



America's Best Intergenerational Communities: Building Livable Communities for Children, Youth, Families, and Older Adults



ABOUT GENERATIONS UNITED

Generations United is the national membership organization focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. Since 1986, Generations United has served as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. Generations United acts as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration between aging, children, and youth organizations, providing a forum to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation. For more information, visit www.gu.org.

ABOUT METLIFE FOUNDATION

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$530 million in grants to nonprofit organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thank you to our panel of judges who had the difficult job of reviewing an excellent pool of applications and selecting our finalists.

Finally, we extend a very special thank you to all the communities who applied for the awards. The innovation and creativity in connecting generations exhibited by all the applicants is truly inspirational. Thank you for building strong, supportive communities for people of all ages.

Cover photographs are all from the Generations United Intergenerational Photography Contest. Photo Credits: Tyshaun Graham (upper left), Denzel Mitchell (upper right), Braden S. (center left), Richard Derwald (center right), and Sally Drumm (bottom left)

All other photographs courtesy of the award winning communities and national finalists.

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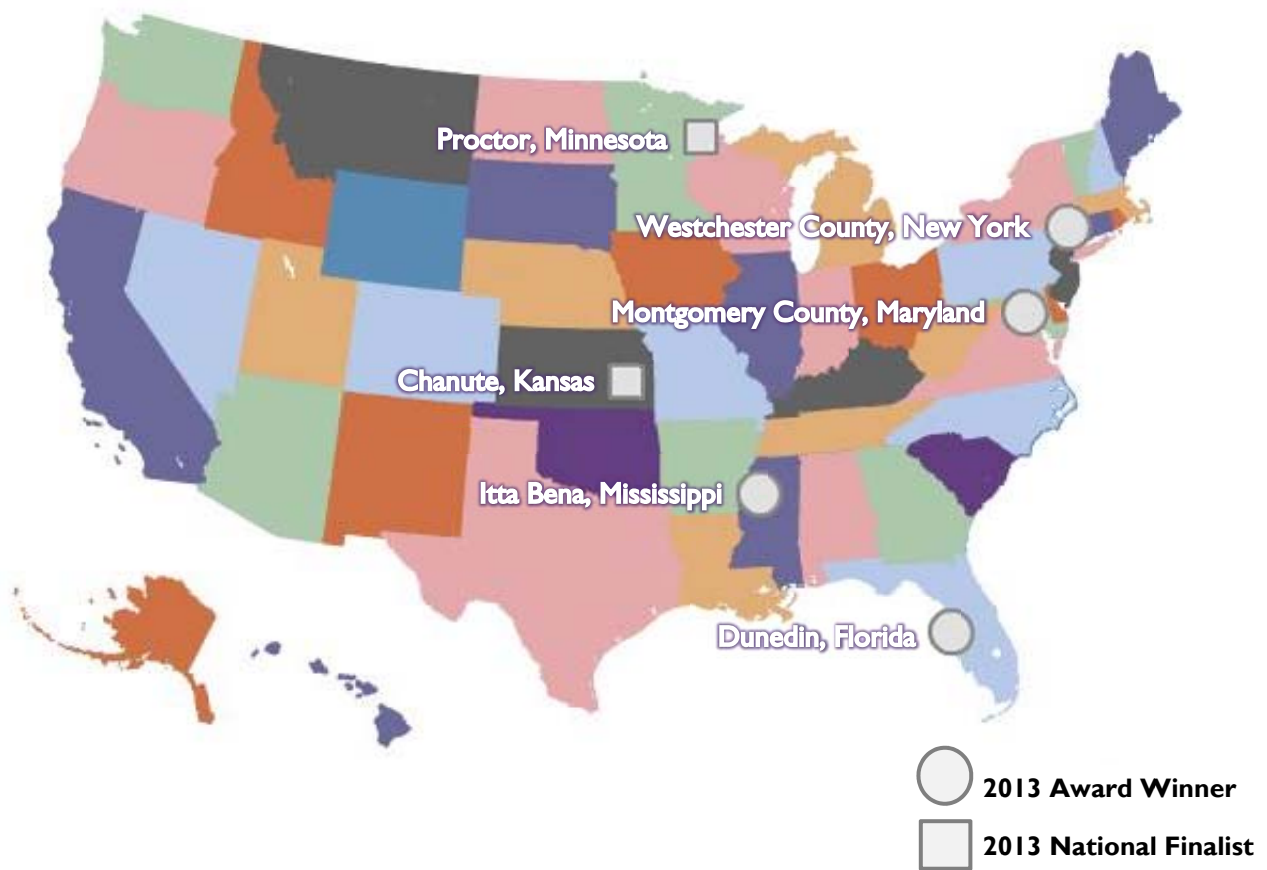


