

HEAD, HANDS, AND HEART

You may choose to identify residents' strengths and talents by engaging them in this group-based activity. This activity can also serve as a great ice-breaker to try with residents and young people.

Begin the activity by explaining that everyone can bring special gifts to any group. If we recognize each other's gifts, we can combine those gifts creatively to make our group stronger.

1. Create a simple handout that describes each of the following categories:

➔ **Gifts of the hands:** These physical skills or talents can include any gift, talent, or ability having to do with the hands or body, such as:

- Athletics.
- Wood working.
- Playing an instrument.
- Singing.
- Painting.
- Gardening.
- Dancing.
- Cooking.
- Sewing.

➔ **Gifts of the head:** *These abilities are associated with learning, knowledge, organizational capacity, or numbers and could include skills related to thinking and planning, like:*

- Having a knowledge of art history.
- Speaking another language.
- Growing vegetables.
- Organizing special events.

➔ **Gifts of the heart:** *These talents are linked to emotions, such as empathy and caring. This includes people skills like:*

- Being friendly.
- Seeing humor in a situation.
- Carrying out volunteer commitments.
- Being passionate about jogging, family, social justice, teaching, ending world hunger, sports or other interests.

Note: Gifts may appear under multiple categories. For example, I might be very good at fishing (gift of the hand), know a lot about fish (gift of the head), and be passionate about fishing (gift of the heart).

2. Propose silent time, usually about 5 minutes, to give everyone the opportunity to think about and write their own gifts on the handout.

3. Ask each person to share, with a partner or the group, 3-5 gifts they consider to be their most valuable. After everyone has had a chance to share, discuss how these gifts could benefit an intergenerational program. Ask such questions as:

- ➔ Is there anything we are missing?
- ➔ Are there some similarities here? Differences?
- ➔ What did you learn from this exercise?
- ➔ How might this group use some of your gifts in the future?
- ➔ Any other comments or feedback?

Time Required: 10-15 minutes to prepare chart/write responses. If you are conducting this exercise in a group setting, allow 3-5 additional minutes for each person to present a response to the group.

Additional Options:

- ➔ You can also use this exercise to identify community resources. Include a fourth category and ask participants to list their important affiliations or connections.
- ➔ If space allows, hang the charts around the room to help participants get to know other group members.