

Libraries as Lifelong Connectors

Intergenerational Programming in Action

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Today's Agenda

- * Define “intergenerational”
- * The why behind the programs
- * Our programming
- * Community collaborations
- * We want to hear from you!



What is intergenerational programming?

Activities or programs that increase cooperation, **interaction**, or exchange between any two generations. It involves the sharing of skills, knowledge, or **experience** between old and young.

-National Council on the Aging

Research

In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory declaring an epidemic of loneliness and isolation, contributing to a multitude of negative consequences.

- * Higher risk of premature death
 - * Cardiovascular disease
 - * Diabetes
 - * Infectious disease
 - * Lower cognitive function
 - * Depression and anxiety
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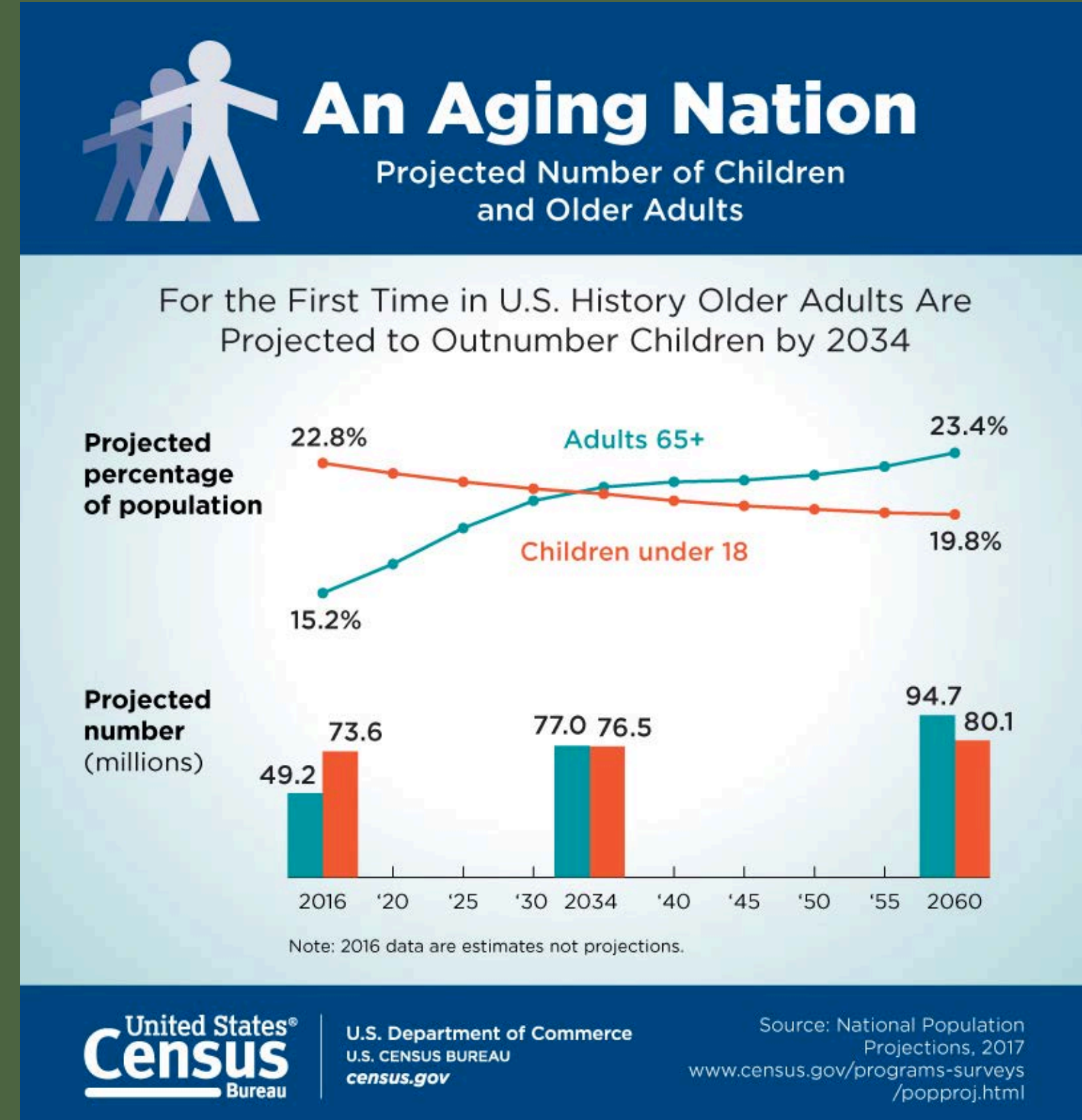
Research

Age segregation – an increase of the separation between youth and older adults with living arrangements and recreational activities.