MetLife Foundation

**generations
united**

Because we're stronger together®

AMERICA'S BEST INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITIES



INTRODUCTION

Generations United and MetLife Foundation are pleased to honor four incredible communities with the 2013 Best Intergenerational Communities Awards. Dunedin, Florida; Itta Bena, Mississippi; Montgomery County, Maryland, and Westchester County, New York all build on the positive resources that community members of each generation have to offer to each other and those around them. They advance policies and practices that both acknowledge and promote intergenerational interdependence.

We are also pleased to recognize Chanute, Kansas and Proctor, Minnesota as national finalists for the award. We are impressed by the commitment of these towns to developing an intergenerational community and we will follow and celebrate their continued growth and progress in the future.

These six communities, along with the five communities recognized last year,¹ show what is possible when government, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community residents come together to unleash the power of intergenerational experiences to help people of all ages thrive in their communities.

¹ The 2012 Best Intergenerational Communities Award winners were Georgetown, Texas; Lamoni, Iowa; Oberlin, Ohio; San Diego County, California; and Virginia Planning District 10 (covering the City of Charlottesville and the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson)

OVERVIEW

Generations United and MetLife Foundation created the Best Intergenerational Community Awards to heighten awareness of the importance intergenerational solidarity plays in building strong, supportive communities. A panel of judges selected the winning entries from an excellent pool of applicants from across the country. The judges made their recommendations based on standard criteria that take into account a community's own demographics, services, programs and organizational structure. We recognized communities for their specific intergenerational successes, not as compared to other applicants.

This report presents a brief look at the award winning communities. We have included a profile on each community that includes:

- A snapshot of community demographics
- A description of intergenerational work
- Quotes from younger and older community residents
- Images of intergenerational connections in action

DEFINITIONS

The term **“community”** refers to a geographic area with defined borders and resident populations for which reliable demographic data is available. This could include metropolitan areas, cities, towns, counties, zip codes, neighborhoods, and school districts.

The term **“intergenerational community”** refers to a place that (1) provides adequately for the safety, health, education and basic necessities of life for people of all ages; (2) promotes programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between people of different generations; and (3) enables all ages to share their talents and resources, and support each other in relationships that benefit both individuals and their community.

An intergenerational community is not just one where multiple generations reside. It is one where individuals of all ages are an integral and valued part of the setting. This perspective is reflected in the families, structures, facilities and services that children, youth, and older adults encounter in the community, as well as in day-to-day interactions and relationships. Partnerships are essential to intergenerational communities and can be between local government, senior adult living communities, schools, businesses, local cultural and community organizations and services, families, older adults and children.

"SOMEHOW, WE HAVE TO GET OLDER PEOPLE BACK CLOSE TO GROWING CHILDREN IF WE ARE TO RESTORE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY, A KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAST, AND A SENSE OF THE FUTURE."

MARGARET MEADE

Dunedin, Florida:

Living and Breathing the Intergenerational Mission

The 35,000+ residents of Dunedin, Florida don't just enjoy a warm and sunny physical environment; they delight in a warm and sunny mental outlook, as well. No matter what your age, you'll find plenty of ways to be an integral part of this community on Florida's Gulf Coast.

