

# Generation

# *Celebration*



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This edition was prepared by Jan Scholl and Matthew Kaplan, associate professors of agricultural and extension education, and Lydia Hanhardt, program associate. The first edition was prepared by Michelle Rodgers, Jan Scholl, and Barbara Davis in 1995.

This second edition of *Generation Celebration* covers the same themes and goals as the original curriculum, but the format has been updated based largely on the comments of Pennsylvania 4-H and family and consumer science extension agents. Changes have been made to the structure and labeling of some sessions.

*Generation Celebration* features six sessions. The table of contents outlines the types of activities included in the project and where they can be found. Activities may be completed by an individual or in a group setting. “Fun with My Friend” activities involve both a young person and an adult who is several generations older. All activities should include supervision by a parent or leader, at least to start.

Each session in this project begins with an introduction. Activities, checklists, and questions are provided in order to stimulate learning and two-way conversation between the youth and the older adult participant. Alternate activities are optional or may be substituted for the main activities if they work better in your situation. Resources, references, and further reading sections are included in the this guide.

The *Generation Celebration* project is primarily designed for older youths and teens. Certain activities may need to be modified for younger participants, particularly those that require reading, writing, and interviewing an older adult. “Fun with My Friend” activities should be carried out with an older adult at least one generation older and preferably 65 years or older, with permission granted by the parents. Younger participants may limit their contact to older adult relatives who live in the home or who are well known by the parents. All members should be supervised by parents and leaders.

This project supports the development of life skills in personal development, community work, relating to others, and acquiring, analyzing, and using information. Life skills are tools for coping with daily situations, making decisions, and enhancing the quality of our lives. The 4-H program has a long tradition of helping youths develop life skills.

Some activities were adapted from *Insights on Aging* by Mary Kalymum, 1979. Permission was granted by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences to use the information included in this publication.

The activity “What Does ‘Old’ Mean?” was adapted from a pamphlet by the same name developed by the Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Storytelling practices were taken from *Celebrate Your Family Through Stories* by Pat Leach, Penn State Cooperative Extension, 1984.

“Jumping to Conclusions” was adapted from “Growing Up and Growing Older: Confronting Ageism,” an activity developed by Fran Pratt, director of the Center for Understanding Aging in Framingham, Massachusetts.

## 4-H Program Goals

In today's rapidly changing world, young people face choices, challenges, and opportunities unheard of just 25 years ago. To address these needs, the 4-H program sponsors relevant, organized learning experiences in which youths, their parents, and other adults work together.

With youth development as its primary goal, 4-H builds upon the expertise of Cooperative Extension and the knowledge, experience, and dedication of volunteer leaders. Programs are designed to help young people acquire the information, skills, and understanding they need to make wise decisions about their futures.

4-H programs are based on the philosophy of "learning by doing," so members participate in planning activities as well as in real-life learning experiences. Family and community members play a major role in determining the depth, significance, and future application of the learning that takes place.

The 4-H program has a long tradition of helping youths develop life skills to enhance personal development, relationships with others, and the ability to acquire, analyze, and use information. This project is designed to enhance all of these life skills.

