Ageism and Connecting the Generations

Mikki Lori Brooks
University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Follow this and additional works at: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj

Recommended Citation

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Supervised Undergraduate Student Research and Creative Work at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chancellor's Honors Program Projects by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.
Appendix E - UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Mikki Brooks

College: UTK Department: Nursing

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sandra McGuire

PROJECT TITLE: __________________________________

AGEISM: Connecting the Generations

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: Dr. Sandra McGuire, Faculty Mentor

Date: 4-18-01

General Assessment - please provide a short paragraph that highlights the most significant features of the project.

Comments (Optional):

I was impressed with Mikki's enthusiasm for this project. She explored resources, became familiar with programs and offered suggestions to help eliminate ageism. I think she did an excellent job on this project and was sincerely interested in the topic. I would assign a letter grade of A.
Exhibition of Undergraduate Research
And Creative Achievement
April 5-6, 2001

Please submit a copy of your abstract to College Representative no later than March 10, 2001. You will need to bring 20 copies of your abstract to present along with your poster on April 5.

Student Name: Mikki Brooks

Title of Presentation: AGEISM: CONNECTING THE GENERATIONS

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Sandra McGuire, Associate Professor, College of Nursing

Division of Entry: College of Nursing

ABSTRACT: (Type: 12 pt. Font to fit in the box below)

Growing older causes you to reevaluate life - what you’ve done, what you’ve contributed, and what is remaining. As the United States ages, we are faced with a new dilemma. What do we do with all of these aging, urban, well-to-do, well-educated, healthy people who hit the nation by storm in the ‘50s and ‘60s? Yuppies are rapidly becoming Guppies, replacing “young” with “geriatric.” Because of exciting medical technology, people are living longer, healthier lives. Our society has been one that has glorified youth, good looks, higher education, and status, and one that harbors prejudice attitudes and behaviors toward the elderly – this is ageism. We are bombarded daily with the images of how to look younger, feel better, get slimmer, eat healthier, become well liked and respected. So what happens when skin begins to sag, weight collects and gravitates ever downward, hearing is blunted, and sight is declining? Have we become such a disposable society that we will even discard our elderly? This project proposes that we make a concerted and collective effort in whatever career or walk of life we choose, to help stamp out ageism and to spread a renewed respect and honor for our nation’s older people. To do this we must be guarded against ageist language, literature, and media; we must teach our young children early on to appreciate and celebrate the stages of life; and we must bring the generations together to work, share, care, and celebrate each other’s similarities, gifts, and diversity.
Ageism and Connecting the Generations

Advisor: Dr. Sandra McGuire

Mikki L. Brooks

University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Ageism and Connecting the Generations

Growing older causes you to reevaluate life - what you’ve done, what you’ve contributed, and what is remaining. As the United States ages, we are faced with a new dilemma. What do we do with all these aging, urban, well-to-do, well-educated, healthy people who hit the nation by storm in the '50s and '60s? “Yuppies” are rapidly becoming “Guppies,” replacing “young” with “geriatric.” Because of exciting medical technology, people are living longer, healthier lives. Our society has been one that has glorified youth, good looks, higher education, and status, and one that harbors prejudice attitudes and behaviors toward the elderly – this is ageism. We are bombarded daily with the images of how to look younger, feel better, get slimmer, eat healthier, become well liked and respected. So what happens when skin begins to sag, weight collects and gravitates ever downward, hearing is blunted, and sight is declining? Have we become such a disposable society that we will even discard our elderly?

