

# Intergenerational Solutions for Healthy Aging in Michigan – Phase Two



**Purpose:** Generations United, with support from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, is working with key partners in Michigan to expand intergenerational initiatives designed to decrease social isolation among older adults while increasing interest among young people in health professions focused on older adults. Studies show intergenerational engagement reduces social isolation, increases sense of purpose and heightens interest in continued engagement with other generations including future career choices.

The two-year project implementation period includes four specific areas of work:

1. Providing training and technical assistance
2. Deepening partnerships with high impact potential
3. Expanding intergenerational pilot programs
4. Addressing sustainability through philanthropy and public policy.

## Goal:

To develop partnerships focused on intergenerational solutions to increase social connection among generations resulting in a statewide network that ultimately leads to a healthier Michigan for all ages.

## Strategies:

Based on the findings of the one year planning and pilot process, the Generations United Michigan team will:

**Provide Training and Technical Assistance:** We will organize and conduct robust half-day trainings designed to inspire high quality intergenerational practices in targeted areas in Michigan. The training will include an informative, inspirational keynote, a panel of intergenerational experts discussing innovative examples and showcasing existing intergenerational work underway in Michigan. We will provide ongoing technical assistance to intergenerational partnerships as they design and implement their projects and share program resources developed during the pilot phase. We will integrate exposure to aging and health care professions into program design.

**Deepen Partnerships with Potential for Most Significant Impact:** We will work with partners such as the Detroit Area Agency on Aging to facilitate intergenerational planning councils or partnerships and identify and implement short and long term opportunities for projects resulting in age integrated sites and activities. We will work with MSU Extension to engage their expertise and increase intergenerational programming in areas such as 4-H, master gardening and natural resource education. We will create a statewide intergenerational network capable of advancing the health and well-being of Michigan's older and younger populations by inviting Generations United's existing network and members to join the new sites.

**Expand the Intergenerational Pilot:** We will build on the Ypsilanti Intergenerational Partnership pilot led by the Ypsilanti Senior Center to include additional youth and older adult groups and facilities like libraries and community centers which may currently be multigenerational but not intentionally intergenerational. These partnerships will assess opportunities and implement projects or programs that engage each generation's strengths and addresses social determinants of health among older adults such as social isolation while also benefitting youth, families and communities.

**Address Sustainability through Philanthropy and Public Policy:** We will work with Community Foundations and other philanthropies in Michigan to raise awareness and expand support for intergenerational programs and practices. We will begin the work of bringing together statewide intergenerational advocacy and public policies and raise the visibility of intergenerational perspectives, programs and public policies to decrease social isolation throughout the State—and in Lansing—as a way to inform public policy. We will work to introduce and incorporate an intergenerational lens into the State's healthy aging programs network, youth development programs and aging services.

### **Project Team:**

The project team includes Michigan residents **Bruce Astrein**, Generations United senior fellow, policy, philanthropy and library expert and former foundation leader and community organizer; **Don Jost**, retired executive director of the Michigan 4-H Foundation and youth development expert; and **Dr. Abbie Lawrence Jacobson** intergenerational program design expert and evaluator. **Sheri Steinig**, Generations United's special projects director based in Colorado, is the project manager. **Dr. Nancy Henkin**, Generations United senior fellow based in Pennsylvania, is the senior housing liaison and will assist with outreach, training and technical assistance. **Donna Butts**, Generations United's executive director based in Washington, DC, will assist with training and advise the project.

### **For More Information:**

Contact Generations United special project director Sheri Steinig at [ssteinig@gu.org](mailto:ssteinig@gu.org) or senior fellow Bruce Astrein at [bastrein@gu.org](mailto:bastrein@gu.org).

### **About Generations United:**

The mission of Generations United is to improve the lives of children, youth and older adults through intergenerational collaboration, public policies and programs for the enduring benefit of all. For over three decades, Generations United has catalyzed cooperation and collaboration among generations, evoking the vibrancy, energy and sheer productivity that result when people of all ages come together. We believe that we can only be successful in the face of our complex future if age diversity is regarded as a national asset and fully leveraged. To learn more about Generations United, please visit [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org).