Dunedin formalized its efforts to connect generations in 1992. That's when the community's Committee on Aging formed an Intergenerational Subcommittee "to bring public awareness to the value of intergenerational relationships by supporting and promoting recreational, educational and service projects that bring together people of all ages."

Today, intergenerational awareness in Dunedin is free-flowing and seamless. This mindset resonates from the city leaders through staff and into the community. Each year since 2006, the mayor has issued a formal proclamation to bring awareness and commitment to the community's celebration of Intergenerational Week. During that week – the first full week in December – the city celebrates activities to cap off all the events and programs that brought generations together throughout the year. Yearly, there are 29 events in the city that bring together multiple generations, along with ongoing programs, ranging from teenagers visiting nursing homes, intergenerational activities at senior centers and holiday festivals.

Dunedin says it exemplifies a community where individuals of all ages are integral and valued. It currently has 30 boards and committees comprising volunteers who are residents and dedicated to service in the community, including a Youth Advisory Board



"DUNEDIN IS... A VERY ENCOURAGING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERY FAMILY TO ENJOY....THANK YOU TO THE CITY OF DUNEDIN FOR CREATING AN EXCELLENT ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL OF US TO LIVE LIKE A BIG FAMILY."

ISHAN MANDANI, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT





that offers a youthful perspective on policies and practices, as well as city infrastructure.

This is a place where groups like the Rotary Club support a program called, “Sing, Spell, Read and Write”, to assist children in grades K through 2 improve their reading skills. It’s also a place where third grade students and older adults spend time talking and stitching together a quilt that represents the younger and older generations with regard to what they enjoy or believe is important.

The emphasis on valuing residents of all ages has made Dunedin a truly desirable place to live. In 2008, Money Magazine named the community one of the “Best Places to Retire in the USA.” The State of Florida designated it among its “Communities for a Lifetime” in both 2009 and 2007. And this year, it reigns as one of the “Best Intergenerational Communities in America.”

Dunedin has certainly come up with a winning formula for making every resident feel good about themselves and about living in this gem of a city.

QUICK FACTS

Dunedin, Florida

Community Type: City

Total Population: 35,321

Percent Under 23: 20.50%

Percent Over 55: 43.90%

Median Household Income: \$41,630

Dunedin is a city in Pinellas County on the Gulf Coast of Florida that covers a total area of 28.2 square miles with 10.4 square miles of land and 17.8 square miles of water.



“THERE ARE BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE PROGRAMS WITH FACILITIES FOR EVERYONE IN DUNEDIN....ALL OF THESE PROGRAMS ENABLE INTERGENERATIONAL EXPERIENCES THAT GROW FAMILY AND COMMUNITY VALUES AND COMMUNICATION. THANK YOU DUNEDIN.”

ROGER L. NIPPER, OLDER ADULT

Itta Bena, Mississippi:

Growing a Healthy Intergenerational Community

Despite having just under 2,000 residents, Itta Bena, Mississippi has a big vision for its future. The tiny town, located in west central Mississippi, believes it can create “a healthy, thriving college town with positive and deep connections, trust and collaboration among Itta Bena residents of all ages and among Mississippi Valley State University.”

And based on the evidence of the past few years, achieving that vision should be a slam dunk.

Intergenerational connections have always been an important element of Itta Bena's culture. In 2009, the community ramped up its intergenerational efforts when it joined the National Network of Communities for All Ages, an initiative of The Intergenerational Center at Temple University. In so doing, the community formalized its commitment to achieving a better way of life for people of every age.

In just four years, Itta Bena has employed intergenerational strategies to address a host of challenges. Here are just a few examples:

Health care: To reduce the high incidence of diabetes and obesity, the community collaborates with the local university and the local hospital to provide health fairs and quarterly screenings for diabetes, weight, cholesterol and other health factors.