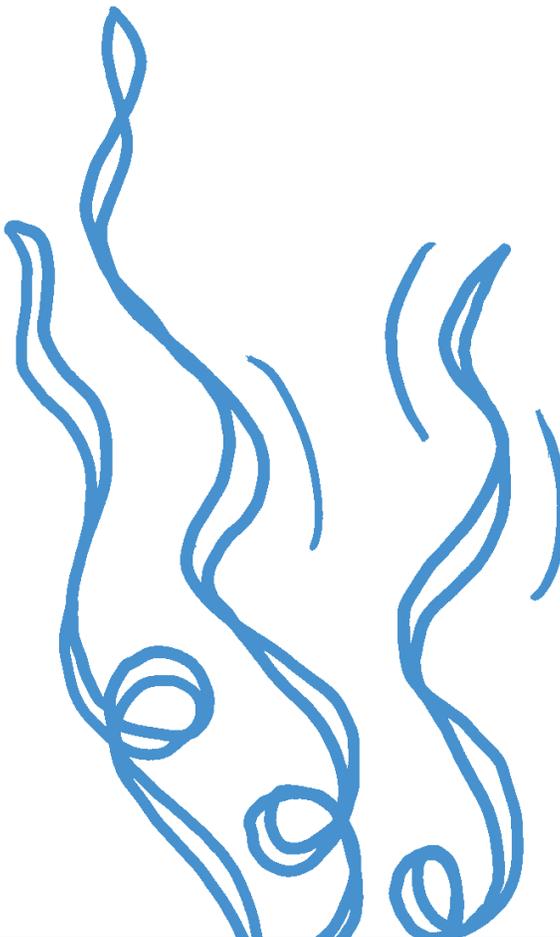
## The Leader's Role

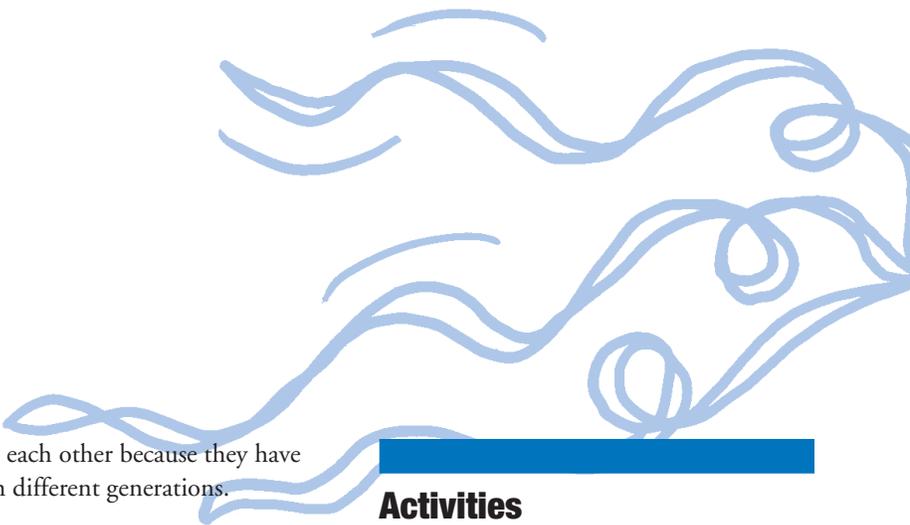
This manual will help you plan and carry out your project, build member participation, and learn about the developmental needs and interests of youths 8 to 18 years of age. There may be other leaders, professionals, and parents in your local area who have experiences and suggestions that will help you carry out this project.

Keep your extension educator and parents informed of your activities and plans. They may be able to provide resource information and help you connect youths with older adults who will be interested in this experience.

## Screening of Volunteers

Cooperative Extension wants to provide quality educational experiences for young people involved in its programming. It also wants to address issues concerning the well-being and safety of youth. Through the use of an established application and screening process, Cooperative Extension agents are able to appropriately place volunteers within their programs. Potential volunteers who will be working with youth under the age of 18 need to complete the established application and screening process before they begin working with youth.





## Generation Celebration Project Overview

In the United States today, there are more people over 65 years old than there are teenagers. In fact, this older group is the fastest-growing segment of our population. Yet many children, teenagers, and adults have an inaccurate view of aging—a view that can foster negative stereotypes of older people. Unfortunately, some older people absorb these negative views into their self-perceptions. Young people need to obtain accurate information about the aging process and become acquainted with older persons if they are to fully appreciate the diversity and the contributions of older relatives, neighbors, and other community members.

Geographical distance and economic circumstances may prevent many grandparents and grandchildren from seeing each other regularly. Moreover, because neighborhoods are often age-segregated, young people have few opportunities to become acquainted with their elders. Research findings show that positive experiences with older adults help youths develop healthy attitudes about aging. This contact can improve self-esteem and motivation for both the youth and the older adult.

