

ICIP NEWSLETTER



International Consortium
for Intergenerational
Programmes

June 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the Chair Page 2

Young and older activists join forces in the US Page 3

News from San Francisco Page 5

School Grandparent project in Norway Page 6

The Macklin Intergenerational Institute Page 7

Intergenerational Work in Wales Page 8

Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderrly Page 9

UK Older Peoples Day Page 10

JIR & Dancing in Melbourne Page 11

An American Werewolf In London Page 13

News from Botswana Page 14

University of Pittsburgh Online course Page 15

From the Editor

A key element of intergenerational exchange is good communication. As a project manager I am constantly brokering conversations and negotiations between people of different generations and experiences. This includes not just young and older people who participate, but professionals who work with them, in schools, care homes or community centres. I meet people who speak completely different languages, sometimes known as jargon, and operate from diverse training, concepts and points of view. Good communication is essential to start a programme, and it is also one of the most useful outcomes, enabling everyone involved to express their own position more clearly, and to recognise that others hold different, and equally valid, points of view.

The issue for ICIP is how to communicate with members world wide, and how to manage our business when our Management Committee are spread around the globe. A recent Management Committee meeting was conducted over two weeks by email to give everyone time to comment on, and debate the agenda. As the earth moved round the sun, different members came in and out of the discussion and we realised that we are never all awake at the same time!

Our meeting was very productive, but I missed the handshakes and the cups of tea, the catching up with people before and after the official agenda, the things that make meetings human. And that human element is, I think another essential ingredient, and outcome of intergenerational work.

One of our biggest challenges in London, and around the globe I imagine, is that people know and communicate with others all around the world, but don't know their next door neighbours. We don't notice, or feel noticed by those who live on the other side of the wall. Taking the time to slow down, or speed up to the pace of someone of a different age to you, to come alongside another human being and really listen to their unique ways of speaking or being silent, that is the essence of intergenerational interaction.

I feel lucky to work amongst people whose profession and interest is better communication. I hope that at ICIP we can continue to bring our daily work and proven techniques into our discussions and planning. However we meet, whether through newsletters, emails or face-to-face at conferences, as members we can all share our combined expertise

and excite others about the possibilities and benefits of real communication with those whose lives and experiences are very different to our own.

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From the Chair of ICIP

The Management Committee of the International Consortium of Intergenerational Programmes recently held an electronic meeting to discuss progress towards our goals and review our future work. Most importantly the Call for Proposals to host the ICIP 2010 conference was approved. The call will be circulated to members soon and be available on the ICIP website and we look forward to receiving many fine proposals. Thank you to Susan Feldman who chaired our 2007 conference in Australia for agreeing to lead the selection process as well as respond to questions from potential hosts.

In addition to the ICIP conference, we agreed to encourage regional conferences that would inspire intergenerational practice and network those engaged in this work. Successful conferences have been held throughout Europe, in the USA and in Japan. Given the expense of travel and the ability to connect networks via the internet, members of the MC believe this will be beneficial to the intergenerational field.

The MC also reviewed the constitution which until recently had only been available in Dutch. We agreed to maintain the Dutch constitution and not lose the history of ICIP but agreed to make a few amendments that would more readily support a global organization. A meeting of the members will take place during each ICIP conference and the MC will conduct its business through electronic meetings during the interim years. We also bid farewell to several members of the MC and thank them for their years of service. They are Amy Goyer from the USA, Dov Friedlander from Israel, and Marcia Krawll from New Zealand. We appreciate all you have done to help grow ICIP and wish you the very best in the future.

The MC also discussed the need for volunteers to assist with growing the ICIP membership. If you are interested in helping in this area, please contact me.

Several ICIP members participated in a special United Nations convening of experts to discuss intergenerational solidarity held in New York in the fall. The background papers as well as the document describing the results of the insightful meetings are now on the UN website. Thank you for your continued interest in and support of ICIP.

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Thanks to
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For hosting the ICIP website and producing the newsletter.
Visit www.icip.info for more information about ICIP

Volunteers to translate into any other language should contact the editor.

Want to contribute?
Please send articles (usual maximum size, 500 words, i.e. one A4 page) news, events, discussion points to: susanlangford@magicme.co.uk

Please type articles, with no formatting (no indents, bold headings etc)
Do not wait for the deadline. It helps our volunteer translators to get pieces over the months, not all in one go!