An Aging Nation

2000:	2020:
Under 18 – 25.7%	Under 18 – 22.1%
Over 65 – 12.4%	Over 65 – 16.8%

www.census.gov



Benefits

- * Better social skills: empathy, patience, compassion, and respect
- * Increased social acceptance and reduction of age-based stereotyping and discrimination
- * Improved mental health
- * Decreased isolation
- * Stronger sense of community



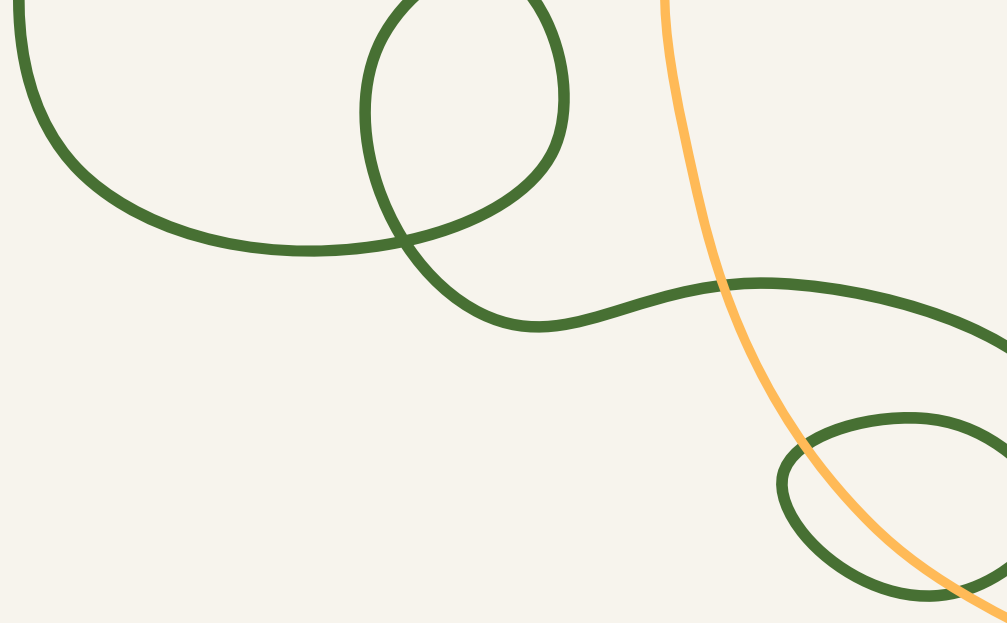
Research

Penn State Intergenerational Program (PSIP), some of the leading researchers and developers of materials and resources for intergenerational models since 2001.

Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education, Penn State University Extension

- * Develop more effective training for professionals
- * Promote wider access to new resources
- * Evaluation and studies confirming the programs' successes

Our Takeaways



The library is a natural setting for this type of programming. Since we already offer programs tailored to specific age groups, it was a logical progression to purposefully develop intergenerational programming that brings different generations together.

- * Promote community and reach out to potential new users
- * Provide a space where people can connect and learn, experience, and grow from one another
- * Programming for all age groups – not just toddlers and seniors. Include elementary level and teens as well.
- * Utilize staffing from all departments: youth, teen, outreach, cross departmental planning



Intergenerational Programming

Storytime

A story hour encouraging social interaction between generations. Librarians will read stories, lead songs, and provide a snack, craft, and social time for all attendees. Intergenerational programs offer numerous benefits for both children and seniors, including reduced loneliness, delayed mental decline, and new connections, as well as increased smiling and conversation among all involved!