The Generation Celebration project comprises six sessions designed to assist youths and older adults in learning about each other as individuals, and to share their feelings and needs. As they learn that they have many feelings and needs in common, they will also learn many new

things from each other because they have grown up in different generations.

Older people are healthier and more active than their counterparts of a generation ago. They can give the young a sense of stability—the assurance that although life brings many changes and some hard times, it is possible to overcome difficulties and continue to lead productive lives.

Many older adults can impart ways to manage change and help younger people learn to make important decisions. They also can share skills needed in everyday life: basic life skills, ways to conserve resources, skills in art and music, outdoor skills, and positive ways to get along with other people.

In turn, youths can assure older people that they are needed and that they are appreciated for who they are, what they have contributed, and what they continue to give. Each generation can provide a sense of security and belonging for the other.

The program, therefore, seeks to help youths:

- develop healthy relationships with older adults
- increase sensitivity to the needs of others
- gain a more accurate perception of what it means to grow older
- value the experiences and perspectives of the elder generation
- understand the full cycle of life

## Activities

4-H'ers will be encouraged to examine their attitudes toward aging by participating in group learning activities and by interacting with older people in their families and communities.

A variety of learning experiences are provided to help young people understand the life situations, health status, and capabilities of older people. These experiences are detailed in the member guide. These learning aids include:

- activities to simulate age-related sensory losses
- checklists to help youth examine the images of aging portrayed by mass media
- games designed to create opportunities to interact with older adults
- activities to stimulate skill sharing

## Risk Management

As with all activities, there is a risk of injury resulting from a visit to the older person's residence or during the home visit. In all cases, youths should be accompanied by a leader or a parent on at least the first visit with the older adult, be supervised during subsequent visits, and never be forced to participate in a situation in which they do not feel comfortable.

Parents need to give you permission to involve their child in the project. They also must be kept informed of where their children will be and whom they are visiting. As much as possible, parents need to be involved in this project and present during the visits with the older adults. Permission slips outlining the project, the project goals, and the schedule of events should be completed and given to you before the project starts. Keep a list of parent phone numbers in case of an injury or illness during a meeting, visit, or event.

Visit with the young people about any hesitation or questions they may have about their experiences. Young people may need to ask questions if they are having trouble understanding the older person. Participants also may be shy. This is often a new experience for them.

Answer the questions to the best of your ability and solicit the older person's assistance as well. Once young people establish a friendship and people skills, they are often more confident in the relationship. If any troubling experience should occur during a visit, encourage the young person to talk with you and to express any feelings related to the visit.

