALLENGES AND ACTION PLANS

Two projects were funded under the “Bridging the Age Gap” initiative and are analyzed in this report:

The Multi-Cultural Intergenerational Leadership Training Project (MILTP)  
Sponsored by Third Age, Incorporated  
Oakland, California

Bridging the Age Gap Program (BTAGP)  
Sponsored by Volunteer Center of the Redwoods  
(a program of the Area I Agency on Aging)  
Eureka, California

**A. MILTP's Challenges and Action Plan**

The Multi-Cultural Intergenerational Leadership Training Project (MILTP) targeted the San Antonio neighborhood in South-Central Oakland because of the identified needs of youths and elderly. It is reported that this neighborhood has a rapidly-growing immigrant population, high rates of poverty and unemployment, general lack of opportunity, high crime rates, frequent episodes of racially-motivated harassment, and drug dealing. Twelve percent of the population are age 60 and over. Many live alone, in isolation, and are long-time residents who are alienated from the younger newcomers of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The staff at Third Age noted that before the advent of MILTP, no structures existed for fostering contact and communication between the seniors and youth. They set out to demonstrate that an intergenerational program could achieve success even in a challenged environment as opposed to a more affluent and cohesive community. They did so with the support of Archstone Foundation, in collaboration with several local government and nonprofit organizations -- and with the blessing of the Mayor of Oakland. An ad hoc task force was organized, comprised of representatives from eleven community and educational agencies.

MILTP began with the purpose of developing a model urban community program structured to bring culturally- and ethnically-diverse youths into intergenerational leadership roles. Program officials received training for activities designed to:

- reduce youth-related crime and racial harassment in high-risk neighborhoods;
- integrate youths into existing programs for the elderly;
- motivate high school students to become advocates for the elderly;
- inspire community leaders to create forums promoting intergenerational contact.

The method of implementation outlined by MILTP included six components:

1. **Leadership Training:** Paid training and work experience focussed on aging issues, ethnic sensitivity, conflict resolution, and improving neighborhoods through elder-youth partnerships. These students were then paired with senior mentors and were involved in training and recruitment for other activities.

2. **Youth Volunteer Program:** Teens volunteering one-on-one with seniors. Recruiting and training high school students to participate in a pre-existing senior companion program (paying a stipend) and in pre-existing elderly services programs linking student volunteers with elders needing help with shopping, gardening, and other chores.

3. **Intergenerational Summer Day Camp:** Bringing together junior high school students with elders at a regional park for intergenerational storytelling, games, discussions, arts and crafts, racial sensitivity training, and folk dancing, with MILTP Leadership graduates as counselors.

4. **Key Community Leader Training Program:** Gathering key civic, business, church, educational, social service, and community leaders together for a full-day program to identify multi-cultural and intergenerational issues and create strategies for solving them.

5. **Scholarships:** The project's scholarship awards program was designed to encourage students to seek higher education, careers, and involvement in fields related to the elderly.

6. **Volunteer and Student Recognition Events:** Each project year, students, volunteer program students, work site supervisors, senior volunteers, parents, and program supporters were honored at a Recognition Event.

Archstone Foundation awarded MILTP a grant of \$163,563 for the period July 1, 1995 to April 1, 1998.

## **B. BTAGP's Challenges and Action Plan**

Volunteer Center of the Redwoods' Bridging the Age Gap Program (BTAGP) targeted the geographically spread-out, sparsely populated rural towns of Humboldt County for recruiting participants. The area reports 91 percent of public school students receiving state subsidized or free lunches. Drug use is high, with 41 percent of teens reporting drug use compared to 29 percent of students statewide. Alienation between youth and elders was demonstrated by strong opposition by seniors to a proposed teen center in the county's largest city, Eureka. Interviews with teens showed lack of respect for seniors' wisdom and intelligence.

BTAGP set out to meet these challenges with the support of the Archstone Foundation to create collaborative working relationships with area schools and neighboring organizations working with the elderly. The stated purpose of BTAGP at the outset was to motivate teenagers to join active senior volunteers in community service, including assistance to the frail elderly. Productive and active seniors were envisioned as ideal role models for youths, able to demonstrate the value of community service. Anticipated side benefits included helping students build their resumes for future employment, increased mutual understanding between youths and elders, constructive activities for youths to deter drug use and problem behaviors, and outside recognition for good citizenship.

BTAGP's action plan was to involve students and seniors from Humboldt County in community service. All volunteers received orientation and training for the three components of this program:

1. **Volunteering with agencies.** Providing services to frail elderly by delivering meals-on-wheels, playing individual games, leading group games such as BINGO, helping with yard work and household chores, and delivering groceries. This activity was accomplished in collaboration with home health organizations that provided further training and supervision.

2. **'One Shot' Volunteer Programs.** Supervised by sponsoring agency, teens and senior volunteers plan, organize and accomplish one-day programs such as bagging groceries at the Food Bank and planting trees at a housing project.

3. **Mentoring Relationships.** Pairing youths with seniors who can mentor them in skill-based philanthropic activities such as sewing stuffed animals for children in foster care, turning stories into live theater to instruct others, and sharing peer counseling strategies.

Archstone Foundation awarded BTAGP \$111,196 in grant funding for the period July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1998.

