



## Post-Event Summary Report

**Name of Event:** *Charting the Intergenerational Path*  
Generations United White House Conference on Aging Event

**Date of Event:** September 17, 2005

**Location of Event:** Washington Marriott Hotel, Washington, D.C.

**Number of Persons attending:** 50

**Sponsoring Organization:** Generations United

**Contact Name:** Donna M. Butts, Executive Director

**Telephone Number:** (202) 289-3979      **Email:** [dbutts@gu.org](mailto:dbutts@gu.org)

**Background:** Intergenerational program and policy experts, grandparents and other relatives raising children, professionals working with relative caregivers, and several White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) delegates convened at this event to explore and refine Generations United's (GU) six previously submitted resolutions for the WHCoA. The participants clarified the resolutions' language, and identified barriers and challenges for each issue. This report, which has been posted online for participants' review, renames the resolutions "priority issues" and lists them in order of importance.

GU staff organized its WHCoA event in order to complete the process of developing thoughtful and comprehensive resolutions for the WHCoA in December. This process began by sending out an email request for recommendations to GU's membership – which includes individuals and over 100 national, state, and local organizations representing children, youth, and older adults – and hosting an online chat to discuss the proposed ideas. GU staff then drafted the resolutions based on this member input. They were reviewed by GU's policy and program committees, composed of leaders from many of GU's organizational members -- including AARP, National Conference on the Aging, Children's Defense Fund, and Child Welfare League of America. The resolutions were distributed by email and posted on GU's website at [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org) for comments.

The last step in this process was the event itself. In order to stimulate discussion, GU staff prepared a short background paper for each resolution and compiled them in a booklet that was given to all participants. During the event, a panel of experts made short presentations for each recommendation, and powerful personal stories were told. Working groups then met to explore the resolutions in detail. The day concluded with remarks from Bob Blancato, a member of the WHCoA's policy committee. This report summarizes the results of GU's WHCoA event, *Charting the Intergenerational Path*.

**Priority Issue #1:**

**Encourage quality intergenerational shared site programs by promoting the development of new programs and supporting existing programs, such as co-located child and adult day cares, before and after school programs, long term care facilities, and shared housing.**

**Barriers:** Policy barriers currently inhibit the creation of additional shared sites, including issues related to:

- conflicting licensing regulations that make it difficult or impossible to have programs serving children and older adults in the same building,
- no accreditation standards for intergenerational shared sites and divergent standards when applying for accreditation for either adult or child aspects of the program,
- lack of a road map or central source of information about funding sources, including federal programs, that could be used in shared site programs, and
- public and private zoning regulations that restrict the operation of shared site programs.

**Proposed Solutions:** Government and private agencies can help address these barriers by:

- coordinating policy guidance and standards to resolve potential regulatory and accreditation conflicts
- sharing information through a database on shared site programs,
- sponsoring research on their long-term benefits,
- educating policymakers and the public about these programs, through promotional materials, media stories, and site visits,
- promoting more governmental involvement by training its staff and including specific intergenerational language in program initiatives, funding guidelines, and requests for proposals.

**Priority Issue #2:**

**Support grandparents and other relatives raising children by federally funding subsidized guardianship programs and making these programs available to all relative-headed families regardless of their status with the child welfare system, so relative caregivers can meet the needs of the children in their care without compromising their own health and financial security.**

**Barriers:** Funding is one of the most critical barriers to the creation of subsidized guardianship programs. While more than 35 states currently have programs, many are at risk due to state budget constraints. They need a steady source of federal funding to assure their stability. These programs provide required resources so caregivers can continue to raise their relative children outside of the foster care system and keep families together, without sacrificing their own well-being.