Coming deadlines:
15th Sept 2008 for Oct 2008 issue
12th Jan 2009 for Feb 2009 issue

WHAT'S NEXT AFTER INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING? Young and older activists join forces in the US

As intergenerational practitioners and policy makers we understand the great societal value of intergenerational interactions and the win-win benefits for all involved. But many older adults do not understand. They often feel they have negligible influence and impact in society and they feel marginalized by a society that worships youthful appearances and activity. How then do practitioners create opportunities to raise the awareness in older adults of the inherent power and community building aspect of their intergenerational interactions? And is that awareness important if our programs with older adults are already successful?

Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly (JCHE) in Brighton and Newton, MA, is government subsidized independent living. The average age of our residents is 82 years. When I began work at JCHE eight years ago, it was a challenge to create, and recruit for, programs that enabled our residents to feel good and important about what they were doing; to help them realize the benefits for their own good health and life-satisfaction; and to show them the success they could help schools and organizations achieve. It was also a challenge for our residents to redefine this stage of their lives and accept new roles at a time when they often perceived their roles in life as having ended. After 8 years of participating in programs, they do understand this and they share an elevated sense of pride and self-esteem.

The challenge for me now is to raise their level of intergenerational awareness one step further. The services JCHE provides allows our residents to age in place with dignity, independence, and meaningful activity. The residents are happy and comfortable and their natural impulse is to stay in that place and not venture beyond. However, I believe the next step is for them to see themselves as, and actually be, advocates for intergenerational interactions and issues in a more global society. Despite the fact that they inherently know from their life experiences and accumulated wisdom that we are all interdependent, they do not always act on it. They need to experience that their voice can make a difference and that people will indeed listen. Certainly there are many older adults who do this everyday and who are advocating strongly and effectively. But I believe there are many more, who live in varied types of elder housing, who do not. That is where I believe the next challenge lies.

Programmatically, the answer to this at JCHE is what we are calling Coleman College (Coleman House is the JCHE building in which this program takes place). In this initial pilot year, we have partnered with Boston Latin High School students and together we explore issues that affect both generations. We learn how to develop and execute effective lobbying techniques and we establish likely contacts, both individuals, and organizations, with whom we can partner. Our first effort concerned local transportation issues for both high school students and elders. Letters were the advocacy medium of choice in this initial endeavour. Not news to experienced advocates, but surprising to both of these generations, was that their combined voice was stronger than either generation's individual voice. The next steps involve other issues, other advocacy techniques, and increasingly greater involvement on a grander scale.

Amazingly, many of our older adults who might have been activists in their youth never realized they were "changing the world". They "just" marched with their suffragette mothers, or collected money in neighbourhoods to eradicate polio, or simply "did what needed doing." We need for them to apply that same-can-do attitude and those advocacy techniques to addressing issues pertinent to children and youth today. Perhaps our own expectations for older adults to understand the power of intergenerational interactions, and their ability to act, might also need re-adjustment. They can, and should, be a powerful voice. With world demographics pointing to larger numbers of older adults as boomers age and present day older adults live longer, it makes sense for us to raise their level of intergenerational awareness one step further.

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The Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL) of the SF Bay Area just held its third mini-conference of the year. As a change of pace, we decided to have separate workshops for tutors in each of the regions served by the organization--SF, East Bay and the Peninsula. Attendance and enthusiasm were high which reinforces our idea to bring extra resources to the tutors closer to home.

JCL continues its mission as an intergenerational program! We bring older people-both retired and employed-together with young people for the purpose of building literacy and sharing an interest in books. Based on the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam (Repair of the World), JCL came into being in 1997 in order to match the experience and talents of adults with the needs of school children.

We train tutors to work with youngsters from grades kindergarten to 3, that is children from 5 -8 years old, who are at risk of falling behind in Reading. Our tutors spend at least one hour a week with their students, reading together and building literacy skills. The tutor and student generally establish a close relationship that often turns into a mentoring-style bond. Many tutors are inclined to follow their students as they progress. As a result, our long time tutors are now working with students in higher grades and providing support in a more generalized way.

