

NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults

2013-2015



Fort Good Hope, NT

INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Handbook

*A compilation of stories from intergenerational
projects throughout communities in the
Northwest Territories*

Background

Through our work with service providers, older adults, youth, policymakers, and other community members around the Northwest Territories, we consistently hear the desire for more elder-youth programming.

Considering this, the NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults initiated its *Intergenerational Connections* project. As part of our *Leading the Way: Preventing Abuse of Older Adults* program, the Network provided funding and support for several communities to develop and implement intergenerational initiatives.

Intergenerational Practice aims to “bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to more cohesive communities. It is inclusive and builds on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them” (Centre for Intergenerational Practice, 2001).



Fort Smith, NT

Overall, the goal and hope was to reduce the generational gap between youth and older adults.

This goal was achieved by:

- attitudes of ageism being better understood and rejected
- increased understanding of the value of young people and older adults
- stronger intergenerational relationships and connections between youth and older adults
- more youth and seniors supporting and protecting each other
- young and old alike having a better understanding of issues younger and older people face, with a specific focus on the issue of abuse
- increased skills and knowledge exchange

This handbook is designed to outline the projects in Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Tulita, Hay River, Fort Good Hope, N'Dilo, Dettah, and Inuvik with the hope that their work will inspire other organizations to create their own intergenerational activities around the territory and throughout Canada.

In total, **516 youth** and **337 older adults** were involved in some capacity in these projects. We'd like to thank all of the event organizers for their creativity and commitment; your work illustrates how even simple activities can make lasting impacts on intergenerational connections and relationships.

“Solidarity between generations at all levels – in families, communities, and nations – is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages.” UN International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002)

Elders & Preschoolers Connection

Community: Tulita

Lead organization: Sister Celeste Child Development Centre

Timeline: September 2014 – March 2015 (Monday-Friday)

Tulita, NT

Project Overview: An elders' centre was set up within Tulita's Child Development Centre. Using a previously empty room, organizers created a space for elders to meet over tea and bannock and connect with preschoolers on a daily basis. Coordinator Sister Celeste identified that teaching North Slavey and cultural lessons was an important aspect of the project. The students at the elementary and high school, as well as other service providers, were also invited to do programming activities.



"We will share our commonalities by sharing our ways together." (Inuvik Participant)

Outcome: This program proved to be an engaging way to incorporate traditional language and cultural lessons into the preschool. According to Sister Celeste, "the first thing the students do in the morning is stop by the Elders' Centre to say hello to their grandma or grandpa".



Tulita, NT

Bridging the Gap

Community: N'Dilo & Dettah

Lead Organization: Yellowknives Dene First Nation

Timeline: July – August 2013 (Monday-Friday)

Project Overview: The Yellowknives Dene First Nation integrated elders into their youth Sakaii Summer Camp program. The objective was to bridge the gap between older adults and children aged 6-10 by having elders demonstrate traditional skills, including: Hand Games, preparing of traditional foods, tanning moose hides, making drums, playing drums, beading, and traditional crafts skills. In teaching and participating in these activities, elders acted as mentors for the camp participants. Youth were able to use their newly created drums during the closing ceremony, which was open to all residents of N'dilo and Dettah.

Outcome: This initiative addressed a need within the organization to create a specific program for elders and youth in N'Dilo and Dettah. Coordinators recognized that the cultural activities were beneficial for the children on a number of levels, including the child's sense of self and appreciation for others.

Storytelling with Seniors

Community: Fort Smith

Lead organization: Fort Smith Senior Citizens' Society

Timeline: September – April 2013 (weekly)

Project Overview: The Fort Smith Seniors' Society organized weekly visits to the local elementary school. Older adults joined kids from Kindergarten to grade 5 to tell stories and visit. There was also the opportunity for students to practice their reading one-on-one with an elder.

Outcome: This was a valuable opportunity to share stories and laughs across generations. For many seniors, it was their first time visiting classrooms and helped make the connection for further visits.