Ageism Defined

Ageism is defined as any attitude, action, or institutional structure that subordinates a person or group because of age or any assignment of roles in society purely on the basis of age. It differs from racism or sexism in that age is progressive, characterized by continual change, and no one is exempt. It can be ageism with respect to others or self (Woolf, 2000). We don’t often think of someone being ageist toward self, but many people do think when they get to a certain age they are no longer useful based solely on their chronological age or that they are forgetful because of age, continually putting themselves down to others derogatorily. This is often a conditioning brought on from our ageist society. Funny thing is, those marketers who promote and sell youth get older each day, models get older each day, and actors age at the same rate. No one is exempt from this process, so perhaps it’s time to reevaluate our thinking and celebrate the
The Gray Panthers is an intergenerational organization dedicated to bringing together young, old, women, men, persons of all ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds for the promotion of social justice. Founded in 1970 by Maggie Kuhn, this group has been active in trying to stamp out ageism and celebrate old age. Following are ways they propose we can all contribute to annihilating ageism in our society:

- Quit complimenting people on how young they look.
- Promote intergenerational job sharing, part-time hours, and no hiring or retirement plans based on age.
- Try not to blame old age for fatigue or disorganization or forgetfulness. In our youth we blame poor planning, lack of sleep, and bad memory.
- Criticize your local news media when a headline or cartoon is offensive to older people.
- When selecting a birthday card, keep your sense of humor but learn the difference between laughing WITH and laughing AT.
- Fight ageism with 2 important weapons: knowledge and a willingness to approach every person, regardless of age, as an individual with unique strengths, weaknesses, options, and opportunities (Gray Panthers, 1996).

Children’s negative attitudes toward the elderly develops at a young age, and beyond 12 or 13 years old, these attitudes are difficult to change (McGuire, 1986). One seemingly benign community service may actually serve to reinforce these negative feelings toward the elderly. That is taking children to visit institutionalized elderly. These are often worst-case scenarios, typically in poor health and decreased cognition, along with mental illnesses. Churches often like
to send their Sunday school children to sing Christmas carols or visit nursing homes to spread
good, young cheer, but depending on the emotional and maturational level of the child, these
experiences can be frightening. It would be more helpful to expose children to the positive
aspects of aging, for example, visiting a senior recreation center.

A Dear Abby reader sent in something she had read in a Reader’s Digest article a few
years ago, which addressed the problem of people not talking to seniors. A daughter
accompanied her mother to the doctor’s office, and the doctor kept addressing the daughter
regarding her mother’s condition. Finally, the mother said to the doctor:

“Doctor, do you work crossword puzzles?”

“Yes,” he replied, trying to humor her.

“Do you do them with pencil or pen?” she asked.

“With a pencil,” he replied.

“Well, I do them in ink. Now, talk to ME!”

Another Dear Abby reader sent in this poem by Shel Silverstein:

_Said the little boy, “Sometimes I drop my spoon.”_

_Said the little old man, “I do that, too.”_

_The little boy whispered, “I wet my pants.”_

_The old man nodded, “So do I.”_

“But worst of all,” said the boy, “it seems grown-ups don’t pay attention to me.”

_And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.

“I know what you mean,” said the little old man._
Survey Results

A survey consisting of 15 questions about people's attitudes about aging was conducted off campus (see Appendix A). Approximately 100 surveys were collected over a six-week period during Fall 2000. Some trends in attitude emerged in each age group surveyed. Following is a synopsis of the results.

18-24 year olds: Most respondents feel impatient when elderly people are driving in the passing lane and are annoyed to have to repeat sentences to elderly folks. One-third believe 15% of people over 75 reside in a nursing home, one-third think it is 25%, and one-third think it is 50%. Twenty percent felt they would not have a productive senior life. Half would pick the 35-year-old for the job and would not consider the 60-year-old purely based on age.

25-35 year olds: All in this age group expect to have a healthy, productive senior life. Eighty percent believe there should be an annual driving test for those over 65 years old.

35-50 year olds: None of these respondents are bothered by the slow-driving elderly or having to repeat words. One-third said they would rather not live to be 80-100 years old.

50-65 year olds: More than half want to live to be very old, and all agree that the government should help pay for prescriptions. Surprisingly, 80% think there should be a mandatory annual driving test over age 65.