Physical activity: The community now offers a wide range of opportunities to get physically active, including a bike-a-thon, fishing rodeo, multigenerational physical exercise classes, monthly intergenerational walking groups, Little League baseball (with older adults serving as coaches), and daily walking at the local high school track.



“ALTHOUGH WE ARE A SMALL TOWN...WE HOLD STRONG TIES TO THIS COMMUNITY, AND WE SPEND TIME IMPROVING THE COMMUNITY FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ALL.” SHAWNTERIA WARD, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Access to healthy food: Itta Bena has no grocery store, but it has created a prized community garden that engages people of all ages in the planning, harvesting, and distribution of the garden's produce. (The food is distributed to families with children, older adults, people with disabilities, and all other residents who desire the harvested produce.) In addition, Itta Bena has partnered with the mass transit system at nearby Mississippi Valley State University to transport residents to the closest grocery stores in Greenwood, seven miles away.

What's next? Itta Bena is currently working towards the next steps to reach their intergenerational goals. Currently, twenty five local community residents ages 15-76 are engaged in leadership training in an effort to increase resident participation and civic engagement. Upon completion of this training, the residents will develop intergenerational projects including a farmers' market, a Mayor's Council, and a mentor's initiative.



"OURS IS A COMMUNITY IN WHICH LOCAL CULTURE AND COMMUNITY ARE CURRENTLY BEING SEVERELY CHALLENGED BY DESPERATE ECONOMIC AND ACADEMIC LIMITATIONS. WE DRAW DEEPLY ON THE GROWING NETWORK OF POSITIVE RESOURCES (PEOPLE, BUSINESSES, AND PROGRAMS) ... OFFERING SUPPORT TO ALL AGES AND ENCOURAGING INTERGENERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND INTERDEPENDENCE ON ONE ANOTHER." REV. MAXINE BOLDEN, PASTOR, SAMUEL CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Montgomery County, Maryland: Honoring Diversity, Engaging the Generations

Thinking intergenerationally may be old hat to Montgomery County, Maryland, but nothing about its intergenerational programs and initiatives are old or outdated. This is a community where new ideas and ways to integrate the generations are continually being sought and implemented.

It's been 30 years since the county executive formed the Intergenerational Committee to advocate and plan for a system in which older adults and younger generations could enhance each other's lives. That committee led to the formation of the Montgomery County Intergenerational Resource Center, a partnership that included the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Interages, a nonprofit. This was the first time in Montgomery County history that a nonprofit, the public schools and county government joined together to make a difference in the community.

And what a difference such collaboration has made. Today this highly diverse county of almost one million residents offers myriad ways for all generations to connect with each other. It also has formal agendas to help ensure all residents can live their entire lives in Montgomery County.



"WHILE SPENDING TIME WITH PEOPLE FROM SUNRISE, I MOST LIKED HEARING ABOUT THEIR EARLY LIVES AND HOBBIES. ONE WOMAN TOLD ME ABOUT HOW SHE HAD TRAVELED ALL AROUND THE WORLD AND VISITED MANY OF THE MOST FAMOUS PLACES....I HOPE I CAN LIVE A LIFE AS FULL AS HERS."

MADDIE HAMILL, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT



Intergenerational opportunities abound. For example, the public schools work with several nonprofit organizations to bring older adults in to tutor and mentor students. In turn, the schools offer students service-learning opportunities where they can help out older residents. In addition, the county's libraries, recreation department, arts and humanities council, community college and other county entities continually work to connect the generations in thoughtful ways. The county also has the region's first intentionally built "shared site" for children and older adults with disabilities.

A major element of the county's intergenerational efforts is the JCA Heyman Interages Center. The name change came in 2011 when, after 26 successful years of operation, the original Interages was consolidated within the Jewish Council for the Aging. During its tenure, the organization has led the way in intergenerational programming and expertise for the county while improving the lives of thousands of children, adults, and seniors. It also has the distinction of being the third oldest intergenerational program in the United States.