We recruit our tutors from a variety of sources including local synagogues, churches and businesses, as well as using general public volunteer announcements, i.e. web sites and newspapers. JCL has recently set up a structure of partnering with institutions to support recruitment of tutors and the tutoring program.

We serve the general Bay Area with offices in San Francisco, Oakland and the Peninsula. We have around 500 tutors in many different schools around the Bay.

The tutors receive an initial training in the basics of Reading with a child and imparting the importance of books in ones life. Follow-up workshops are offered after the tutors are placed on working with Kindergarteners or Second language Speakers along with other topics of interest. In addition, JCL holds its yearly conference with various workshop sessions to meet the needs of the tutors.

JCL also recognizes the importance of parents as home teachers. As a result, we have started to offer Parent workshops in schools where we tutor to give parents who may be hesitant the skills and confidence to read with their children at home.

With all these activities we are trying to shape the experience of one generation into a stepping stone for the academic benefit of the next generation.

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Taken from a Report on a national three year programme

The Project was initiated with a view to trying out models for involving pensioners in primary and lower secondary education. It had political support and was started up by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in 2003 on commission from the Ministry of Education and Research. The Project was to last until the end of the school year of 2005/2006.

Background

School Grandparents as a concept is about developing contact and interaction between children and the elderly through school. In the near future senior citizens will constitute a major group in society. A lot of them can count on many years with good health and surplus energy. They come from a wide variety of vocational backgrounds and experiences and represent a significant and important resource in socially useful work. At the same time they also find enjoyment in meaningful tasks across the generations and other divisions of society.

When different generations get together and interact relationships are created that are important for everybody. The older generation is a natural contributor to the transfer of culture, traditions, history, knowledge and experience. The establishment of closer bonds between old and young leads to an increase in well-being and security for all, also outside school.

Both old and young perceive this to be positive, a win-win situation. School grandparents are people who are meant to act as the school's grandparents. They are elderly people, men and women, who are to give a positive contribution to the children's social development, in addition to providing support and help with practical functions and tasks. They are not to be substitutes for any members of the school staff but act as an additional resource for the school. It is essential that they accept responsibility and are interested in the children's development and security. The scheme is voluntary and in principle unpaid.

The Project has been implemented at ten selected primary and lower secondary schools throughout the country. The schools were selected after consultations with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and participating organisations; both urban and rural municipalities have been represented. The Project started in the school year of 2003/2004 and finished at the end of the school year of 2005/2006.

The Project was led by a steering committee with members representing, respectively, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Directorate for Education and Training, the Norwegian Pensioners' Association, the Norwegian Senior Citizen Association, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and the Union of Education, Norway. The Project Manager, Per Olav Strande, has been given paid leave from his position as head teacher in Vestre Toten municipality to manage the Project.

The Project's main objective has been to establish good school models for developing ways of how generations can get together and interact. The target groups have been pupils in primary and lower secondary schools and pensioners/senior citizens of both genders.

The Report on the project contains some background information, information about the implementation itself, including experiences and ideas for the future.

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SHARED SITE PROGRAM, OHIO, US

Updates On The Macklin Intergenerational Institute

The Marilyn & Gordon Macklin Intergenerational Institute is a shared site program, located in Findlay, Ohio, USA. The Macklin Institute provides opportunities for young and old to come together and share their talents, information, and resources, thereby allowing their unique personal knowledge, experiences, and expectations to shape their interactions. As a result of quality services provided, Generations United named the Macklin Institute: the 2007 Intergenerational Shared Site of the Year and an Intergenerational Best Practice Site in 2008. The priorities of the Macklin Institute include intergenerational care, consultation, training, and research. The Institute's mission is *to continually improve lives of all ages through multi-age programming, care, community relationships, and creative communication.*

The Macklin Institute is located in an extended care facility that includes independent and congregate living, nursing and skilled nursing care, assisted living, adult day services, Alzheimer's Care, and Home Health & Hospice. Here, childcare is provided in a generationally-enriched, home-like, participant-centered, and interactive intergenerational setting. Seventy-two Children - six weeks to five years - interact daily with about 300 Elders, thus encouraging ageless connections and multi-generational relationships. But, how did the Macklin Institute create such an outstanding program?