Both programs set out with prescribed evaluation techniques, agreements with collaborating agencies, and ideas about problems that might arise. Section III of this report will examine the strategies, issues, and experiences that unfolded during the course of each program, with emphasis on information that will apply to future projects tackling similar challenges.

## SECTION IV ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES, ISSUES, AND EXPERIENCES

In pioneering new methods of bringing youths and elders together, both projects funded under the Archstone “Bridging the Age Gap” campaign contributed to the body of knowledge about the mechanics and principles that build successful intergenerational programs. In this section, we will examine eight critical elements that emerged from this initiative:

**A. NETWORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS** - With the long-range goal of building a society where connections between elders and youths thrive, it is essential that programs work closely with schools, senior citizen service providers, civic groups, and appropriate nonprofits in order to establish systems that will endure into the future.

**B. MEANINGFUL AND COST-EFFECTIVE ACTIVITIES** - The most effective activities for programs bringing together youths and elders are those that allow a certain amount of 'wiggle room' for participants to choose activities and methods of communication that reflect their individual personalities, while providing enough structure that participants feel secure in their roles. Planned activities -- such as providing service, mentoring, sharing knowledge, and enjoying recreation together -- need not be expensive or require elaborate infrastructure in order to set the stage for meaningful exchange to occur between the generations.

**C. EDUCATION AND TRAINING** - For intergenerational programs to work both in the practical arena of human resource exchange and toward the broader goal of improving understanding between different age groups, participants must identify and overcome barriers, acquire sensitivity about the personal issues at different life stages, and develop communication skills.

**D. RECRUITMENT** - Finding people to become involved in intergenerational programming requires effective outreach for participants with a clear statement of the ideological and practical benefits of making a commitment.

**E. FEEDBACK FOR PARTICIPANTS** - Formal acknowledgment and less formal dialogue sessions can encourage participants to recognize the often subtle ways in which their efforts are helping others, providing motivation to continue this work in other forms into the future, and help them articulate their experiences to others.

**F. SENSITIVITY TO PARTICIPANTS/ADAPTING TO GEOGRAPHIC AREAS** - Programs begin with planned schedules and activities, but different individuals often end up with unanticipated limits or needs that must be addressed for the momentum to continue. Similarly, different areas present different problems and opportunities that often are unknown in the beginning but require response for a healthy evolution of the program unique to its geographic location.

**G. COMMUNITY OUTREACH/PUBLICITY** - To affect social change, intergenerational programs must look beyond the activities of their program to the impact they may have - inspiring others to do the same, encouraging more funding, and gaining political support for schools and community groups to look for innovative ways to continue the work of bringing generations together.

**H. EVALUATIONS** - Finding ways to measure and report the progress of something as subtle as human connection is a challenge, but one that is critical toward fine-tuning program methods and proving the ultimate value of continuing the work.

## **A. NETWORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS**

*"With assistance from local organizations, we invented both short-term and long-term service projects on which students and seniors could work together."* BTAGP

Both BTAGP and MILTP set out in partnership with other organizations to facilitate their work, and networks grew as the programs developed. More agencies became involved and the relationships deepened to the point where some agencies planned to continue intergenerational programming on their own.

In the beginning, BTAGP and MILTP connected with programs providing services to locate frail elderly in need of help and with senior volunteer organizations to locate healthy, active seniors as support and role models for youth. BTAGP was already affiliated with the Area I Agency on Aging and thus had access to the staff resources, client information base, and education facilities of a program already providing services to needy seniors. To find seniors as mentors to youths providing service, the project coordinator also contacted the S.H.A.R.E. (Seniors in Humboldt as Resources in Education) Program to recruit seniors; they had great success, yielding far higher numbers of participants than expected. Similarly, MILTP worked with the City of Oakland's Department on Aging Senior Companion Program to locate seniors in need, and contacted the United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County to recruit active senior volunteers as guides for youth, with less success than expected.

Such partnerships could be arranged in most communities by contacting agencies that provide services to frail elderly and finding the volunteer centers that attract service-minded, active seniors apt to welcome an opportunity to work with youths. Both BTAGP and MILTP enlisted the partnership agencies in training and in ongoing involvement with their programs as advisors and evaluators.

Coordination with schools also was critical for recruiting and training students, and for bringing the practice of intergenerational programming into the education system. Helping to activate the networks, the programs established advisory councils composed of educators, volunteers, and civic leaders. Both involved the chiefs of local police agencies, school officials, and representatives from key senior organizations on committees involved with designing recruitment and training programs. Project leaders reported enthusiastic support from community groups, but noted the need for continued outreach and thoughtful scheduling to maintain momentum.

The importance of these partnerships became clear not only from the successes but from the occasional failures. For example, MILTP found one of its programs, the

Intergenerational Summer Day Camp, was seriously compromised because of staff changes at United Seniors, the agency that was to recruit senior mentors.

