

The Friendship Quilt

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The Atrium Health Care Center at The Village at Penn State has been working with the Youth Service Bureau's Big Brother Big Sister Program to build relationships with children and seniors. The program seeks to place caring adults in ongoing relationships with children between the ages of five to seventeen throughout Centre County. The intergenerational programs that these children have been involved in at the Health Care Center have been packed full of fun! With a focus on fostering friendship across the generations and caring for one another, both groups have had an extraordinary experience. The seniors and children made ice cream, played games, made holiday crafts and spent time outdoors together.

The latest activity was a friendship quilt. A bright array of colored pencils along with geometric patterns & designs were all that was needed to spark creativity for this fun intergenerational afternoon! There was increasing enthusiasm in the room as the colored pencils were passed back and forth across the generations. The interest for the project grew when the participants learned that the patterns they were coloring would be joined together to form a Friendship Quilt. Additional designs were completed in the weeks to follow by many excited residents, family, and staff. The designs were joined together with colorful ribbons and displayed for everyone to enjoy.



The Friendship Quilt
The Village at Penn State
Photo by Dana Davis

2008 Intergenerational Study Tours

The Pennsylvania State University in partnership with Travel & Learn LLC

Intergenerational study tours provide an intensive opportunity to learn about intergenerational programs and practices and become immersed in the cultural traditions in the host countries.

The Germany Study tour took place from June 1-7, 2008. To find out why many people call Germany "The Intergenerational Country," read the Final Report: <http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Docs/FinalReport.pdf>.

Two more tours are planned for 2008: Spain and Japan.

Spain: October 5-10, 2008. The itinerary in Spain includes Barcelona, Valencia, Murcia, and Granada. Organized by: Red Intergeneracional (Spain's intergenerational network), Viure i Conviure Foundation (Caixa Catalunya), La Nau Gran (University of Valencia's School of Grandparents), the University of Murcia, and Ofecum (Oferta Cultural de Universitarios Mayores). For more information, go to: <http://www.travellearnstudy.com/signupsp.asp>.

Japan: November 30-December 5, 2008. The itinerary in Japan includes: Tokyo, Kyoto, and Kuwana. For more information, go to: <http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Docs/JapanStudyTour2008.pdf>.

The Golden Opportunity Today's Grandparents

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Extension Educator, Clearfield County

Growing Stronger: Strength Training for Older Adults

To be truly fit at any age, one must do three types of physical activity:

- Aerobic – that increases heart rate and uses the large muscles of the body;
- Strength Training – that increases muscle size and strength; and
- Stretching – that keeps the body flexible.

Most people know a lot about aerobic exercise and many older adults regularly walk, swim, bike, and dance. The U. S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that adults do at least 5 or more days of moderate aerobic exercise a week for at least 30 minutes a day.

But you may know less about strength training and stretching. Strength training is probably the most important exercise for keeping you independent. Because it maintains or increases muscle mass, you are less likely to fall and will have more stamina and strength for chores like carrying groceries or playing with your grandchildren.



Strength training helps you to look trimmer even if you don't lose weight. Muscle weighs more than fat, but it looks firmer. You will love your new appearance because you will have better posture and your clothes will fit better.

Don't be surprised if you drop a few pounds. Muscle burns more calories than the same amount of fat, so you may lose weight if you don't overeat.

Strength training benefits you in many ways. It can:

- Reduce arthritis pain by increasing muscle strength around the joints;
- Improve blood glucose by helping the body use insulin better;
- Slow bone loss;
- Improve your balance to reduce your chances of falling;
- Lower your cholesterol and triglyceride levels;
- Relieve back pain; and
- Improve mental and emotional health.



Strength training requires little time and minimal equipment. And it's safe, even for adults with health problems. Many older adults enjoy strength training more than aerobic exercise because they do it only 2 – 3 times a week and they see the benefits very quickly.

Strength training works because it tears down some of the working muscle while you train. On the days you do not lift weights; your muscles repair themselves and get stronger. If you train the same muscles every day, your muscles will never have a chance to get stronger.