Over 65 years old: The primary result from the few respondents in this age group is that they feel there should be a mandatory annual driving test and that they do not consider themselves to be very old. One 75-year-old respondent stated that she just recently had her driver's license renewed for five years by passing the vision test only, without having to take a driving test or a written exam. She felt that was out of line and a dangerous policy.
Statistics

The American Association of Retired Persons publishes an annual brochure called "A Profile of Older Americans," providing up-to-date information on the elder population. There were 34.3 million over 65 in the United States in 1998, 14.2 million were men and 20.2 million were women. Since 1900, the percentage of Americans over 65 has tripled. By 2030, there will be 70 million older persons, representing 20% of the total U.S. population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1998</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California</td>
<td>3,614,632</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>2,734,145</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>2,423,797</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1,999,751</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1,904,312</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>679,212</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depression is one of the most common and most treatable disorders of the elderly. As many as 15% of community-dwelling elderly and half of those institutionalized experience chronic depression (AARP, 1999). Factors that contribute to depression in elderly are comorbidity with a physical illness such as cancer or stroke and side effects of medications used to control those ailments. Another big reason for depression is loss – loss of spouse, friends, family. Life changes dramatically when a woman has lived with her husband for more than 50 years. He dies and she goes on, but her life will never be the same. Often times, in our transient society, family members have moved far away for a career or job transfer. The support system is gone, and this person is left with little comfort or companionship.

Severe depression can and should be treated clinically using antidepressants and biologic treatment, but for mild persistent depression, community services can become vital to reintegrate them into society and activity (Wakefield, Gerdner, Buckwalter, & Tripp-Reimer, 1998).
Employment for the Elderly

Approximately 3.7 million older Americans – 12% were in the work force in 1998, constituting 2.8% of the U.S. labor force (AARP, 1999). Because the educational level of the older population is increasing, they will be a much greater asset to the labor force in years to come. However, with this education and expertise comes high wages. Many companies simply do not want to pay the older, perhaps better qualified person when they can mold a new grad from the ground up for much less salary. There are issues such as corporate downsizing and international competition, along with mandatory retirement policies.

During the 1960s we saw a boom in mandatory retirement at age 65. It was revised to 70 years old in 1979, with the exceptions of businesses with fewer than 20 on the payroll, executives whose pensions will be greater than $27,000 per year, and tenured college professors. Mandatory retirement at the age of 70 for federal workers was abolished in 1979 and was eliminated for college professors in 1993.

Some employers see the advantage to retaining older workers, claiming that their work ethic, conscientiousness, reliability, and promptness, along with their expertise, is a positive influence on younger workers and provides an excellent integration of human resources (Trinity website, 2000).

Assisted Living

When we think of old people, we often picture a person hunched over in a wheelchair, slobbering and staring blankly, with dried food crusted in their wrinkled face. These pictures do exist, and they are indeed sad and cast a negative light on aging. But this is a very small population. In fact only 5% live in nursing homes, and of those institutionalized 65% are mentally ill. The United States has developed a much more humane system of caring for and
nurturing our elderly. It is called assisted living. There are many fine facilities that cater to people who are functioning at different levels but who need some assistance in their daily activities of grooming, medications, meals, and socialization. Perhaps they are in various stages of dementia, such as Alzheimer's. Or maybe they have had a stroke that has impaired some of their physical or mental capabilities.

Facilities like Williamsburg Villas cater to people and families who want a beautiful, serene, inviting, and stimulating environment where their loved one can live in a community setting. The Villas opened in July 1990, and each villa accommodates 16 permanent members and up to four day and evening care participants. Their theme is "More than a place to live, Morningside Williamsburg Villas are a place for living." Healthy Generations is their program that teaches residents about a balanced lifestyle and equips them to take responsibility for their physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social health. Each of the 6 villas has a similar layout, containing bedrooms, dining area, living room, game room, TV room, screened porch, and courtyard/garden. Guests are involved in recreation, gardening, crafts, classes, exercise, and social interactions. Families are free to visit, and will occasionally get a day pass to take their loved one out to eat or home for the holidays.

The primary goal is to promote the highest quality of life, optimizing independence and focusing on abilities rather than disabilities. Caregivers include both licensed and unlicensed health care workers, but all are trained in depth on aging and dementia, so the team may give the highest care possible.