A unique manner of age-integrated care - the FamilyRoom Approach® - is utilized at the Macklin Intergenerational Institute. The approach consists of three equal and synergistic components – organizational structure, physical setting, and holistic care. Within the Approach, staff members are empowered and bureaucracy is discouraged; the setting is home-like and welcoming; and Children and Elders are seen as whole-beings – socially, physically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually. In keeping with the FamilyRoom Approach notion of the whole-being, the terms Children and Elders are capitalized. This is done as a symbol of the respect, acceptance, and approval that they so deserve.

The foundation of the FamilyRoom Approach® is based on the work of Dr. William Thomas, creator of the Eden Alternative™ and Vicki Rosebrook PhD., Executive Director of the Macklin Institute. In 1997, Dr. Thomas identified the three plagues of aging suffered by residents in nursing homes - boredom, loneliness, and helplessness. In 2000, Rosebrook determined three basic needs of Children that offset the plagues of aging - exploration, interaction, and guidance. This discovery - *Reciprocal Needs* - identified that the Child's need to explore counters Elder boredom; the Child's need to interact diminishes Elder loneliness; and the Child's need for guidance virtually eliminates Elder helplessness. The Reciprocal Needs concept substantiated the shared needs of Children and Elders and therefore, became mystic mortar of the *FamilyRoom Approach®*.

The Macklin Institute is fully dedicated to providing quality training and consultation, as well as completing systematic evaluation and research. However, the Institute's most significant work is providing superior, simultaneous care for Children and Elders in a family-like setting.

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RECOGNITION FOR INTERGENERATIONAL WORK IN WALES

Welsh Assembly Government Minister visits Wales Centre for Intergenerational Practice

The Wales Centre for Intergenerational Practice (CCIP) is situated within the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Glamorgan. CCIP was established in May 2004 and is an initiative of the Beth Johnson Foundation, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, and developed in partnership with the University of Glamorgan, who host and administer the Centre

CCIP's 2008 conference was held at The Pavilion, Llandrindod Wells on Thursday 06th March 2008 and over seventy delegates, from the education, health, public and charity sectors, attended.

To encourage delegates to consider the wide range of opportunities for collaboration within the field of intergenerational practice, the theme for this year's conference was **Community Cohesion – Cross Cutting Partnerships**. The conference was opened by Angela Fish, the Centre Director and Alan Hatton-Yeo, Director of the Beth Johnson Foundation and Centre for Intergenerational Practice (England). Keynote speakers included Gwenda Thomas AM – Deputy Minister for Health & Social Services, Welsh Assembly Government, and Dr Matthew Kaplan, Associate Professor, Intergenerational Programs & Ageing, Pennsylvania State University, USA, who spoke about *Intergenerational Approaches for Building Community*. Morning and afternoon workshops were run by experienced facilitators which offered the opportunity to engage with current approaches and examples of strategic partnerships.

The Welsh Assembly Government highlighted the significance of intergenerational practice in their *Strategy for Older People in Wales* which was launched in 2003. The second phase of the strategy, launched at an event in Cardiff on 13 March 2008, continues to recognise and support this work. Speaking at the conference, Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas, said:

“ Intergenerational relationships are significant for a number of reasons and none more so than they recognise that everyone has the capacity as human beings to learn and grow throughout the whole of our life span.”

“ Ensuring that people from across the generations work together, share their experiences and expertise is vitally important - which is why intergenerational practice is and will continue to be a key priority issue for the Assembly Government's Strategy for Older People in Wales.”

Gwenda Thomas A.M., Deputy Minister for Social Services, together with Andrea Nicholas-Jones, Head of Older People and Long Term Care Policy Directorate, visited the University recently to meet with Angela Fish, and Alan Hatton-Yeo, to discuss the work of CCIP and its future remit. The Minister expressed her enthusiasm for intergenerational work and confirmed her commitment to support the development of IP in Wales. She also applauded the work of CCIP and agreed that the centre would play an important part in future developments.

Dr Rob Payne and Kathryn Addicott, from the Centre for Lifelong Learning, joined the meeting to confirm the support of the University and to showcase materials from *Write-On!*, an intergenerational project which Angela and Kathryn have run over the past six years in collaboration with local comprehensive schools and adults from local communities.