As Montgomery County residents of every age have discovered, theirs is a community that cares about its people and does all it can to create a welcome home for all.

QUICK FACTS

Montgomery County, Maryland

Community Type: County

Total Population: 989,794

Percent Under 23: 31.30%

Percent over 55: 25.20%

Median Household Income: \$96,750

Montgomery County covers 495.52 square miles to the north and west of Washington, DC.



"THESE RELATIONSHIPS KEEP US GOING AND TOUCH OUR HEARTS. WHEN WE'RE DOING THINGS INTERGENERATIONALLY, EVERYONE BENEFITS, EVERYONE LEARNS. AS JOEY IS FOND OF SAYING, 'MENTORING WAS THE BEST THING I EVER DID FOR MYSELF.'"

MS. LOIS BAKER AND MS. JOEY POTTER, OLDER ADULTS

Westchester County, New York:

Promoting a Sense of Worth and Connection

Westchester County, New York is a good place to grow up and grow older...together. Whether you live in the county's rural northern section or its big-city southern region, you're sure to feel at home, no matter what your age.

This community really knows the value of intergenerational living; they've been at it for quite a while now – more than 16 years. It also is a master at bringing groups together to continually find new ways to improve life for all. Westchester boasts more than 40 intergenerational programs – shared site, individual on-site, and four Communities for All Ages based on the model developed by The Intergenerational Center at Temple University. Westchester stands out as a model for how to enhance collaboration across sectors, build leadership of civic engagement of all ages, increase social cohesion among the generations, and address a broad range of critical concerns from a lifespan perspective.



"I REALLY LIKE THE PEEKSKILL COMMUNITY FOR ALL AGES BECAUSE WE DO FUN STUFF WITH KIDS MY AGE, MY MOM'S AGE, AND MY GRANDDAD'S AGE. AT FIRST, IT WAS MY MOM'S IDEA FOR ME TO WORK WITH THE TEAM, BUT NOW I AM PART OF THE TEAM AND I LOOK FORWARD TO IT."

MALACHI McDONALD, FIFTH-GRADE STUDENT

A strong public/private network of motivated individuals, not-for-profits, United Way, a private foundation, and government funders has fostered and supported a growing variety of intentional and ongoing intergenerational programs and initiatives. NYSigN-Westchester, a local educational/advocacy group of individuals and organizations, is committed to promoting intergenerational thinking across the county. The group meets bi-monthly to share, strategize, and keep Westchester on track as an outstanding intergenerational community.

Need more evidence of Westchester's commitment? The county also has nine Livable Communities regions. Each acts as a hub of information and collaboration for all ages.



Perhaps most critically, Westchester has used an array of intergenerational strategies to effectively leverage the assets of all generations and address their key challenges. Over the past 10 years, the county's intergenerational programs and initiatives have:

- increased access to healthy, affordable food and physical activity for all
- improved housing so as to address changing needs across the life course, enhanced protective factors for local youth
- increased access of older adults to social media and technology
- built trust and connections across generations
- developed inclusive practices that encourage all generations to become civically engaged
- built strong collaborations among organizations that previously worked in age-segregated silos.

QUICK FACTS

Westchester County, New York

Community Type: County

Total Population: 955,899

Percent Under 23: 32%

Percent Over 55: 27%

Median Household Income: \$77,006

Westchester County covers an area of 450 square miles and includes 45 municipalities. It is located to the north of New York City and borders Connecticut.

The result is a community that people are happy to call home and where everyone can have a voice.



"THERE ARE MANY EXPECTATIONS SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE FOR THE PLACE WHERE THEY LIVE, AMONG THEM ARE DECENT SCHOOLS, CLEAN WATER, SAFE ROADS, POLICE AND FIRE PROTECTION...BUT THERE IS ANOTHER TOTALLY UNEXPECTED BENEFIT THAT I HAVE FOUND HERE IN YONKERS... AND THAT IS A PROFOUND SENSE OF PURPOSE AND CONNECTION."