The Villas publish a cookbook on occasion that includes favorite recipes of its members and their families, along with poetry and quotes. It stirs you to think about life and all the experiences one has over so many years. The holidays when you are expected to always make
that special dish, the songs you love to sing, the skills and wisdom that once brought you success in the world’s view, all wrapped up in this package who some consider unuseful. But if we can just be willing to tap into that wealth of information, knowledge, and experience, we can learn so much about life, love, and ourselves. One thought-provoking quote in the cookbook follows:

As for old age, embrace it and love it. It abounds with pleasure, if you know how to use it.
The gradually declining years are amongst the sweetest... and I maintain, that even where they have reached the extreme limit, they have their pleasure still.

Seneca

Recreation and Activities

I wondered while doing this project, what do people do when they retire? We invest so much of ourselves into our children and our careers. But the children grow up and begin lives of their own, and we often retire because it’s expected or desired, only to find that the days and nights seem very long and empty. Not so, if you know where to look.

The John T. O’Connor Senior Center is located right here in Knoxville near the old Smokies’ baseball stadium (see Appendix D). This is a place for those 55 and over to come and enjoy activities with friends, family, and community folks of similar ages. There is no membership fee and only small charges for supplies in some classes, which can be covered by scholarships if needed. There are arts and crafts classes, computer classes, dancing, fine arts, fitness, gardening groups, health checks and education, investment classes and clubs, legal assistance, support groups, trips, and volunteer opportunities. The CAC office on Aging provides free transportation.

The day I visited, I was told there wasn’t much going on, as they were winding down for the holidays, but I saw a lot of action. There were women playing bridge and men playing pool,
several were surfing the Internet and doing various projects and games on the computers. Some were gathered in conversation, while others read quietly in the library. I was very impressed at the cleanliness and atmosphere, and as always, I wonder if this is a place I would like my 75-year-old mother to come to for activities. And the answer is yes. They have a beautiful, large dance hall where they learn salsa, ballroom dancing, and line dancing, and take aerobics and strength and flexibility training. They have Senior Cloggers, a photography club, and Happy Hikers.

The John T. O'Connor Center also has a Neighbors Club Adult Day Service, which is a 6-hour day program for senior adults who need special care and companionship. It provides a place to go, friends, activities, a safe environment, and very importantly it provides respite for the primary family caregiver. These folks have a more structured day than those who come and go for activities and are monitored more closely by medically trained personnel. Also there is a gift shop full of handmade crafts that the center’s members have created, providing the public with some fine handiwork and the seniors with some spending money.

Rehabilitation

I worked at Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center at Fort Sanders Regional as a technician. This is a wonderfully positive place that provides hope for a functional life following serious illness, stroke, car accident, head trauma, or spinal cord injury. Seniors can relearn occupational skills like cooking, shopping, and bill paying, turning tragedy to triumph. The program incorporates pet, water, occupational, speech, and physical therapies to maximize the full potential of each person. I found it quite encouraging that there is a place that believes each individual is important and can achieve much more than they were ever thought capable regardless of their age.
Intergenerational Programs

The notion that we could actually put a 70-year-old together with an 8-year-old for a meaningful interaction is foreign to some who may say the gap and interests are just too wide. But promoting this exchange of knowledge, ideas, and interests has proven mutually beneficial. The University of Pittsburgh is at the forefront of this positive movement toward integration. Their extensive research has shown positive outcomes and a desire to begin more programs nationally. For older adults, activities and sharing with youth helps build self-esteem, alleviates symptoms of depression, gives meaning and validity to life, and is just plain fun. For the children, it is a time to be on stage with a captive audience, which is what most children crave and do not get in their own home life for various reasons. It is also an opportunity to learn about life in the past and how the world has changed and to alleviate the fear of aging and dispel its negative connotation.