**Proposed Solutions:** There are various proposals for new ways to use existing federal funding sources for subsidized guardianship programs:

- The bipartisan Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, in its 2004 report, *Fostering the Future: Safety, Permanence and Well-Being for Children in Foster Care*, has recommended that federal guardianship assistance be provided to all children who leave foster care to live with a permanent legal guardian by allowing federal Title IV-E (of the Social Security Act) reimbursement for these programs.
- Pending federal legislation (S 985 and HB 3380) would allow all states to use Title IV-E funds to establish or expand subsidized guardianship programs.

### **Priority Issue #3:**

**Advance communities for all ages by engaging the contributions of each generation to meet community and workplace needs, such as intergenerational education, literacy, mentoring, housing, health and wellness, disaster prevention and preparedness, and Internet and technology skills.**

**Barriers:** Intergenerational programs are a fundamental component of advancing communities for all ages, and one of the major barriers to the creation of such programs is the lack of explicit intergenerational language in:

- public policies,
- program initiatives, and
- funding guidelines and requests for proposals.

**Proposed Solutions:** The inclusion of intergenerational language in public policies, program initiatives, funding guidelines, and requests for proposals will encourage people to think creatively about meeting community and workplace needs by collaborating with nontraditional partners to bring the generations together.

### **Priority Issue #4:**

**Develop and increase support for comprehensive services for grandparents and other relatives raising children, including information and referral, respite care, specialized housing, physical and mental health supports, and supplemental services. Many of these necessary services will reach additional relative caregivers by expanding the National Family Caregiver Support Program and/or developing federally funded kinship navigator programs.**

**Barriers:** Limitations within the law establishing the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) significantly restrict its potential impact:

- To be served, relative caregivers must be at least age 60, and U.S. Census Bureau data show that about 71 percent of these caregivers are under age 60.
- No more than 10 percent of the funds can be used to help relatives raising children, and states and Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are not required to use any of these funds to serve relative caregivers.

Kinship navigator programs currently only exist on a statewide basis in two states, and there is no federal financing to promote more of these programs.

**Proposed Solutions:**

In the federal law establishing the NFCSP:

- Lower the age restriction to age 55, and proportionally increase funding for the program. This age restriction currently exists in other parts of the Older American Act. By lowering the age five years, nearly an additional 20 percent of relative caregivers can be served.
- Require that 10 percent of the funds be used for grandparents and other relatives raising children.

Federally finance kinship navigator programs by enacting federal legislation (S 985 and HB3380) that would support this initiative.

**Priority Issue #5:**

**Promote civic engagement of baby boomers and older adults through intergenerational service by expanding existing volunteer and service programs and creating new opportunities.**

**Barrier:** Many aging and children’s organizations work independently and fail to collaborate and pool resources to create new opportunities for baby boomers and older adults to be civically engaged either with young people or in support of young people.

**Proposed Solutions:** There are various ways to address this barrier and engage the growing numbers of baby boomers and older adults in intergenerational community service including:

- reauthorize the Corporation for National and Community Service, and raise the income threshold and lower the age requirement for the Foster Grandparent Program to make additional older adult volunteers eligible for the program,
- educate AAAs and the public about opportunities available through the Older Americans Act for intergenerational civic engagement,
- promote innovative intergenerational service opportunities like Family Friends and Experience Corps, and

- include intergenerational examples and language in funding guidelines and requests for proposals.

**Priority Issue #6:**

**Maintain a strong and solvent Social Security system that continues to meet its obligations for current and future beneficiaries, including the more than 30 percent who are under 65 and receive disability and/or survivor benefits.**

**Barriers:** Most of the Social Security debate has been focused on retiree benefits, without much attention being paid to the impact of reform across all vulnerable groups and generations.

**Proposed Solutions:** Reframe the debate to include children, youth, families, and people with disabilities, as well as older adults. In strengthening Social Security, it is essential to consider the needs of all ages and the one in four U.S. households that participate in the program and depend on its benefits. In addition to functioning as an important part of an individual's retirement plan, Social Security serves as a family insurance program, providing quick response in times of disaster at both the personal level, and on a national scale.