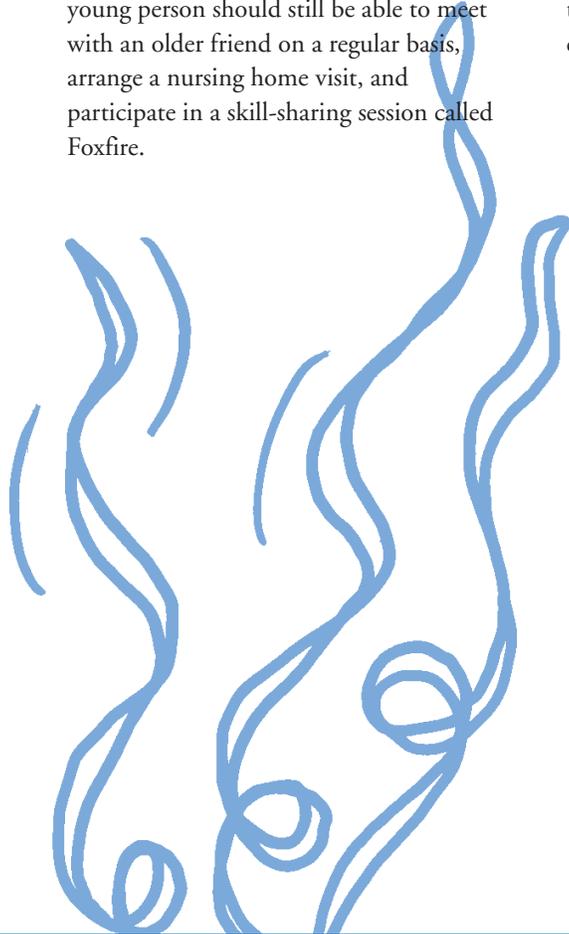
## Audience

Youths ages 8–18 can participate, although this project is designed mainly for older youth and teens. You may need to modify activities for younger participants, particularly activities that require reading and writing. Older adults may be relatives, neighbors, and friends, or someone in a nursing home or living at home. In cases where a couple lives at home, the young person may want to visit both older adults together.

It is ideal if a group of young people take the project together so that there is additional discussion, planning, and idea sharing. If you are not able to do the project as a group, encourage individual youth to do the group activities at home with family members. With assistance, the young person should still be able to meet with an older friend on a regular basis, arrange a nursing home visit, and participate in a skill-sharing session called Foxfire.

## Special Notes

As group members think about building a special friendship with an older person in the community, help them select someone who is relatively healthy, mentally alert, friendly, and who will contribute to a positive learning experience. Obtain written parental permission for the young person to visit with his or her older friend and for the group to visit a nursing home. Give parents schedules of where the youth will be and how they may be reached, and inform parents of any changes. Make sure the participants know how to reach you in case they need to ask questions.



## Organizing the Project

The project is organized into six sessions:

Session 1: Our Attitudes Toward Aging

Session 2: Aging and the Media

Session 3: What about the Senses?

Session 4: Storytelling

Session 5: Making Visits Count

Session 6: Foxfire: A Generation Celebration

First, read through both the member and leader guides thoroughly. You'll need to plan several weeks ahead to make sure you have the resources required for each session and to arrange for the activities you want to incorporate. Also, include input from your group members and their parents. Having a plan helps you obtain resources more easily and helps everyone know what events are coming up. Ask your county 4-H agent or other extension educator to help you locate resources.

Many organizations have materials on intergenerational programs to share. The local chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the Area Agency on Aging are two groups that might be willing to become involved in your program, share information about resources in the community, and locate elders who would like to get involved. Also, don't forget your local library! There are many books about children and older adults that can be checked out.

## Forming Planning Committee

Before launching a group project, assemble a planning committee. Involve at least one parent of a member, two older adults, and several young people. You might include your extension educator, a representative from an area aging association, or a leader in your community who has conducted this project with another group. Choose the activities that are the most meaningful to your group and outline a plan of action. To spark enthusiasm, distribute member guides and present the plan to the youths and their parents. Explain activities and answer questions. Share possibilities for cooperation with older adult organizations.

Make a "to-do" list to acquire resources, contact speakers, and plan the final Foxfire session. Involve members, parents, and leaders in the preparations for future meetings. Help connect youths with older persons if they need this kind of assistance.

The plan and "to-do" list should include dates, times, and locations of meetings. In addition, each member should have a calendar to schedule meetings with their older friend(s).

Suggest ways parents can help their children with project activities. Follow up with parents who were not part of any planning activities and ask for their help.

## Scheduling Resources

Create a list of all the resources you'll need and the people you'll want to contact. Keep track of which resources work well in your group. Your extension educator will also want to know this information and will want to share it with others.

Also, several weeks in advance, work with your planning committee to organize and schedule a date to visit a nursing home, identify books that might be useful for the young people to read, and set a date for the Foxfire celebration activity.

# 1

## Session 1: Our Attitudes Toward Aging

### Background Information

Americans are living longer and maintaining their health better than ever before. Active people in their 70s and 80s are found in most communities, yet attitudes toward aging remain ambivalent at best.