The program is called Generations Together and its various activities are designed to benefit the participants and the community. Older adults may train to work in child care, or they may volunteer in schools for library time or science fairs. They often volunteer to help in the classroom, providing tutoring, assisting in projects, coordinating extracurricular activities, offering friendship, and reinforcing teacher-directed activities. Workshops are provided to train older adults so they will be better able to serve in these capacities. Mentors in Service to Youth (MISTY) is another program that allows older adults to work with at-risk children in elementary and middle schools. Their goals are to improve academic achievement, increase motivation to learn, enhance student’s self image, and broaden career awareness. These kids may have parents who have to work two or three jobs just to pay bills, and so the older adult can step in to take up
Youth Community Service Programs (YISTE) enlists young people to volunteer, working side by side with older adults. They serve in settings such as nursing homes, adult day care, and private residences, providing companionship and shared activities. They also are trained to help know what to expect and how to behave with certain elderly populations. They learn leadership and organizational skills as they plan activities, and most importantly, they learn to value fellow humans without regard to age or ability (Generations Together Programs, 2000).

**Affirmative Action**

Educating our children from the beginning to dispel all “isms” is the most sensible approach to a positive attitude toward aging. Many educators do not want to incorporate aging education stating that it is nontraditional and perhaps controversial. Teachers may not have adequate resources or training or have become weary of integration. These excuses are not valid because integrating aging education would be fairly easily accomplished. When talking about growing and developing, students can be encouraged to look at the entire lifespan and perhaps bring in an older guest speaker to the classroom. When discussing finances and budgets, students can see how this will effect their income in retirement years. Feelings and emotions across the life span can also be addressed. Aging can be presented in a positive light throughout the school years to promote a healthier, happier, generationally connected society (McGuire, 1987).

As a society, we also must be careful to screen the literature to which our children are exposed. Young children should have minimal exposure to literature focusing on death, dying, and illness related to aging. This serves to accentuate the negative aspects of aging and is misrepresentative of the majority of the elder population. Children should not be sheltered from literature on aging but should be exposed to the aging process in the most affirmative light
The purpose of this project is to propose that we make a concerted and collective effort in whatever career or walk of life we choose, to help stamp out ageism and to spread a renewed respect and honor for our nation’s older people. To do this we must be guarded against ageist language, literature, and media; we must teach our young children early on to appreciate and celebrate the stages of life; and we must bring the generations together to work, share, care, and respect each other’s similarities, gifts, and diversity.
Ageism and Connecting Generations

References


APPENDIX A

Opinion Survey

Please be honest. Your name will not be used; for research only. Please return to Mikki Brooks.

Your Age: 18-24___ 25-35___ 35-50___ 50-65___ over 65___

Your Gender: Male___ Female___

1. At what age do you perceive a person to be old or elderly?

40___ 50___ 60___ 70___ other __________

2. How do you feel when an elderly person is driving a car slowly in front of you, blocking the passing lane?

Angry_________ Accepting_________ Impatient_________

Shouldn't be allowed to drive_________ other _______________________

3. Does it annoy you when you have to repeat words or sentences to an elderly person?

YES______ NO______ Other _______________________

4. Does it annoy you when you have to repeat words to a person who is hearing impaired (i.e., wearing hearing aids)?

YES______ NO______ Other _______________________

5. Do you think the federal government should fund recreational/educational programs for fixed-income elderly?

YES______ NO______ Other _______________________

6. What percentage of people over 75 years old do you think reside in a nursing home?

15%_____ 25%_____ 50%____ 75%____ other _______________________

7. Would you consider you or a loved one ever being placed in a nursing home?

YES______ NO______ other _______________________

8. Do you show respect to elderly people (i.e., speak intelligently, polite, refrain from mocking or making fun)?

YES______ NO______ Other _______________________

9. Do you want to live to be very old (80-100 years old)?

YES______ NO______ Other _______________________


10. Do you anticipate, based on your current health and health history, that you will have the opportunity for a healthy, productive senior life?

YES  NO  Other

11. Scenario: A 35-year-old and a 60-year-old are competing for the same position in a law firm as a legal assistant. Both are looking for the same salary package and both have equal qualifications to perform the job. Would you, as the Human Resources Director (responsible for staffing), be inclined to select the 35-year-old because of possible length of stay issues or health and physical issues or would you select the 60-year-old as a seasoned professional, bringing extensive life and work experience to the job, knowing that he/she may retire in 5 years?

