



Intergenerational Activities

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1.0 Introduction

Social contacts and engagements that unite younger and older generations towards a shared goal are intergenerational activities. They combat ageism, foster understanding and respect for one another, and build on the positive aspects that each generation has to contribute. Both sides give, receive, and experience a sense of accomplishment and ownership (St Monica Trust, 2018).

There are several activities to promote intergenerational bonding, and these are implemented mainly by various retirement homes. Precedence is drawn from several intergenerational activities implemented by various retirement homes such as Sunrise Senior's Living, StoryPoint Senior's Living and others. However, Sunrise Senior Living's Live with Legacy project integrates most of the intergenerational activities implemented by other homes. It simplifies intergenerational activities that can be replicated in other places, either city or rural.

2.0 Live With Legacy Project

Live with Legacy is a program that offers seniors the opportunity to share their wisdom and knowledge with the generations, which then gives the generations the chance to share the acquired knowledge. The program has several activities that ensure interactions with older adults and the younger generations. The activities include anything from one or two students interacting with a resident/senior to a small classroom with the preschool and the older adults singing together and residents reading to the students. It comprises various activities such as reading together, day trips/days outside, gardening, etc (Sunrise Senior Living, 2017). These activities provide the avenue for older adults to share their rich tapestry of experience with the young generation, and it goes beyond just sharing experiences to passing down cultural value to the younger generation.



Photo Credit: Visiting Angels

Figure 1: Reading Section with resident

2.1 Read Together

Taking turns reading a book tops the list of intergenerational activities for seniors and youth because it is a low-cost, low-energy activity that is great for the whole family. Reading provides a stable, safe, loving and fun environment for grandkids and grandparents to have fun together. Reading a bedtime story is



Figure 2: Bonding in Nature



Figure 3: A day out to bond

a great way to instill a love of reading in children at a young age. This could be taken a step further for older adults living in retirement homes; the local senior services center partners with the preschools to have sessions ranging from having seniors and kids in a room interacting to having one-on-one readings with seniors.

2.2 Day Trips/Day outside

Families disconnecting themselves from the screens and taking a trip provides a strong foundation for staying active and strengthening interaction between grandparents and grandkids through the sense of wonder that such trips bring. These trips do not necessarily have to be outside or far; it can be bird watching in the backyard or strolling along the nature trails at a nearby park; the great outdoors easily lends itself to bonding. Other low-impact physical outdoor activities, such as arts and crafts, allow several generations to enjoy time together. These can include making jewelry, bird housing, painting letters and alphabets; these provide endless possibilities for intergenerational bonding. As shown in [figure 2&3](#), these are all activities that individual homes and senior homes can do.

2.3 Gardening

Gardening together allows families to spend quality time outdoors, forming long-lasting bonds between grandparents and children. The younger/grandkids are assigned roles such as watering and maintaining the garden (Story Point Group, 2023). As depicted in [figure 4](#), gardening an activities for knowledge sharing and happy moments in families and homes. The garden allows children to interact with older adults by executing their shared responsibility to maintain the garden. This is to say, the family spending time in gardening builds stronger relationships, enabling the older adult to pass on cultural values and their experience to the next generation, whose duty will relay such knowledge to the next generation (Olsen, 2012).



Figure 4: Family Gardening

3.0 Suggested Resources

Planning intergenerational activities does not have to be complicated; it can range from simple reading, painting, and singing to just having a walk between the two generations. The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) in Singapore, through



Figure 5: Preschool
Engaging with Seniors



Figure 6: Bonding with Art & Craft

their AIC Wellness Programme, has developed several toolkits that enhance intergenerational bonding. This aligns with their aim of creating vibrant care homes for Singaporeans to live well and age gracefully. The AIC has developed several toolkits such as the;

- 1) Joyfully Engaged Toolkit,
- 2) Fit and Fun Adaptative Sports Toolkit,
- 3) Arts, Ageing and Wellbeing Toolkit, and
- 4) Befriending Seniors: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Intergenerational Ties.



Figure 7: Bonding through painting

Families and retirement homes can utilize these toolkits to foster bonding between children, youth and older adults (AIC & Community Chest, 2021).

4.0 Final Thoughts

Beyond the goal of transmitting knowledge to the younger generation, intergenerational activities contribute to improving seniors' well-being. Encouraging bonds across the generations offers benefits to everyone involved. These generational activities help to;

- 1) stimulate the mind by improving cognitive brain functions,
- 2) Improve communication skills
- 3) Improve attention span and memory skills.

These activities enhance emotional well-being and social engagement, which often evoke a strong sense of family, belonging and a renewed interest in life. The younger generations also benefit from friendship with older adults in various ways. Intergenerational interactions give the children and the youth the chance to make friends with older adults or develop a close bond with family elders, which enables them to build healthy attitudes about ageing. Instead of fearing growing older, children and teens see it as the joyous time in life it can be.

Sources:

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