Seated (l-r): Angela Fish: Gwenda Thomas A.M.: Andrea Nicholas-Jones
Standing (l-r): Kathryn Addicott: Rob Payne: Alan Hatton-Yeo

Contact CCIP by email: ccip@glam.ac.uk tel: 01443.482372
web: <http://www.ccip.org.uk>

INTERGENERATIONAL EXHIBIT IN THE US **Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly, Chicago**

About 25 artworks by artists who ranged in age from teenagers to 80 years old were featured in a special exhibit, "Intergenerational Moments," hosted by the Little Brothers—Friends of the Elderly (LBFE), Chicago Chapter at the Chicago Cultural Center, June 1 through July 15. Held cooperatively with the Chicago Department on Aging, the show asked artists: "What does an intergenerational moment mean to you?"

This project began in 2004 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Intergenerational Program at Little Brothers—Friends of the Elderly, Chicago Chapter. Professional and recreational artists were asked – how would you represent an intergenerational moment? No limits were placed on size, style or medium used. This collection represents the view of artists from every generation – teens to octogenarians.

"There is so much we can learn from our elders and so many ways in which relationships across the generations can enrich our quality of life," said Simone Mitchell-Peterson, LBFE executive director. "This exhibit speaks to the significance older relatives and friends have on personal development in our lives."

"Intergenerational Moments" illustrates Little Brothers—Friends of the Elderly's mission to celebrate long life in its commitment to Chicago's elderly community. For nearly 50 years, LBFE has provided friendship and other services to more than 90,000 of Chicago's elders who are lonely and isolated.

"Part of what we do is help connect the elder generation with the younger generation," said Christine Bertrand, intergenerational program coordinator at LBFE.

“Intergenerational learning is about enriching our lives with the wealth of knowledge and history from our elders, who gain from the vitality and exuberance of youth.”

The Intergenerational Program brings students of all ages together with seniors who provide a vital link to the past. By sharing their stories, elders provide an eyewitness account of historic events and a snapshot of what life was like when they were young. Intergenerational sharing promotes aging in a positive way; changes stereotypes; improves mutual understanding; re-constructs social networks and promotes volunteerism. When this exhibit closes, the art pieces will be loaned to schools, colleges, universities, libraries and galleries to promote the benefit of intergenerational learning.

Little Brothers—Friends of the Elderly, Chicago Chapter, is part of a national network of non-profit volunteer-based organizations committed to relieving loneliness and isolation among the elderly by offering them friendship and socialization opportunities. LBFE has been serving elders for over 47 years.

For information on loan of the exhibit for your organization, please contact: Christine Bertrand,

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UK OLDER PEOPLES DAY

1st October is the UN Day for Older People and will also be UK Older People’s Day. This is a chance to tackle outdated stereotypes on ageing and bring people of all ages together. UK Older People’s Day aims to celebrate the contribution of older people, raise awareness of the opportunities on offer and ensure that older people feel included in society.

The focus this year is on intergenerational projects and relationships. To support this, organisations across the UK are being contacted to build up a database of activities and success stories which will be used to support national and regional media campaigns. In addition schools, older people and youth organisations will be sent an introductory guide to intergenerational work, showing examples of how generations can work together and build relationships. Supported by online resources, this guide is a further attempt to raise awareness and understanding between generations.

Already a number of intergenerational events are being organised across the UK on October 1st, bringing young and old people together to get to know each other and hopefully build long term engagement in projects and activities. Grandparents Day, which is organised by Age Concern, will now be held on the first Sunday in October, to coincide with UK Older People’s Day. In Wales the Assembly are preparing to launch a national intergenerational strategy for consultation and it is hoped that the First Minister will launch the final strategy on October 1st. If so, this will be the first national intergenerational government strategy in the world.

As part of the Government's ongoing commitment to support this initiative, a new visual identity called 'Full of Life' was launched by Mike O'Brien, Minister for Pensions Reform in a special ceremony held at the House of Commons. 'Full of Life' celebrates the opportunities, achievements and aspirations of older people and aims to show the positive side of later life. Under the 'Full of Life' banner, the Government and other supporting groups are undertaking a wide programme of activity to raise the profile of the issues surrounding older people and their increasingly valuable role in society.

If you'd like to find out more information about UK Older People's Day please visit: www.dwp.gov.uk/fulloflife/.