Ms. DORA MEJICOVSKY, OLDER ADULT

National Finalists

CHANUTE, KANSAS

The City of Chanute, population 9,085, is located in southeastern Kansas. In 2005, this struggling rural community engaged in a visioning process to focus on identifying needs and taking action to improve the community. Out of this process, the first formal intergenerational program was developed. A student from Chanute High School, Christian Watkins, stated, "We need school greeters." Her recommendation was accepted and Chanute High School was the first school in the city to have the greeter program run by the Southeast Kansas Retired Senior Volunteer Program (SEK-RSVP). Since then the school greeters program has expanded to all schools in Chanute.



The simple yet extremely powerful premise of this program is that all students are welcomed as they enter school in the morning. Older adult volunteers at the schools open doors, shake hands, give high fives or even hugs, visit with and share a smile with each student as they enter school. In return, the schools offer breakfast to the volunteers to show their appreciation, as well as providing an official t-shirt and identification badge.

Around the same time the Vision Committee proposed the intergenerational greeter program, the idea for an intergenerational baseball game through Neosho County Community College originated. The first intergenerational baseball game took place in the following spring of 2006. The success of bringing the generations together sharing in America's favorite pastime created an annual event with increased sponsorship and attendance each year.

The creative and ongoing program development of intergenerational activities in Chanute has built and strengthened the atmosphere of community and provided an environment that enhances the lives of all generations. Neosho County Community College and Southeast Kansas Retired Senior Volunteer Program (SEK-RSVP) spearhead this intergenerational movement and partner with other community members, organizations, businesses, schools and government who are committed to promoting and supporting an intergenerational community.



PROCTOR, MINNESOTA

The City of Proctor, population 2,853 is located in northeastern Minnesota, approximately 10 miles from downtown Duluth. The Proctor school district is comprised of several small towns and rural townships bringing the total population to nearly 12,608. The focus of their intergenerational work started in 2009 through the Age to age program, known locally as G³ (Gathering Generations for Greatness). After a series of public meetings and a visioning process, the leadership team, comprised of elders, adults, and teens decided that community cohesion was the area the group wanted their work to bolster.

They have taken a two-pronged approach to community cohesion: community gatherings and the renovation of a community park as an intergenerational gathering place.

G³ provides community gatherings at which people of all ages come to meet and reconnect with each other and to have fun together. Events are designed to meet the need shared interest of each generation and to make each generation the “expert” in some activity.

G³ has also undertaken the redesign of an unused city park to provide a public space in which community can gather causally or in formal settings. The new design will have spaces for causal meeting, conversation, children's play and will be welcoming and accessible for all ages. This space located next to the community center, will provide on-going, sustainable opportunities for building community cohesion.

Proctor, Minnesota is a community to watch. They are off to a phenomenal start in building a strong, healthy intentional intergenerational community and their thoughtful planning process engaging community members of all ages is sure to continue to result in positive outcomes for all.



Intergenerational Community Resources

Do you want your community to be more intergenerational, but aren't sure where to begin? Here are some helpful resources:

2012 BEST INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY AWARD PROFILES

Learn about the winners of the 2012 Generations United/MetLife Foundation Best Intergenerational Communities Awards and what they accomplished to earn this recognition. Download the publication at <http://www.gu.org/OURWORK/Programs/BestIntergenerationalCommunities.aspx>

COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

Communities for All Ages is a national initiative housed at The Intergenerational Center at Temple University that helps communities address critical issues from a multi-generational perspective and promote the well-being of all age groups. *The Intergenerational Community Building Resource Guide* is available for download from their website at <http://www.communitiesforallages.org/>

LIVABLE COMMUNITY INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGING IN PLACE