## **B. MEANINGFUL AND COST-EFFECTIVE ACTIVITIES**

*“A few supervisors reported that the program had helped them see their work and role differently. One who had always planned highly structured activities learned she could simply let interactions between students and seniors unfold as they could come to an easy consensus without any kind of forced plan. Another said that the students brought a whole different level of creativity and energy to planning and participating in activities.”* MILTP

Choosing appropriate activities bringing youths and elders together is arguably the most critical element in intergenerational programming. Connection between the generations occurs in a meaningful way -- rather than through perfunctory talk and going through the motions -- when youths and elders bring their own unique experiences into their exchange. This gives them an opportunity to explore and develop points of connection. They can truly *see* one another and share something important of themselves. Obviously, these 'magical moments' (and we'll explore these in depth in Section IV of this report) cannot be brought about by anyone besides the participants. But both BTAGP and MILTP found ways to structure activities in such a way as to maximize the potential for these meaningful exchanges to occur.

One common element among the most successful of the activities was creativity -- the meaningful exchanges were more inclined to happen when there was enough latitude in the structure so that youths and elders could contribute in their individual ways. Prescribed activity had to be modified in such a way that they drew on their particular abilities or experiences. Success also came from endeavors where everyone was involved in recreational activity, working together on plans to help others, or when serious goal-oriented activities offered obvious and clear benefit to one group or the other.

On the other hand, ironically, activities that did not turn out to be as successful as anticipated sometimes were those that required the most infrastructure, cost, and arranging, such as setting up camps and formal mentor relationships. Interestingly, the more straightforward and 'simple' activities -- taking place within existing structures -- seemed to work best as a backdrop for elaborate and intricate relationships to develop.

The following are examples of some of the activities choreographed by the programs funded under the Archstone initiative. These shed some light on how to structure and facilitate intergenerational relationships, as well as the pitfalls to avoid.

***Philanthropic Work*** - Responding to needs within the community gives teens and elders an opportunity to work together toward a common goal. This was the impetus for both MILTP and BTAGP to put volunteer students and active seniors together for many community-oriented charitable works.

One stellar example comes from BTAGP's response to a need discovered in the course of setting up programs in Humboldt County. In conversations with one school official, a placement coordinator discovered that many poor students in a community

school did not get enough to eat and their school did not qualify for subsidized meals because of its hours of operation. Student participants in BTAGP coordinated with a teacher at the school and adult volunteers from the community to create a fund-raiser - building "bat houses." In their rural area, bats are valuable for farms and gardens because they eat insects. This fund-raiser enabled students to acquire skills and to learn some biology (studying about bats) in the process. The bat houses were sold for \$25 apiece, with the money going to purchase food for needy students. The enthusiasm behind this project grew out of the participants' up-close view of the need (among children in their midst) and the type of project, involving both kinetic activity and scholarly learning.

Other philanthropic activities that brought people of different ages together with a shared goal included the one-time-only events such as BTAGP's canned food drives, a creek clean-up, and bulk mailings to aid nonprofit organizations. Students also volunteered at thrift shops, libraries, and senior centers.

Again, the most success was reported in connection with activities where people brought in some of their own creativity. Most notably was a Christmas project in which BTAGP participants created toy ducks and planes, toolboxes, food packages, hair ties and baked cookies for the needy. They chose their offerings based on their skills and interests.

***Volunteering with frail elderly*** - The types of assistance that youth, in conjunction with senior volunteers, provided to frail elderly in their homes or institutions included: helping with light exercise, conducting games such as BINGO, taking them on walks inside and outside their facilities, shopping and running errands, assisting them with English as a Second Language, reading to them, helping them study for citizenship tests, and just sitting together for visits.

One fun and successful innovation by the MILTP program was the "Nail Salon" which proved to be pleasurable for everyone. The youths enjoyed doing the manicures, the elders liked getting their nails done, and the sitting-across-from-each-other arrangement was good for conversation. This was a simple activity to arrange -- and one with ostensibly simple goals -- but one that provided an opportunity for comforting exchange.

An element of communication discovered to be critical, especially with mentally-diminished elders, was touch such as hand and shoulder massages. A challenge for the students was learning how to offer comforting physical contact in a non-intrusive way. They could do this during the course of walking (arm-in-arm) or talking (hand-holding), and of course such activities as doing nails or shampooing hair provide natural opportunities for touch.

Both MILTP and BTAGP put students and volunteer seniors together for visiting the frail, but some difficulties were discovered in scheduling. In private interviews, the staff of MILTP learned that although the senior companions enjoyed the enthusiasm and warmth of the youths, arranging schedules proved difficult at times because coordinating with youths compromised their flexibility. Commitment on the part of senior volunteers to intergenerational program must be high in order for them to go to the extra trouble for accommodating youths in their schedule. They must be convinced that it is worth the inconvenience to receive help from youths. Establishing high motivation at the outset is necessary to maintain momentum.

In situations where active elders had the time and enthusiasm for the programs, they were able to help youths with innovative offerings for frail elders. Through BTAGP, a master gardener taught students how to choose plants and build window boxes as gifts for elders in a care home.

A cautionary note came from MILTP: some homebound seniors were wary of having student volunteers visit their homes. Such fears can prove awkward for administrators, who must finesse situations in order not to hurt teenagers' feelings. These fears clearly must be honored and perhaps worked through.

***Mentoring relationships*** - The explicit goal of having people from one generation guide the next seemed to work best when clear activities were outlined, such as students helping elders study for ESL classes or citizenship tests, or elders telling their experiences for student history projects. Of course, no one can *arrange* for the kind of personal chemistry that makes these relationships work. The most effective activities were those with another stated goal in which the mentoring function could emerge. Both BTAGP and MILTP arranged for mentoring of youths by seniors and by other youths.