35-year-old  60-year-old  Not swayed based on age

Other

12. Do you believe the U.S. government should help pay for prescription medications that help promote healthy, long life for those over-65, fixed-income individuals who may not be able to afford it? (sometimes $1,000/month)

YES  NO  Other

13. Do you believe that your ability to think clearly decreases with age?

YES  NO  Other

14. Do you view retirement as a time for rest and relaxation or the beginning of a new, exciting chapter of life?

R&R  New Chapter  Other

15. Do you think it should be mandatory for over-65s to submit to a driving road test each year for license renewal?

YES  NO  Other
“OLD” IS RELATIVE

- Preschooler: 12 years old
- School age: 21 years old
- Young adult: 65 years old
- Active retiree: 80 or 90 years old
AGEISM DEFINED

• Ageism is prejudice against older adults through attitudes and behavior.
• Additionally, it is defined as any attitude, action, or institutional structure that subordinates a person or group because of age or any assignment of roles in society purely on the basis of age.
AGEISM DEFINED contd.

- The notion that people cease to be people, cease to be the same people, or become people of a distinct and inferior kind, by virtue of having lived a specified number of years.
AGEISM compared to other "ISMS"

• Racism solely based on race or skin color
• Sexism based on gender
• Ageism differs in that age is progressive, characterized by continual change, and no one is exempt.
• Ageism with respect to others or self.
Alby will be 101 years old and just moved to the nursing home a little over a year ago.
In 1998 there were 34.3 million over 65 in the U.S.
14.2 million men
20.2 million women
Since 1900, the % of Americans over 65 has tripled.

By 2030, there will be 70 million older persons, representing 20% of the total U.S. population.
By 2050, 1:4 elders will be at least 85
Dear Abby: A Reader’s Digest quip addressed the problem of people not talking to seniors

A daughter accompanied her mother to the doctor’s office. The doctor kept addressing the daughter regarding her mother’s condition. Finally the mother said, “Doctor, do you work crossword puzzles?”

“Yes,” he replied, trying to humor her.

“Do you do them with pencil or pen?” she asked.

“With a pencil,” he replied.

Well, I do them in ink. Now, talk to ME!”
The Little Boy and the Old Man
by Shel Silverstein

Said the little boy, “Sometimes I drop my spoon.”
Said the little old man, “I do that, too.”
The little boy whispered, “I wet my pants.”
“I do that, too,” laughed the little old man.

Said the little boy, “I often cry.”
The old man nodded, “So do I.”

“But worst of all,” said the boy, “it seems grown-ups don’t pay attention to me.”

And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
“I know what you mean,” said the little old man.
HOW OLD IS OLD?

The graph shows the distribution of ages as follows:

- **18-24**
- **25-35**
- **35-50**
- **50-65**
- **OVER 65**
- **3-D Column 6**

The x-axis represents age groups in years, and the y-axis represents the number of individuals in each age group. The bars indicate the frequency of each age group.
OTHER SURVEY RESULTS
18-24 YEAR OLDS

• Most feel impatient when elderly driving slowly in fast lane
• Most are not annoyed to repeat to elderly
• only one voted against government funding elderly programs
• split 3 ways on % in nursing homes: 1/3 15%, 1/3 25%, and 1/3 50%
SURVEY 18-24 contd.

• split 50/50 on putting loved one in nursing home
• all show respect to elderly
• most want to live to be old old, but many qualify it with good health only.
• 20% thought they would not have a healthy, productive senior life
SURVEY 18-24 contd.

• about 1/2 for job interview not swayed based on age, but majority remaining would pick the 35-year-old
• 80% thought government should help pay for prescription meds
• mandatory driving test over 65 split 50/50
• think clearly decreases with age 50/50
SURVEY 25-35

- Never annoyed to repeat words
- All but one thought gov. should fund rec. activities
- All expect to have healthy senior life
- 80% believe in a mandatory driving test over 65 years old
- Most not swayed on age for job applicant
- Retirement is a new chapter for 1/2, R&R for half
SURVEY 35-50 YEAR OLDS

- Slow-driving person does not bother them
- repeating does not bother
- loved one in nursing home split 50/50
- more than 1/2 believe cognition decr. w/age

- 1/3 said they’d rather not live to be 80-100
- 20% picked the 35-year-old
- all thought the gov. should help with scrips
SURVEY 50-65 years old

- Most believe 25% reside in a nursing home over 75 years
- 60% want to live to be old old
- all say gov. should help with scrips

- Over 1/2 picked the 60-year-old for the job
- 80% think driving test should be mandatory
How many do live in nursing homes over age 75?