Elders' Music Night

Community: Inuvik

Lead Organizations: Ingamo Hall Friendship Centre & Beaufort Delta Elders' Group

Timeline: October-June 2014 (monthly)

Project Overview: Once a month, elders and youth gathered at Ingamo Hall in Inuvik for a dinner and music night. Organizers teamed up to get people together for a shared meal, followed by skits, dancing, singing, and storytelling. Older adults from the long-term care facility were also included through transportation arrangements and help from support workers.

Outcome: Social isolation occurring in the community was addressed by creating the space for elders and youth to connect and empower one another.

“Respect and care for each other will be the objective of this intergenerational connection.” (Tulita Coordinator)



Gana River Camp, Sahtu Region, NT

Grandparents' Lunches

Community: Hay River

Lead Organizations: Hay River Seniors' Society & Hay River Literacy Society

Timeline: October 2013 –June 2014 and January–June 2015 (monthly)

Hay River, NT



Project Overview: Seniors joined students and teachers at the two local schools to share lunch and ice cream over the noon hour in the library. Anyone interested in participating brought a simple brownbag lunch and the two groups were able to build relationships in a relaxed atmosphere. Each month, a different grade was visited and children were given flowers to present to their lunch-mates.

Outcome: Both children and the adults enjoyed their lunches and sharing stories. Grandparents attended from Fort Resolution, Texas, and from the French Immersion School as well. It was a highlight for many students who continued talking about it for weeks to follow. Overall, organizers indicated that their true sign of success was the “many smiles and much laughter.”



Yellowknife, NT

Community: Yellowknife

Lead Organization: Yellowknife Seniors' Society & NWT Seniors' Society

Timeline: International Older Persons' Day (October 1, 2014)

Project Overview: Celebrating International Older Persons' Day, approximately 50 older adults attended an afternoon socializing event at the Baker Centre. With tea and goodies, participants were treated to a performance by the youth Aurora Fiddle Cats. The musicians played wonderful old classics, even inspiring some members to hop up and join in with a jig!

Outcome: This afternoon provided an example of how a simple event with limited resources can have a positive impact for many people. Connecting with other organizations in the community to plan and implement an activity helps to share the costs and time associated with planning an event. It was evident that the music provided by the youth brightened many older adults' days as they left the Baker Centre smiling and thanking the fiddlers.

Youth Leadership Camp - Sahtu Region



Gana River Camp, Sahtu NT

Community: Territory-Wide
Lead Organization: Northern Youth Leadership
Timeline: July 2014 (one week camp)

Project Overview: Northern Youth hosts leadership and traditional skill camps to help inspire a generation of courageous, young, northern leaders. As part of the *Intergenerational Connections* project, two elders from the Sahtu Region joined a group of older girls at Gana River Camp to share their knowledge of the area as the girls learned to hike, canoe, and trap. Elders told stories about growing up in the Mackenzie Mountains and living off the land.

Outcome: Having the elders present during the camp helped to create a supportive and peaceful environment. The director recognized that when some of the girls were frustrated with their tasks or acting out, they chose to spend time with one of the elders. The one-on-one time collecting spruce gum or helping with sewing had a calming effect on the youth and allowed them to return to their peers in a more respectful manner.



Genealogy Building through Family Trees

Community: Inuvik

Lead Organization: Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Inuvik Youth Centre, Gwich'in Tribal Council

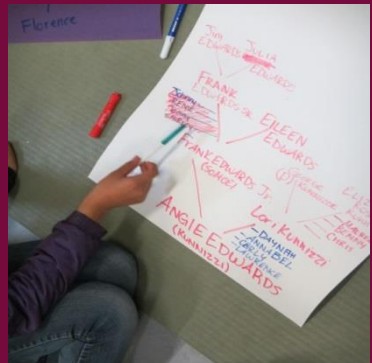
Timeline: March – June 2014 (biweekly)

Project Overview: Elders worked with students at the school to create their family trees and trace their genealogical roots. One youth was able to record 6 generations all the way back to Alaskan roots, and another went back to the Dene area 5 generations ago in the Tliche region. Elders also taught youth how to make traditional foods during the sessions.