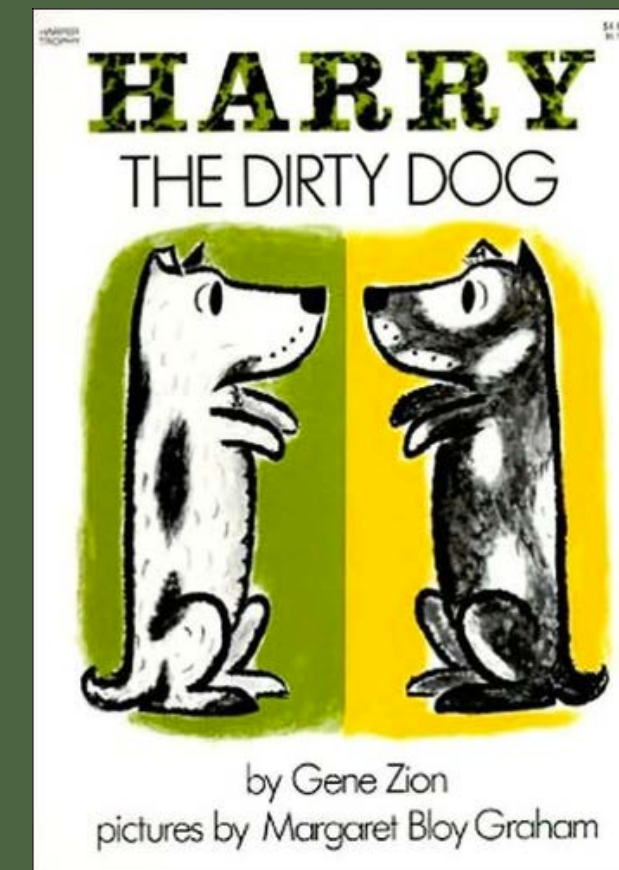
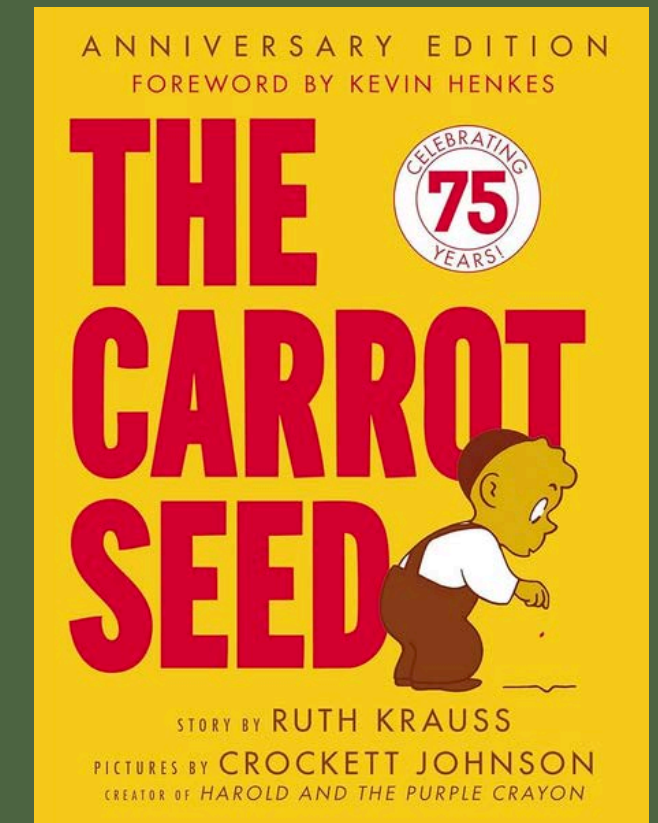
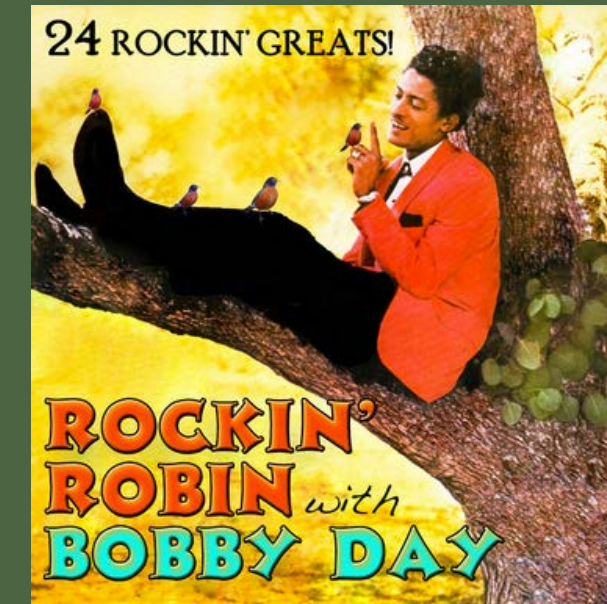
- * Held offsite at Pomery Civing
 - * Included both independent and memory care residents.
 - * Held in spring or fall
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Storytime

Clean into classic songs and books to grow a sense of familiarity and knowing with attendees

- *The Carrot Seed, The Mapping House, Harry the Dirty Dog, Where the Wild Things Are
- *BINGO, How Much is that Doggy in the Window, Rockin' Robin, Itsy Bitsy Spider, Wild Thing

Seniors may remember these from growing up, reading them to their own kids, and even grandchildren.