While being mentored themselves by elders, leadership trainees in the MILTP program were able to pass on those skills by offering training and supervision to other youths who joined the program. Through BTAGP, youth-to-youth mentoring was accomplished by training high school students to help elementary-age students with their studies through a local Homework Club.

Formal presentations also were used to help youths truly *listen* to the experiences of elders. For example, BTAGP arranged for 'resource speakers' to come speak to youths. One talked about growing up in Hitler's Germany before and after World War II. From this emerged both historical and ethical lessons as the students tried to picture how they would respond and make decisions if called upon to help people who were victims of persecution.

In some cases, youths and elders were matched according to interests and abilities, leading to successful partnerships. One example was BTAGP's matching of a retired theater arts professor and set designer with an aspiring young artist; the two collaborated on a mural program.

***Summer day camp*** - A social experiment by MILTP setting up a summer camp for youths and elders unfolded with mixed results. Three-week sessions were arranged at a regional park where a racially- and culturally-mixed group of youths and elders got together for intergenerational games, skits, arts and crafts, nature hikes, boating, kite-flying, sports, carnival games, and outings.

Although post-camp evaluations indicated the participants enjoyed and learned from these activities, there was a decline in participation from year to year (due in part to year-round school scheduling and competing activities during the second year of the program). MILTP received impressive support from the City of Oakland's Recreation Department, YMCA, and Department of Aging, as well as from other agencies, parents and individuals. However, it was clear that the program could not be self-supporting or self-sustaining, and required a great deal of administrative and supervision time by the staff.

## C. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

*"(In the second year of the program) site supervisors said they agreed to participate again because of the success of the first year and their confidence that the students were well screened and trained in aging issues." MILTP*

Because participants in intergenerational programs often begin with stereotyped views of those on the other end of the age spectrum - and the challenges at different phases of human development often are unknown (or not remembered) - intergenerational programming depends on the preparation and teaching of participants. Both programs discovered the value not only of information, but also of opportunities to practice new communication skills before transitioning into new situations. They also became increasingly aware of the youths' needs for ongoing training, along with opportunities to de-brief and talk about the feelings and concerns that surfaced during their interactions with elders throughout their period of participation.

Some of the features of education and training under the Archstone initiative included:

**Peer training** - MILTP paid selected high school students to undergo extensive education and training so that they could pass their knowledge on to other youths participating in the program. This approach was successful, with the note that school site-based training sessions tend to be more effective for team-building than larger sessions at a central site. The MILTP organizers underscored the need for regularly scheduled meetings among peers to discuss death and dying and other emotional aspects of working with elderly.

**On-site training** - For many of their service activities, students received training at the site by the supervisors of agencies where they were working. This put agency supervisors in the role of trainers with mixed results. Some supervisors noted they found themselves playing a 'mother role' to students, becoming involved in the complexities of the students' lives. The trade-off was the energy and enthusiasm contributed by the youthful participants.

Training varied from site to site, depending on the needs of the facility. MILTP noted that training received at more than one site appeared to be valuable to students. The larger sites that provided a task-list with daily assignments found that students benefited from having a clear idea about their roles and responsibilities.

MILTP also noted that training sometimes did not prepare students well enough for making the transition into the workplace and suggested future emphasis on question-and-answer sessions, printed educational materials, and the same participation in orientation sessions as regularly-paid employees. Also at times, students failed to attend all the field trips; as a result they later reported a lack of preparation for their work, particularly in new and challenging situations such as working with Alzheimer's patients.

**Professional trainers** - Instructors brought in to assist MILTP with training students included a gerontologist and psychologist. These professionals could advise students about how to cope with death and dying issues, including their own grief. In an ideal situation, the professionals could take an active role in organizing and/or facilitating regularly-scheduled peer meetings. MILTP also noted the need for bringing in professionals to teach students how to manage their feelings. Learning how to

appropriately detach was important so youths did not end up feeling personally responsible, guilty or anxious about the plight of others.

***Coordination with school teachers and counselors*** - Programs were strengthened by the active involvement of teachers and counselors. With school support, student participants in intergenerational programs can integrate their community work with their school work. Counselors can play a vital role in helping students translate their work into career objectives, and can be available to assist with some of the emotional issues that may emerge from association with elders.

***Community involvement in curriculum*** - Both programs brought in representatives of different aspects of the community to assist with developing a curriculum and to participate in the training. In training students leaders for the MILTP program, for example, organizers brought in representatives from the Oakland Unified School District, the Oakland Police Department, the United Seniors of Oakland, and the City of Oakland's Aging, Health and Human Services Department. Together they developed a 30-hour curriculum that included the following topics:

- Aging and the Aging Process
- Developing Leadership Skills
- Racial and Intergenerational Conflict Resolution
- Building Safer, Healthier and Cleaner Neighborhoods through Youth/Elder Partnerships.

In addition they developed two four-hour workshops on multi-culturalism and ethnicity issues.