Inuvik, NT

Outcome: Youth were engaged and loved learning more about their families and culture. It was a wonderful opportunity for youth and elders to work together on a project improving their communication and their understanding of each other. The elders were able to help the students connect with their past in a tangible way, sparking discussion of what life was like in the region for the elders many years ago when they were living, travelling, and surviving on the land. Given the success of this program, the Inuvik Youth Centre plans to implement more intergenerational activities in the future.



Grandmother Walks

Community: Fort Good Hope

Lead Organization: K'asho Got'ine Charter Community Council

Timeline: June – October 2014 (twice a week)



Fort Good Hope, NT

Project Overview: This project had been previously piloted in the community and was very well received by participants, who requested the event become a regular activity. During the first medicine walk, older women guided a group of youth and taught them how to pick and prepare traditional plants, while discussing the healing properties of each. The second walk focused on berry picking and the traditional stories behind each type of berry was shared.

Outcome: The two projects promoted exercise, healthy eating, bonding, and traditional ecological knowledge sharing (including traditional landmarks for picking medicinal plants and berries). Through the lessons from this walk, the coordinator developed a medicinal plant guidebook, specific to the region.

“We want to appreciate one another as a group, family, or individual by recognizing the success of elders and everyone in the community.” (Inuvik Participant)

Youth Leadership Camp - North Slave Region

Community: Territory-Wide

Lead Organization: Northern Youth Leadership

Timeline: July 2014 (one week camp)

Project Overview: The North Slave Region camp was a boys' fishing camp for ages 11-17 on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake. The group learned firsthand about life on the water with help from an elder from Hay River, who joined them to share her insight on raising her family on the lake.

Outcome: These camps allow youth a unique experience and having elders present contributed to the overall emphasis on community connectedness, empowerment, and cultural lessons. Importantly, the elders also had a positive experience and were grateful to be out on the land.

Fort Good Hope, NT



How can I implement an intergenerational project in my community?

- **Partner Up:** connect with other key players in your community involved with elders, youth, or recreational programming. Meet as often as necessary and establish a Terms of Reference if needed to guide each representative's role.
- **Identify Program Gaps:** what services or activities are currently lacking in your community for elders and youth? What would your group like to see implemented?
- **Finances:** create a budget for your project. Consider costs for equipment, food, transportation, space rentals, or staffing. Work with partners for funding collaboration and be creative with funding applications – look locally, territorially, and nationally.
- **Find Participants:** what groups already exist that you could connect with? Long-term care facilities, youth groups, friendship centres, and others are good starting points.
- **Think Inclusively:** ensure any initiative is cross-culturally designed and sensitive to any language or physical barriers that may impede some participants' involvement.
- **Celebrate:** share your successes and recognize your struggles with others. Intergenerational programming can be challenging and we can all learn from one another!

Check out our websites for more information:

www.nwtnetwork.com

www.nwtseniorsociety.ca

The Intergenerational Committee was a subgroup of 15 NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults members who were interested in developing the resources necessary to establish the *Intergenerational Connections* project.

Meeting once a month for five months, the committee created templates for both project proposals and evaluations, as well as developed a work plan and call for submissions. All documents are available for download at: www.nwtseniorssociety.ca/?page_id=142.

If you prefer hardcopies or have any questions regarding these pilot projects, please contact the NWT Seniors' Society: 1-800-661-0878 or seniors@yk.com. It is our hope these materials will provide reference and guidance as other groups consider organizing similar projects.

Other resources of interest may be:

- “Traditional Medicine Book” - developed by Brandi Corri, K’asho Got’ine Charter Community Council in Fort Good Hope (2015): www.nwtseniorssociety.ca/?page_id=142
- i2i Intergenerational Society - a national group created in 2008 to assist Canadians in the building of bridges between generations: www.intergenerational.ca/
- Creating Caring Communities - a guide to establishing intergenerational programs for schools, care facilities and community groups, BC Care Providers Association (2009): www.bccare.ca/file/BCCPA-Intergenerational-Toolkit.pdf
- LINKages Society - an Alberta-based charity focused on developing and facilitating intergenerational projects throughout the province: www.link-ages.ca/

Fort Good Hope, NT



Thank you to all participants
and coordinators for your
contributions to this pilot
project!



Recognizing our sponsors
for their contributions!



Employment and
Social Development Canada