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JOURNAL FOR INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

We hope you enjoy reading the following article, published in the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*' Program Profile section in Volume 5, Issue 1. We invite you, as a reader of the ICIP newsletter, to consider submitting your work to JIR. Please visit our website: <http://jir.ucsur.pitt.edu/>.

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****PLEASE NOTE THAT JIR PREFERS ELECTRONIC MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION****

INTERGENERATIONAL DANCE/MOVEMENT PROGRAM IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Creating Relationships through Dance And Movement

Having worked with older adults and with children in separate groups, the dance therapist was inspired to run a combined group by reading an article on an intergenerational dance therapy project in the United States. This paper describes the project she subsequently developed in her

local community, a semi-rural town on the outskirts of Melbourne, Australia.

Description of the program:

The program brought together twelve older adults attending a day centre, eight 6-7 year old children, day centre staff, a school teacher, and a dance therapist facilitator. It took place over a period of nine weeks, during which participants came together weekly for a dance/movement activity. The sessions consisted of expressive/creative movement exploration, singing, vocalizing, dramatic play, props, musical instruments and adapted folk dance. These experiences were carried out in partners, small groups and in the large group.

From the very start, the focus was on creating relationships. The dance therapist consciously structured the activities to facilitate a bringing together of the diverse experiences and ways of being of the older adults and young children, so that they could meet as individuals rather than as representatives of “the old” or “the young”. Children and adults worked together on creative explorations in movement. Movement themes reinforced relationships, for example mirroring each other’s movements, exploring a movement relationship, e.g. taking care or supporting one’s partner, approaching and leaving, offering a safe place to return to. For example, in one activity, the adult became the place of safety while the child crossed a crocodile infested swamp (the rest of the group providing the snapping and generally threatening sounds!). Hugs of welcome were often the greeting on arrival and where physically possible, the adult assisted the child's safe return across the circle.

Over the course of the program, the group took more and more charge of the process, and creative expression happened spontaneously without needing so much facilitation from the dance therapist.

A visual record of the activities was kept by way of an ongoing collage on a long piece of calico fabric, which was added to at the end of each session. This was later displayed at the school. At the last session, children and adults came together to celebrate over afternoon tea. The adults presented the children with special certificates of participation and honorary membership of the adult day centre. A further extension of the program occurred when parents and children viewed some video footage of the sessions, an experience which led parents to contemplate their relationship to their own parents.

Benefits of the program:

In the course of the program, children and adults connected at a very real level: they came to know each other as individual people; trust was developed as they worked together on creative tasks; friendships were formed between individual adults and children, while at the same time a strong sense of group developed with its own creative dynamic.

From a developmental perspective, children and adults were able to enjoy some of the roles appropriate to their age. For example, adults were able to take on a generative role and enjoy the satisfactions of looking after the young and passing on their experience. Children enjoyed having someone to “play” with, someone who could give them time and attention. .

The adults were able to surprise the children with their energy, humour and sheer mischievousness and offer them a very different image of age from the conventional stereotypes relating to passivity and dependency. At the same time, the children were able to display some sensitivity when engaging with some of the more frail adults.

Finally, and joyfully, the combined life experience of adults and children made for a creative and personally meaningful process for all concerned. It was a program that no one wanted to have end and that is still fondly remembered in the local school community years after the event.

Conclusions:

While in the past, intergenerational experiences were an everyday, naturally occurring aspect of life, in our present society it takes thoughtful planning to enable such experiences to come about. Most important is the need for a space or an environment where relationship between the generations is fostered and nurtured, a space where difference is celebrated. In terms of the program goals, the fostering of relationships should be at the forefront. Merely bringing together young and old does not create an intergenerational experience. Finally, the benefits of intergenerational contact rely completely on the quality of the relationship, which rests on the following: getting to know each other as individuals; mutuality, that is, sharing active and passive roles; development of trust between participants through working co-operatively together on something mutually satisfying, and above all, meaningful.

To sum up in the words of one young participant who chose “Friends” as the theme word for one session, “we needed friends to do what we did today.”

Heather Hill, facilitator/dance therapist of the intergenerational dance program, now lectures at the Melbourne Institute of Experiential and Creative Arts Therapy. Correspondence should be sent to:

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AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

While it is true that I am an American, and I have been to London a lot this past year, to be honest, I’m not really a werewolf. I’m a professor at Penn State University working with Beth Johnson Foundation and its affiliates during my sabbatical year, learning about intergenerational programs and practices throughout the UK.