- Only 5%!!
- Most are living productive lives or are being cared for by family.
- Of those in long-term care, 65% have a mental disorder.
- Of those over 85, 20% are institutionalized.
DEPRESSION AFFLICTS OUR ELDERLY
Prevalence of Depression in Elderly

- 15%-20% of community-dwelling elderly are depressed
- 1/2 institutionalized suffer chronic depression
- meds side effects
- loss of loved one
- children moved far away
HOW CAN WE HELP TURN DEPRESSION TO JOY & FULFILLMENT?
Williamsburg Villas
Assisted Living

- "More than a place to live, Morningside Williamsburg Villas are a place for living"
- *Healthy Generations* teaches residents about a balanced lifestyle and equips them to take responsibility for their physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social health
- Residents are active in groups, gardening, art, education, cooking, singing
Williamsburg Villas - Assisted Living

COOKBOOK
OF
MEMORIES
As for old age, embrace it and love it. It abounds with pleasure, if you know how to use it. The gradually declining years are amongst the sweetest...and I maintain, that even where they have reached the extreme limit, they have their pleasure still.

Seneca
WILLIAMSBURG VILLAS GARDEN

Williamsburg Villas
3211 W. John Sevier Hwy.
Knoxville TN 37920
(423) 573-0100
John T. O’Connor Senior Center

- Located in Knoxville by the old Smokies’ stadium
- Offers education classes, computer, sports, arts and crafts, dance, exercise, games, fellowship, and fun
- http://community.knoxville.com
TRANSPORTATION
GARDENING AT THE SENIOR CENTER
HORSESHOES
SOFTBALL
BARBERSHOP BAND
JOINING GENERATIONS
JOINING GENERATIONS
POODLE SKIRTS
BILLIARDS
PATRICIA NEAL
REHABILITATION
FORT SANDERS REGIONAL

- Provides hope for a functional life
- Turns tragedy to triumph
- Changes families’ lives
- Maximizes abilities
- Promotes a positive attitude

- Serves all ages - children--senior adults
- Strokes, car accidents, spinal cord injury, and head trauma
- Seniors relearn occupational skills: cooking, shopping, paying bills
PET THERAPY
WATER THERAPY
CONNECTING THE GENERATIONS

- Disconnection is a result of our transient society
- Myths exist regarding old age
- Kids will learn about aging one way or another
- They may learn negative aspects through media
- Ignorance or lack of guidance may lead to misconceptions of old age
- How do we change this phenomenon?
CONNECTING THE GENERATIONS

- Ageshare

- KATS: Kids Are Tomorrow’s Seniors

- SASSY: Seniors and Sitka Sound Youth project in Sitka, Alaska. This program brings together youth and seniors to share with and learn from each other.
Connecting the Generations

- Youth interview seniors and write an essay on the interaction
- Seniors teach a trade to students, like painting, sculpting, singing
- Youth and seniors exercise together
- Seniors are lunchroom monitors
- Seniors talk about the ups and downs of their careers and life
- Seniors read select books to children
- Youth and seniors put on a play together
FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

- The Foster Grandparent Program has been in existence 35 years nationally.
- Locally, part of the CAC Office on Aging.
- Foster Grandparents serve children and youth with special needs in schools, day care centers, hospitals, youth centers, and juvenile correction facilities.
- For seniors (age 60+) on limited income. Small stipend; 20 hours per week. Assistance with transportation provided.
Intergenerational Programs