The Livable Community Indicators for Sustainable Aging in Place report, produced by the MetLife Mature Market Institute in partnership with the Stanford University Center on Longevity, presents an indicator system for following a list of livable community characteristics that could promote sustainable aging in place. The goal is to identify an initial list of indicators that can be measured using information that is readily available to local governments, providing a low-cost way for cities and towns to begin to examine the needs of their aging population. To learn more or download a copy of this report, visit <https://www.metlife.com/mmi/research/livable-communities.html>

VIABLE FUTURES TOOLKIT

The ***Viable Futures Toolkit: Sustainable Communities for All Ages***, developed by JustPartners Inc. provides concrete guidance for planning, policy-making, and programming to plan for an aging population in ways that benefit all generations. Toolkit includes a workbook; community checklist; issue briefs on health, housing, lifelong learning, land use, transportation, and more; tips for coalition building, a guide for resource development, user's guide, and 18-minute video of 3 communities. You can review the table of contents and order this resource at <http://www.viablefuturescenter.org/>

CREATING AGE-FRIENDLY PLACES

Creating Age-Friendly Places draws together the latest research, case studies and practical advice on what makes an age-friendly community. It looks at current developments across the UK and globally around ageing and discusses the different components needed for an age-friendly city and community. Produced by Manchester City Council and the Beth Johnson Foundation with support from Keele University it will support councils and wider stakeholders in planning how to make their areas good places for people to grow older. To download the guide and learn more visit <http://www.bjf.org.uk/age-friendly/about-age-friendly>

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION AGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAMME

The WHO Age-friendly Environments Programme is an international effort to address the environmental and social factors that contribute to active and healthy ageing. The Programme helps cities and communities become more supportive of older people by addressing their needs across eight dimensions: the built environment, transport, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication, and community support and health services. Resources, including *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide*, are available at http://www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities/en/

A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION: DEVELOPING A LIVABLE COMMUNITY FOR ALL AGES

A Blueprint for Action: Developing a Livable Community for All Ages, developed by Partners for Livable Communities and National Association of Area Agencies on Aging helps communities find answers to some tough questions, providing a step-by-step guide that can help state, local and community decision makers better meet the needs of an older population. You can learn more about their work at www.n4a.org and www.livable.com. You can download the guide at: <http://www.n4a.org/pdf/07-116-N4A-Blueprint4ActionWCovers.pdf>

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES: AN EVALUATION GUIDE

Because there are many aspects of a livable community, the AARP Public Policy Institute developed *Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide* to help residents, advocates, and local leaders identify areas of success and potential opportunities for improvement in their community. Written by a team from the Herberger Center for Design Excellence at Arizona State University, the guide encourages people to take a new look at the community or neighborhood in which they live. Although written from the perspective of persons age 50 and older, the topics are applicable to residents of all ages and abilities. You can download the evaluation guide at: http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-2005/livable_communities__an_evaluation_guide.html

Take the Next Steps

Intergenerational communities positively impact all residents and address community challenges. Join us in educating and inspiring communities around the nation to intentionally connect and maximize the expertise of all generations.

HOW?

1. Share the profiles of the 2013 and 2012 MetLife Foundation/Generations United Best Intergenerational Communities and encourage your networks and communities to start thinking intergenerationally.
2. Get connected or stay connected with Generations United
 - a. Like Generations United on facebook
 - b. Follow @GensUnited on Twitter
 - c. Sign-up to receive *Generations This Week* our weekly e-alert by visiting **www.gu.org** and clicking "Get E-Alerts"
3. Use resources and ideas that are available at **www.gu.org** or contact **gu@gu.org** and we would be happy to share some tips.
4. Think about the communities where you live and work. If you know of one (or two) that is doing an exceptional job in connecting generations, encourage them to apply for the 2014 awards. The awards information can be found at **www.gu.org** starting in Fall 2013.



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