***Ethnic/cultural training*** - In areas with a diverse ethnic and cultural population, education about general issues should be combined with education about different ethnic groups. In the rich cultural mixture of Oakland's San Antonio neighborhood, MILTP's organizers watched the unfolding of greater understanding between ethnic groups. Although multi-culturalism was part of the leadership training program, in retrospect, organizers thought they should have maintained an ongoing educational emphasis for all participants on cultural practices and ideas. This would provide additional benefit for youths learning to live in a diverse society and elders (predominantly white) gaining tolerance toward different ethnic groups.

#### **D. RECRUITMENT**

*"Nearly half of the students in the program had grandparents who were living in another country and several of them had never seen their grandparents (who were living in Vietnam and China). Even some of those who had regular contact with older relatives thought the program might help them to understand their grandparents more." MILTP*

Involvement of schools and community groups is critical to recruiting efforts. It is a challenge for intergenerational programming to disseminate the information and incentives in such a way as to attract committed volunteers and participants. Both programs both appealed to the desire of people to establish intergenerational relationships. Both used flyers and notices and developed the following techniques for recruitment:

**High schools** - Both programs created partnerships with local high school officials who helped identify potential participants and who supported outreach efforts. For example, in Humboldt County, BTAGP experienced success in recruiting students by staffing an information table at high school events, making classroom presentations, and inserting flyers about the program into copies of the school newsletter. BTAGP also worked closely with student clubs (including the Interact Club and Key Club) to coordinate community events and inspire more interest among students in the process. Social studies classes were targeted for recruitment because, as a required course, they represent a cross-section of students

MILTP hosted breakfasts at high schools in Fremont and Oakland and made presentations in 50 classrooms during its second year, resulting in 108 applicants for the leadership training program. This compared to only 17 applicants the previous year with less extensive recruitment activities. Students were selected for leadership roles based on an essay question, recommendation by teachers, and parental approval.

**Financial incentives** - MILTP experienced success with its offer of a minimum-wage-scale stipend to youthful participants. For many of them, it was their first paying job and brought welcome income along with a sense of adult seriousness about the task.

**Community groups** - Networking with existing service groups -- philanthropic organizations and volunteer organizations -- proved successful for both programs. MILTP organizers felt they had better recruitment success from establishing a greater number of such alliances, including church groups and service-oriented nonprofits. BTAGP enjoyed a close working relationship with active senior service organizations whose members often were early retirees with motivation for sharing their energy and talents and who were able to demonstrate for youths the vitality of elders.

**Motivation** - A clear statement of the potential benefits of intergenerational programs will appeal to the idealism of people -- their hope for a better world for themselves and the future. MILTP reported that while some of the students said they were motivated by work experience, community service hours for school or volunteer work for college scholarships, most responded to the ideal behind the program. Most expressed the desire to establish contact with elders to make up for a current lack of connection with grandparents or other seniors.

## **E. FEEDBACK FOR PARTICIPANTS**

*"Working in an environment where their compassion and caring were fully appreciated, many students came to recognize and appreciate their own altruism, their generosity, and their humanity."* MILTP

The financial incentive provided one form of return for participants. A second kind of feedback came from public recognition events. Conversations and evaluations in which youths and elders shared their experiences also provided an opportunity for more subtle feedback. They expressed great satisfaction at being able to share their experiences and lessons.

Formal recognition events included parties and public forums, including one event in Oakland where the mayor spoke. All participants received certificates of

appreciation and were honored for their individual contributions. In addition, college scholarships were given to students on the basis of their essays and experiences in the Oakland program (money for the scholarships came from fund-raising efforts). In the Humboldt program, recognition luncheons were held.

Because civic service was the main incentive for most participants, project leaders found that participants were gratified by opportunities to meet in a less formal environment where they could share and reflect upon their experiences. This occurred in the process of interviews and evaluations, when people talked about their breakthroughs in communication and personal perspective.

Leaders came to realize the value of journal-keeping and other permanent records as ways for individuals to acknowledge their own contributions. It gave them a tangible way of sharing their experiences with others.

## **F. SENSITIVITY TO PARTICIPANTS/ADAPTING TO GEOGRAPHIC AREA**

*"There should be an equitable distribution of responsibility and control among the sponsoring organizations, the sites, the seniors, and the students." MILTP*

One of the administrative challenges in intergenerational programming is allowing latitude for change as feedback comes in from participating individuals and agencies. Different areas are likely to produce different unanticipated needs and issues, and programs must adapt. Having a forum for representatives from all segments of the program to periodically contribute feedback is helpful for identifying problems and possibilities that may not have been recognized in the beginning.

For example, in Oakland, MILTP found that many students were happier participating in activities during the summer months, on weekends or early afternoon because they feared being out on the streets at night. Similarly, there was the problem mentioned earlier in this report of some seniors fearing home visits from teens. Adjustments to schedules and plans and meeting places were made to accommodate these issues.

Expecting the unexpected also opens up valuable opportunities. For example, while MILTP certainly anticipated the social value of bringing a diverse ethnic group of students into a mutually safe and supportive environment with seniors; however, organizers had not predicted the value of participating teens bonding with one another in situations where they could learn about and appreciate their cultural differences. Receptive once this possibility emerged, organizers expanded their program to include forums for teens to talk about and experience the food and customs from one another's cultures.