What we learned along the way

Successful changes, adjustments, and refinements

- * Tried it at the library – a lot of last minute changes
- * Too cold outside? Families won't come
- * Moved to residents' location – captive audience
- * Technology issues
- * Promote to new moms – seniors COVE babies!
- * Request registration

Grandparents Cafe

Kids of all ages are invited to bring their grandparents— or grandparents can bring their grandkids—for a morning filled with tea, treats, and delightful crafts. It's a lovely way to share laughter, make memories, and enjoy a little bit of library magic with those who hold a special place in our hearts. Each guest— young and young at heart— should register separately. Fancy hats welcome!

- * Celebrate National Grandparents Day
- * Tea party, vintage activities and look
- * Requested registration because of pricier supplies



How can we do better?

What we might change, adjust, or remove

- * Grandparents Cafe was a hit, but expensive; only some things reusable.
- * Find a way to promote to all ages - we ended up with a younger audience
- * Not a lot of intermingling. Cook for ways for attendees to talk with each other and not just their own families.
- * Promote to all seniors and families with children. Ones without the others are the ones missing the interaction. Grow a Grandparent!

Bridging Generations

An Afternoon of Connections

Join us for an afternoon of connection and community at our intergenerational event! Teens and senior citizens will have the opportunity to mingle, enjoy light refreshments, and listen to music performed by talented local students.

There will also be meaningful opportunities for conversation, creating bonds across generations.

- ✧ Introductions: Alternating decades playlist and snacks
- ✧ Thought-provoking conversational activities: Head, Heart & Hands, Six Word Stories, Generational Slang, Time Capsule
- ✧ Behind-The-Scenes Library Tour

Participant Outcomes

Attendance was disappointing, but...

Hunk/Huzz

Music is fun. Not my job.
Unmotivated to work, now a passion.
Climbing trees since I was four.
Going into school, is it hard?

“I learned the language that some of the younger generation uses. I think the girls that I was with did also. I happened to be with one shy girl and one very bubbly girl. By the end of the session, we were all sharing equally in our interests and our plans for the future.”

“Ms. Becky is the coolest”

“I think it was a great opportunity to connect across generations and realize they really aren't that different from teens my age. It was interesting to find common ground between my experiences so far and their experiences when they were my age and beyond.”

What worked, what didn't

- * Offered students service hours for participating in the program
- * Initially got a lot of interest from the two senior living facilities we work with regularly
- * Conversation was lively!
- * New AMH machine was popular
- * Transportation issues - would move to seniors' location next time
- * Had to nix live student music and use recorded playlist instead

Generations of Games

Bring the whole family for an afternoon of fun, laughter, and learning! In this intergenerational card game program, grandparents and parents will share the timeless tradition of Euchre, while kids and teens introduce the silly, fast-paced favorite Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza. Whether you're a seasoned card shark or a total beginner, we've got you covered—no experience necessary! We'll teach the rules, then mix everyone up to play together. It's a perfect way for families to share traditions and enjoy some friendly competition across generations—just in time for winter break! Snacks provided.

- * Audience: Middle and high school students, college students, parents and grandparents
- * Activity: Learn how to play euchre and Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza
- * Timing: Winter Break when families are together and have time to spend inside

Community Connections

- * Schools
 - * Senior/Community Centers
 - * Senior Living Facilities
 - * Faith communities
 - * Who Do You Know? Use your personal connections!
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- A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide consisting of two overlapping, swirling lines. One line is white and the other is orange, creating a sense of movement and connection.

Where to Start



Suggestions from ACA

- * Determine what current programs have intergenerational audiences. What's working well with these programs? What needs to be improved?
- * Identify obstacles to increasing family participation at your library. Is it transportation? Child care? Cultural norms?
- * Ask new patrons what programs they'd like to do with their family members, and how to design those programs for success.

Questions and Brainstorming

Resources

* Fact Sheet: Intergenerational Programs Benefit Everyone (Generations United):
<https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2021/03/2021-MakingTheCase-FactSheet-WEB.pdf>

* Activities to Foster Intergenerational Connection (Cogenerate):
<https://cogenerate.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/activitiespdf.pdf>

* Penn State Intergenerational Activities Sourcebook
<https://aese.psu.edu/outreach/intergenerational/curricula-and-activities/intergenerational-activities-sourcebook>