Strength training classes are offered by Penn State Extension in 40+ counties; and also by Cooperative Extension services in other states. Contact your local office to see about class availability. In Pennsylvania, a new series begins in the fall; so call today! You owe it to yourself to be as healthy and strong as possible! Information is also available at:



http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/print_friendly_pdf.htm

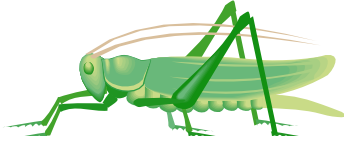
(Reference: Senior Sense, Vol. XVI, No. 2, Georgia Cooperative Extension)

Exploring Insects

The habits of insects are best observed if you can keep them alive in captivity. You and your grandchild can do this by creating an insect zoo.

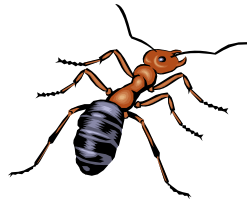
For grasshoppers:

Cut a circle of grass sod to fit the bottom of a 1 or 2 quart jar. Put a grasshopper in the jar and cover it with wire screening or a jar lid punched with holes. Water the grass when it becomes dry. The grass becomes food for the grasshopper.



For ants:

Use a large jar. Cover the lid with cheesecloth held with a rubber band. A layer of earth can go in the bottom. You will need to take enough ants from the hill for them to reproduce a colony in the jar.



Star Gazing

Some clear summer night, take a blanket, find an open field or lawn, lie down with your grandchild, and look at the stars. Vacation time is ideal because you will usually be away from the overwhelming lights of the city. It is a lot easier to go star gazing when the moon is not too bright and there are few clouds.



Your grandchild might enjoy getting a book from the library which gives stories about the stars and describes how to find some of the more easily located constellations. Can you see the Big Dipper? Can you see Sirius, the brightest star in the sky?

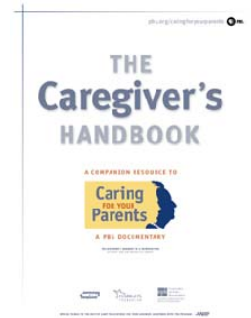
(Reference: Family Time, Summer, Ages 7 – 8, Penn State Extension)

INTERGENERATIONAL NEWS AND RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS

Focus on Family Caregiving

[The Caregiver's Handbook \(April 2008\)](#)

This report covers the issue of aging parents, tackling problems like funding, finances, and health care that revolve around caring for parents. The handbook encourages children to talk about technical, legal matters (i.e., wills, trusts, guardianship) with their parents in order to protect the children from difficult legal procedures after the parents' death.



(From *Policy Digest*, a newsletter of the Family Caregiver Alliance's National Center on Caregiving, February 6, 2008, Volume VIII, Number 3)

[Long-Distance Caregiving](#)

On January 31, 2008, *CNN* published an online story that highlights the challenges of long-distance caregiving. The article by Elizabeth Cohen, "Caring for Mom and Dad from afar," describes the experience of an adult daughter living in Washington, D.C. and, as an only child, making sure that her aging parents in Los Angeles had the support and care they needed. It describes the guilt many long-distance caregivers feel, and it provides tips for being an effective long-distance caregiver. For more information about strategies for long-distance caregiving, check out the Family Caregiver Alliance's "[Handbook for Long-Distance Caregivers.](#)"

Mrs. Rosalynn Carter recently wrote an editorial on the caregiving crisis for the *CDC* journal *Preventing Chronic Disease*. It has been published in the January 2008 edition and was posted online December 17, 2007. You can read the editorial [here](#).

[Caregiving is Expensive](#)

This link is to a study that looks at out-of-pocket costs of family caregivers on behalf of the person they are caring for, who is not their spouse.



Research

[Older People Want to Work In Retirement, Survey Finds \(April 24, 2008\)](#)

"The Golden Years are dead!" That's what Marc Freedman, head of the non-profit organization, Civic Ventures, says. He cites a new survey finding that older American adults want to be active when they retire. They hate being called 'elderly' and look for meaningful work or volunteer opportunities.

[Neighbouring and Older People: An Enfolding Community?](#)

This book reviews the ways in which older people receive social support in their neighborhoods. It offers a historical context to show how change has made neighboring more individualized and discretionary, while underlining the importance of ongoing informal contact for quality of life. The book is based on a review carried out on behalf of Age Concern England. The author draws attention to the extent to which people of different generations spend less and less time in each others' company. He raises significant questions for social policy, asking how we restore the sense of an 'enfolding' community that provides older people with both a sense of security and interdependence. [Click here](#) for further information.