## **G. COMMUNITY OUTREACH/PUBLICITY**

*"As (grant-funded intergenerational) programs are out front, they can be most effective in generating enthusiasm and helping others who may be too hesitant to risk new programs."*

MILTP

Community outreach naturally occurs during the course of intergenerational programs that involve many different agencies, schools, and individuals. But special efforts are needed to carry the ideas into the future and out into the broader community.

For MILTP, community outreach was one of the four major program components. With the Key Community Leadership Training Program designed to bring business, church, health care, education and civic leaders together, ways were explored in which intergenerational issues could be addressed in the broader community. This was considered by evaluators to be the least effective aspect of the program because the goals were not clearly defined at the outset. Attendance was a problem at the community workshops. The first session drew 20 people and the second drew only six (out of 25 who had said they would attend). These were all-day workshops with lively participation and good exchange among participants who came away with new ideas about the politics of implementing intergenerational programs. However, no specific goal was articulated in the process.

Both programs seemed to experience greater success with the outreach that occurred within the context of the primary activities: visiting schools during recruitment, working with agencies to train and use volunteers, and providing charitable community service. In the process, they brought intergenerational programming to the attention of others. These grassroots connections served to demonstrate rather than describe ("show don't tell") the benefits of making an effort to bring youths and elders together.

However, the effectiveness of formal outreach can be validated by interesting record-keeping (for example, journals, essays, photographs) that document the work. These can be shared with civic leaders, political bodies and funding agencies to enhance public support and awareness.

## H. EVALUATIONS

*"We wanted to measure changes in self-esteem and the mitigating of negative stereotypes when senior citizens and teenagers work together toward common purposes."*  
BTAGP

Two different types of evaluative tools were used by the two different programs funded under the Archstone initiative. BTAGP employed an elaborate, statistically-based rubric for analyzing attitude changes during the course of the program. Pre- and post-tests were given to all participants on both ends of the age spectrum. To maintain anonymity of respondents, the questionnaires were coded according to eye color, birth date and other variables.

Statements requiring a yes-or-no answer were used to determine seniors' attitudes toward teens. Some examples:

- *Teens are generally helpful to others*
- *Teens are honest*
- *Teens are polite to others*
- *Teens give as much as they receive*
- *Teens are learning about their community*

Examples of yes-or-no statements used to determine teens' attitudes toward seniors included:

- *Senior citizens have a lot to offer*
- *Seniors deal well with problems*
- *Seniors feel confident about what they know*
- *Seniors are flexible*
- *Seniors are still productive members of society*

Other types of questions were designed to elicit feedback on self-esteem and other feelings. The questions were weighted with various load factors for analysis. This tool resulted in the kind of clear, objective data that will add to the academic body of information in the field of intergenerational programs.

While BTAGP's evaluation was performed in-house, MILTP elected to contract with an outside, independent evaluator, the Center for Social Redesign. CSR is an Oakland-based nonprofit research, educational and counseling firm specializing in evaluating projects that are amenable to qualitative rather than quantitative techniques.

The MILTP evaluation included observations, interviews, questionnaires and other techniques to produce anecdotal information and conclusions about what worked and what didn't. The results of this evaluation also produced observations that were helpful in summarizing and analyzing the activities. These are found in Section V of this report.

On balance, the qualitative approach by MILTP is more helpful in creating a program assessment for the benefit of other programs with similar goals and carrying the ideas to the public. BTAGP's more scientific approach - while complex and obtuse for the lay public - should find a place in the sociological literature, making a lasting contribution to the field of intergenerational programming.

Archstone was pleased that this funding initiative produced both types of evaluations, complimenting one another. Future programs might consider a combination of the two: (a) reporting observations and interview results and (b) documenting the findings from pre- and post-program questionnaires in a parlance that can be understood by the general public.

SECTION V  
RESULTS AND PLANS FOR CONTINUATION

*“Let me tell you about Jasmine and Mildred. One of Jasmine's interview questions for elders was ‘what was your first car?’ Mildred told her, ‘a 1927 Chevy Coupe.’ Jasmine said, ‘come sit with me at the computer.’ They sat down and Mildred said, ‘I've never touched a computer.’ Jasmine said, ‘I'll show you some things’ and she pulled up a search engine and found a 1927 Chevy Coupe. Up popped the picture and Mildred said, ‘Oh my God, that's my car!’ Here was this 84-year-old woman who'd never experienced technology and this young woman who never saw a car that old. It was a magical moment.”* BTAGP

*“We're doing more work with students to bring their social customs together, taking turns going to a Chinese restaurant and a soul food restaurant. The kids got together and had conversations with elders about food. We ended up publishing a cookbook.”* MILTP

*“One of our (meals on wheels) drivers, Noah, (a high school student) was seriously hurt in a single car accident late one night in January. There were no drugs or alcohol involved; this 16-year-old simply fell asleep at the wheel. After three weeks in a coma, he regained consciousness and worked with a rehabilitation therapist for a month. While in therapy, Noah heard that the meals on wheels participants were worried about him. On his very first day back to school, he insisted on riding along with his delivery partner, Chris, to visit the folks on his route and reassure them in person that he was okay.”* BTAGP