Sorry for not being able to resist calling this *An American Werewolf in London*, one of my all-time movie favourites, even if I am actually living in the Midlands.

And now that I have your attention, I begin my report, coincidentally, with London. I had the opportunity to attend meetings of the advisory group convened by the Mayor’s London Development Agency (LDA) to review proposals for developing the country’s first purpose built multigenerational center aimed at providing a range of shared services and facilities under one roof for older people, children and young Londoners.

The successful bid came from the London Borough of Merton. They will receive £1.5 million in capital funding to convert a disused youth centre and motorbike track situated next to a local primary and secondary school into a multi-use facility that provides IT facilities and training for young and old, literacy programs, arts and crafts activities, drama sessions, and a variety of sports and games for local residents of all ages. It will also be the hub for an outreach program that will support activities in the community.

I have also been fortunate to see up close the intergenerational innovation that permeates throughout Manchester, a city in the northwest of England with a population of approximately 450,000 residents. Here are some elements of Manchester’s multifaceted intergenerational strategy that was developed in partnership with the Beth Johnson Foundation:

- An overarching vision for the city called: “Looking back, Looking forward”. The vision is woven into a government policy document, converted into intergenerational programs and activities by a small but growing steering group of administrators from

various city agencies, and promoted by a City Councillor who has the formal title of “intergenerational champion.”

- A series of *demonstration projects*, implemented in various settings, and with diverse populations and objectives: Projects focus on the arts, learning about history, environmental preservation and awareness, and public education through radio programming.
- The Manchester *intergenerational e-bulletin*, a quarterly electronic publication that highlights news and updates on intergenerational work both nationally and in Manchester.
- *Training workshops* to help city staff from a range of sectors and disciplines to develop a better understanding of intergenerational practice.
- *City-wide showcase events* to highlight elements of the city’s intergenerational plan.
- *Tie-ins with other campaigns* run by the city, such as the Positive Images of Ageing initiative.

Here are some other exciting intergenerational programs in the UK that piqued my interest: an intergenerational computer training project (Sixty Plus, London), an intergenerational healthy aging initiative (Liverpool Intergenerational Active Age Program), intergenerational conversations about local history (British Film Institute’s “Screen Dreams” initiative), intergenerational puppetry and other arts initiatives (“Magic Me”, London), an intergenerational dance program (Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company, London), and intergenerational forums organized around community planning themes (Swansea Network 50+ in Wales).

One of the most gratifying things I’ve seen here in the UK is their treatment of a noted intergenerational specialist as a “hero”. Susan Langford, Director and founder of Magic Me, in the UK, was chosen by the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, as one of 33 people from across the UK who are celebrated in his book ‘Britain’s Everyday Heroes’ published July 2007.

Back to the *American Werewolf in London* theme: If you saw the movie, I’m sure you’ll remember the scene in which the American teenagers visited an eerie, old English pub and one of the regulars said, “Keep to the path an’ you’ll be okaaay.” Well, I did visit such a pub, and I too was lost and looking for directions. In my case, fortunately, a gentleman who must have been in his 80’s took me under his wing; he not only offered to buy me a pint, but he practically walked me to my destination. Such is life in the real world, where many intergenerational encounters have happy endings.

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NEWS FROM BOTSWANA

Vire Oduaran will be concluding his successful 6-year tenure as Head of the Department of Adult Education, University of Botswana, on the 30th June, 2008. Vire assumed headship of his Department in May, 2002. During his tenure, Vire introduced a number of new programmes, including the Diploma in adult education and Diploma in NGO Management by Open and Distance Learning. He initiated the drafting of the M. A. in NGO Management which is at the stage of data analysis, and also introduced marketing strategies that led to increase in the number of students in his Department. By the time Vire leaves office in June 2008, he will have attracted to his Department two additional staff establishments and funds from within and outside Botswana to the tune of USD 100,000.

Vire Oduaran would go down in history as the one who introduced the concept of intergenerational relationships and programming to his Department, Faculty and University. On retirement as Head, Vire has promised to push harder the African Network for Intergenerational Programs agenda.

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