- Univ. of Pittsburgh
- Generations Together
- Youth in Service to Elders (YISTE)
- Mentors in Service to Youth (MISTY)
- training for both age groups
- helping, learning, sharing, caring
- http://www.pitt.edu/~gti/programs.html
POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Dispels myths about aging
- Increases self-esteem in both youth and seniors
- Reduces depression in both youth and seniors
- Provides physical and social activity
- Promotes better health
- Personal dignity and respect
- Reduces suicide and alcoholism
- Provides fun and fellowship
- Imparts wisdom to youth
Finding Us Is Easy

John T. O’Connor Senior Center

(865) 523-1135
Fax: (865) 523-7869

Visit our web site at:
http://community.knoxville.com

A Place for Your Active Years
The John T. O'Connor Senior Center

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Thursday evenings until 7:00 p.m.
May 4 - August 31

The John T. O'Connor Senior Center is a unique facility that provides seniors a place to be mentally and physically active and to participate in educational, recreational and social activities.

Key Information

- Ages 55 and over
- Resident of Knox County
- No membership fee
- Diner
- Adult Day Services
- Health Services

Some activities require registration and a small charge for supplies in class. Limited scholarship funds are available.

Activities and Programs

- Arts and Crafts classes
- Blood Pressure checks daily
- Computer classes
- Dancing
- Exceptional Gifts gift shop
- Fine Arts
- Fitness
- Food Functions
- Gardening groups
- Health Checks and classes
- Information and Referral
- Investment classes and clubs
- Legal Assistance
- Recreation
- Self Help/Support Groups
- Trips
- Volunteer opportunities

“This place is WONDERFUL!”
O'Connor participant.
Participants Must Enroll & Attend On A Planned Basis

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY AND/OR THURSDAY
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

A GOAL OF NEIGHBORS CLUB IS TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE CARE FOR THE CITIZENS OF KNOXVILLE, / KNOX COUNTY

MISSION STATEMENT
To provide a quality day designed to Give the participant a feeling of Belonging, of being with friends, And people who care about them. To provide activities which will Bring smiles to their faces, Positive experiences and an Overall feeling that This is a good day!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
THE JOHN T. O'CONNOR SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER
(423) 523-1135
(865) Effective Feb. 2000

O'Connor Senior Center
611 Winona
Knoxville, TN 37917

John T. O'Connor Senior Center
611 Winona Street
Knoxville, TN 37917
Phone: (865) 523-1135
Fax: (865) 523-7869
E-mail: mmccloud@knxcac.org

Melinda L. McCloud
Day Care Coordinator

Neighbors Club Adult Day Service
John T. O'Connor Senior Center
611 Winona
Knoxville, TN 37917
Phone: 523-1135
Fax: 523-7869

Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee Office on Aging
NEIGHBORS CLUB
A SIX HOUR DAY PROGRAM
FOR SENIOR ADULTS
WHO NEED SPECIAL CARE
AND COMPANIONSHIP

PROVIDES
A PLACE TO GO
SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO
NEW FRIENDS
ACTIVITIES
A SAFE & CARING ENVIRONMENT
CAREGIVER RESPITE

ENROLLMENT POLICY
55 YEARS OR OLDER
KNOX COUNTY RESIDENT
AMBULATORY OR SEMI-AMBULATORY
CAPABLE OF BASIC SELF-CARE
ABLE TO ADAPT TO GROUP SETTING

DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00 - 10:00 Arrival
Morning Snack
Newspaper
Visit & Conversation

10:00 - 10:30 Armchair Exercise

10:30 - 11:00 Current Event Discussion

11:00 - 12:00 Activity

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch
(Hot Meal Provided By Senior Nutrition Program)
Visit/Conversation

1:00 - 1:30 Lounge Chair Comfort
Listen Time - Music, Stories
Rest Time For Some

1:30 - 2:45 Activity

2:45 - 3:00 Get Ready To Go Home

ACTIVITIES

Singing Reminiscing
Story Telling Games
Cards Arts/Crafts
Travelogues Cooking
Gardening Bingo
Speakers Writing
History Exercise
Parties Music
Theme Events Discussions
Health Screenings
Holiday Happenings
Remembering Old Facts
Learning New Facts
Talking And Listening
Sharing And Caring

All Group Activities Are Designed To Accomodate Individual Abilities & Interests