*“One young woman is working hard and fast on a computer, taking dictation from a resident in his late eighties who wants to chronicle his life history as a timber worker. This gentleman has been in a motorized wheelchair for many years because of a logging accident and he does not have sufficient manual dexterity to use a keyboard. However, he is intelligent and articulate and his young volunteer is enjoying the opportunity to help him write his life story.”* BTAGP

*“Many students commented on the sage advice they received from seniors, such as encouragement to stay in school and to go to college. Several received personal advice about problems at school and in their families. One student was able to improve her relationship with her mother because of the advice she received. Another changed his social circle and found new friends.”* MILTP

*“Learning about the realities of life for the elderly also impacted the way many of the students looked at their own aging. They thought about what they would be like when they were old, and became concerned about their future health, wondering who would care of them in their old age. Students became able to recognize their connection to elders by the simple fact that they might one day be in the same position.”* MILTP

*“As to future plans, over half (of the students) said they were interested in the helping professions such as social work, education, therapy, etc., and nearly half of those students said they were planning on working in the medical field as doctors, nurses and administrators. The majority of students said they planned on attending a four-year college at some point in the future.” MILTP*

*“One (supervisor) said that having the students there with the seniors was like taking a 'spiritual journey' because she saw that they were being exposed to the cycle of life and were learning to understand death and dying.” MILTP*

The above is a sampling of some anecdotes and experiences that bubbled up from the activities of the Archstone-sponsored programs. These 'magical moments' and windows for insight represent the hoped-for outcome of intergenerational programs: the authentic and meaningful exchange of the gift of humanity between the generations, leading to genuine learning and life-changing new perspectives. Such exchanges are the substance and *raison d'etre* of intergenerational programming. If lives are profoundly affected and society is transformed a bit in the process, success can be claimed. As Denise Fletcher of BTAGP said after relaying the Jasmine and Mildred story, "I realized that these moments are why we do what we do. We connect people."

Obviously, though, there is a need to report results in a more objective way than the difficult-to-quantify relating of personal experience. (Volumes could be filled with these, and we encourage programs to develop more methods of documenting these substantive experiences to create permanent records). Thus, we are pleased that the programs found ways of producing tangible evidence of results that offer more data-based arguments in favor of continuing support of intergenerational programs. Besides the anecdotal evidence, BTAGP and MILTP quantified their results through surveys, evaluations, and interviews along with evidence of their impact on the future. This enables them to continue the work beyond the immediate programs through other agencies and individuals.

## FINDINGS

The results of different types of analysis demonstrated a positive, measurable effect on the attitudes, confidence, decisions and future of teenagers in both programs. Likewise, active seniors involved in the programs demonstrated a rise in their opinions of teenagers. Many senior agencies were so pleased with the youthful influence on their programs for frail elders that they permanently adopted intergenerational programming. We'll take a closer look at these results and how they were determined.

BTAGP's rubric for evaluation concluded from pre- and post-program questionnaires that (1) teenagers felt better about themselves, (2) teenagers felt better about seniors, and (3) seniors felt better about teenagers as a result of participating in the program. The positive changes in attitude were incontrovertibly proven by the statistical analysis of the questionnaires, which utilized dozens of assessment-related questions.

In retrospect, evaluators felt that the questionnaires fell short of assessing improvement in seniors' attitudes about themselves because they failed to ask about education and socio-economic levels. This omission might have explained the lack of measurable change in seniors' confidence in themselves, because so many of BTAGP's

senior participants were well educated, financially comfortable and already had a high level of confidence (perhaps not representative of seniors in general).

Questionnaires -- though not nearly as elaborate in format -- also were used as one component by evaluators of the MILTP program, yielding similar results: the most clear effect on students of participation in intergenerational programming was a positive change in perception of seniors.

Most seniors in the MILTP program did not previously have regular contact with teenagers, and their questionnaires revealed that their perception of teens changed during the program. "Throughout the program, students continued to chip away at stereotypes in small but significant ways -- with their concern, their care and their respect," evaluators reported.

The MILTP evaluators also emerged with the following anecdotal observations:

- Fear of youth and negative stereotypes of youth (by seniors) were dispelled or mitigated.
- Elders were provided with companionship, which often reduced conditions of isolation and/or monotony.
- Elders experienced being held in regard, really listened to, and touched.
- Elders were provided with new opportunities for socializing with their peers.
- Elders had an array of pleasurable experiences which reinforced their self-worth.
- Supervisors (in care homes) were clearly enthusiastic about the program's many benefits and all of them said they would participate again.
- Students' presence helped release staff to do other work and in creating new activities.
- Students brought a more lively, social and caring atmosphere to facilities.
- The majority of students said they were more open and confident and felt more at ease in conversations with others.
- Students felt they were more patient, especially those who helped seniors with ESL homework.
- Students reported new perspectives on cultural differences and an appreciation of how the elderly are treated in different cultures. (Asians particularly learned to appreciate their culture's greater respect given to elders.)
- Students said they would participate in the program again and would recommend it to friends.
- Students gained more self-confidence and better work habits.
- Students felt *safe* in the work environment.
- Students learned from elders' history, experiences, and wisdom.

Both programs found an effect on families and on the larger community. MILTP's findings indicated that:

- ... students reported they were more respectful to their parents and grandparents;
- ... several students reported a greater awareness of how rude other teens were around seniors since they had modified their own behaviors;
- ... all of the students reported that they now wanted to do volunteer work and were interested in careers in the helping professions.

#### NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS

BTAGP far surpassed its goal of involving 1700 students and 100 seniors in the project. At the end of the three years, a total of 2044 students and 1165 seniors were involved (some in one-time-only events).

MILTP involved 254 students and 400 seniors in ongoing relationships that entailed thousands of visits.

#### CONTINUATION PLANS

Both BTAGP and MILTP plan to continue their programs into the future with modifications. These are based on lessons learned (see next section) during the three-year grant period that is the subject of this report. In addition, both noted that the programs have had a permanent effect on other agencies that, as a result of this program, have decided to integrate intergenerational components into their ongoing work. For example:

- One HUD facility manager in Oakland has encouraged colleagues to pursue intergenerational programming;
- The Director of Life Enrichment Services for Oakland has included a section on intergenerational programming;
- Explorer Scouts in Humboldt County are continuing to work with Senior Citizens on Patrol through the Fortuna Police Department;
- Students are continuing to work with Humboldt Home Health Services;
- An ongoing intergenerational committee is working to build an infrastructure that will better connect youth with the community;
- Youth continue volunteering with the Southern Humboldt Meals-On-Wheels Program;
- High school volunteers are continuing to work in skilled nursing facilities in Humboldt County;
- Students are continuing to volunteer at thrift shops, libraries and a senior center;
- Holiday Volunteer Connections will continue as a guide for young people and other community members who want to participate in volunteer opportunities during the holidays.

*"It is the unanimous position of the (Volunteer Center of the Redwoods) Advisory Council that adding youth members to our ranks is the single most important thing we have done."*

Denise Fletcher, BTAGP

## SECTION VI LESSONS LEARNED AND CONCLUSIONS

It is our hope that the experiences and reflections by BTAGP and MILTP will transfer into program ideas for future projects. The following is a distillation of some of the most salient take-home messages from the Archstone initiative:

- Existing agencies, centers and facilities that serve seniors can integrate youths into their daily activities to the enormous benefit of staff and participants; however, they need start-up guidance in training, educating, and scheduling students in order to make intergenerational contact a permanent part of their program.
- Successful intergenerational programs must have clear goals, but must also have the flexibility to respond to the unique challenges and opportunities in different geographic areas and individuals involved.
- Education and training should be ongoing, with regular facilitated peer group meetings, so participants can ask questions as they arise, work through feelings and experiences, and enjoy feedback for their good work.
- Often the most simple activities provide the best opportunities for meaningful exchange between the generations. Participants should be encouraged to realize that it is not *what* you do but *how* you do things together that makes for genuine communication and sharing.
- Training in communication should include role-playing and attention to subtleties such as nonverbal communication, touch, active listening, and opening a dialogue instead of simply asking and getting answers to prepared questions.
- The fears and prejudices between generations should be discussed honestly so that attitudes do not interfere with activities and mutual understanding can emerge.
- Program components that require elaborate infrastructure, cost, administrative attention and transportation may not be the best use of resources when it is possible to operate in pre-existing settings.
- Recruitment is made easier when programs have a simple, memorable name and brief description that can be passed via word-of-mouth, flyers and presentations.
- Incentives for participation - not just the practical incentives (such as stipends, school credit and volunteer hours for college admission) but also those that appeal to idealism, should be made clear from the outset. Students, parents, elders, and agencies respond to the quest for a better society where more respect/cooperation/teaching/friendship connects people of different generations.
- Attention to scheduling and transportation issues cannot be overemphasized in programs dealing with youths and the elderly who often do not have cars, rely on public transportation, and may be fearful of being out after dark.
- Ongoing administration of programs should include regular meetings with representatives of all the groups involved -- each agency, students, elders,

and supervisors. It is important to exchange insights and plans, to maintain momentum and flexibility.

- Activities should be chosen for their potential to elicit involvement, allowing participants to tweak the process so that their skills, interest, experience and sense of fun all come into play.
- Community outreach works best on a grass-roots level, with participants returning to their schools and agencies with their experiences. Participants should be encouraged to 'spread the word' by going to their local newspapers, making speeches to service clubs, and presenting at public forums.
- Careful coordination with school teachers and counselors can maximize the social benefits of intergenerational programming by encouraging students to incorporate lessons into their academic work, career plans, and personal lives.

## CONCLUSIONS

The projects supported by Archstone under the “Bridging the Age Gap” funding initiative produced clear evidence of the social value of intergenerational programs along with substantive ideas about the components necessary for success. We now have data from both the inner city and countryside that can be used by agencies and organizations seeking to bring youths and elders together in rural or urban areas.

The different and complimentary approaches of these two grantees together demonstrate the potential for mobilizing youths, enlisting community support, and mainstreaming elders in the quest for a more peaceful, cohesive society in which the generations work side-by-side with companionable respect. Their experiences and reflections provide a blueprint for other nonprofits, along with schools, businesses, government agencies and community groups, to establish and maintain similar intergenerational programs in the future.

BRIDGING THE AGE GAP  
Promoting Mutual Health Benefits For the Young and Old  
Through Intergenerational Community Programs  
*A report on a Funding Initiative Sponsored by the Archstone Foundation*

Appendix I  
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