(By Kevin Harris, Published by Community Development Foundation, May 2008, From the United Kingdom)

[Bringing Generations Together: Community Well-Being in West Lothian \(Scotland\): Lessons from MOOD](#)

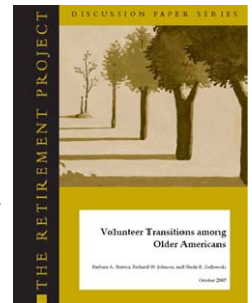
In 2004, the National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being provided two-year funding to support a range of Community Well-being Exemplar Projects. SDC was commissioned to provide practice development and evaluation for these projects. One of the projects, MOOD works with people who are over 55 who are at risk of developing depression and/or other mental health problems. This 2006 paper explores the intergenerational work of MOOD to identify its impact on community well-being in West Lothian. Nice report. [Download paper](#)



(Research reports noted in *Global Action on Aging*, Jan. 2, 2008)

[Generational Differences in Perceptions of Older Workers' Capabilities \(November 2007\)](#)

A significant portion of previous research reveals negative perceptions of older workers' capabilities. However, the situation might be changing now. More companies are gaining recognition as "older worker friendly" and more employers prefer older experts to younger ones. The study examines to what degree negative perceptions of older workers still exist at a workplace and identify whether these perceptions affect older workers' well-being and their attitudes toward the organization.



[Volunteer Transitions among Older Americans \(October 2007\)](#)

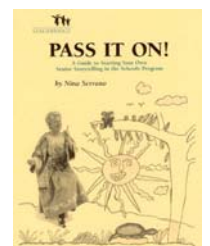
Do people continue to volunteer as they grow older? The report's participants include both volunteers and non-volunteers aged from 55 to 65. The researchers investigate: the dynamics of volunteerism as people age, issues influencing their decisions to continue or stop volunteer activities, and the effects of changes in family status, health or employment on their volunteer availability.

Resource Highlights

[Dorot's Friendly Visiting Plus](#) – This is a six-part set of materials for friendly visiting programs, with separate guides for children and teens engaged in friendly visiting with older adults, a seven-minute DVD, and a comprehensive how-to manual. Dorot is a social service agency in New York City that has many wonderful programs, several of which are intergenerational. [Click here](#) to get more details on the publication.

[PASS IT ON! A Guide to Starting Your Own Senior Storytelling in the Schools Program \(by Nina Serrano\)](#)

This 60-page guidebook (Spiral-bound: \$20) is from Stagebridge, an intergenerational arts organization in Oakland, CA. It provides a step-by-step practical guide for recruiting, training, and placing older adults as storytellers in local schools. To get a sense of this book's approach, visit [Pass It On! Introduction](#). [Click here to order](#).



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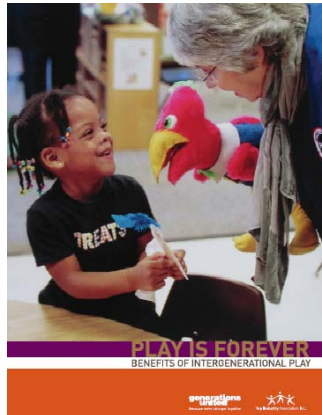
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[Play is Forever: Benefits of Intergenerational Play](#) – New fact sheet from Generations United. To learn about the benefits of intergenerational play, read suggested guidelines for play and discover toys that lend themselves naturally to intergenerational play, download the [new fact sheet](#) on the GU Web site. This fact sheet, developed by GU and the Toy Industry Association, Inc. will get you playing!

[Children From Broken Homes Should Not Have to Have to Lead Broken Lives!](#)

This is part of the mission statement for the National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights. See the rest of their mission statement and [learn more](#) about this organization at the following Web site.

Young Penn State University Alumnus Gives Back to Honor Grandfather

Many Penn State alumni, after years of establishing themselves in their careers and their lives, give back to help young students with their college costs. Benjamin Cordivano has given back, but with a difference. At age 24, he has endowed a student award, only two years after graduating from the University (in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education). Read the full story on Live: <http://live.psu.edu/story/33779/nw4>.

We're on the Web!

<http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu>

Price List & Order Form:

<http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Docs/CurrOrderForm.pdf>

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