Many examples of “ageism” can be found in our society. Ageism promotes the attitude that there are “good ages” and “bad ages.” Biases against aging are both bold and subtle. Age discrimination in employment or ageist jokes may come to mind. Negative portrayals of aging in “humorous” birthday cards have come under attack because they portray negative stereotypes of aging in America. We are a society that glorifies youth, a society where anti-aging cosmetics and facelifts flourish, and where experience often takes second place to “fresh ideas.” There is a tendency to think of older people as boring, rigid, lonely, idle, or dowdy. Older women are especially susceptible to negative stereotyping. Who has not heard words like “shrew,” “hag,” or “dowager” used to describe an older woman?

To discourage negative stereotyping of older people, it is also important not to glamorize the experience of aging. The retirement years are not always carefree. Older people struggle with most of the same physical, emotional, and financial challenges that face younger adults. The only general statement that applies to all older people is that they have lived longer. They come from all parts of society, have a variety of educational backgrounds, are healthy and ill, rich and poor, enjoy quiet

and active pursuits, and have friends, lovers, and families.

Today’s children can expect to live longer than previous generations. It is important for them to develop informed attitudes about aging, appreciate older adults, and have a healthy understanding of the aging process as they grow older themselves. The rewards and the challenges of later life need to be seen from a realistic perspective.

As a leader, it is important to sensitize yourself to the examples of ageism you see and hear around you before leading this session. Be aware, too, of the positive aspects of aging and give examples of healthy, supportive attitudes and actions toward older persons. Remember that age differences may not be the only new thing that youths will encounter. You might want to review with them the fact that different cultures have different attitudes toward youths and elders. For example, in some cultures, youths are expected to do more listening than speaking when communicating with their elders. Also, different cultures have different attitudes toward touching and humor.

Three main activities are suggested in this session:

- How Do We View Older Adults?
- What Does “Old” Mean?
- Jumping to Conclusions

The activities in this section are designed to help young people become more aware of their attitudes toward older adults. See the member’s guide for instructions. Help members complete the activities.

### Activity 1: How Do We View Older Adults?

(member’s guide, page 6)

This activity gives statements to which youths are asked to share their level of agreement/disagreement. There are no right or wrong replies. The idea is to create an awareness of the young person’s attitudes.

### Questions in Activity 2: What Does “Old” Mean?

(member’s guide, page 7)

This activity gives youths an additional opportunity to challenge their opinions against what is actually known about aging.

### Activity 3: Jumping to Conclusions

(member’s guide, page 8)

This activity will help the young people realize that people often have similar misconceptions about both youth and older adults.

In all three activities, it is helpful if the young people complete their own surveys and then use their answers as a basis for a group discussion. In all cases, the youths should feel free to express their opinions without criticism and be encouraged to research answers to questions they might have thought about during the discussion.

## Alternate Activity: Stories about Youth and Older Adults

An alternate activity is to read several fiction books that depict young people and older people together. These are stories that show youths how other young people interact with older people and what they learn. Most of the stories are very short. With the help of a children's librarian, you will have no trouble locating any number of titles. Suggested titles are listed below:

Dionetti, M. (1991).

*Coal Mine Peaches*. New York: Orchard Books, 30 pages.

Johnson, T. (1998).

*Yonder*. New York: Dial Books, 32 pages.

Martin, B. & Archambault, J.

*Knots on a Counting Rope*. New York: Henry Holt, 32 pages.

Nomura, Takaaki. (1991).

*Grandpa's Town*. Brooklyn, NY: Kane/ Miller Book Publishers, 16 pages.

Polacco, P. (1988).

*The Keeping Quilt*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 30 pages.

Polacco, P. (1990).

*Thunder Cake*. New York: Philomel Books, 32 pages.

Polacco, P. (1992).

*Mrs. Katz and Tush*. New York: Bantam Little Rooster Book, 32 pages.

Polacco, P. (1992).

*Picnic at Mudsock Meadow*. New York: Putnam's, 30 pages.

Polacco, P. (1993).

*Babushka's Doll*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 30 pages.

Polacco, P. (1993).

*The Bee Tree*. New York: Philomel Books, 29 pages.

Sakai, K. (1990).

*Sachiko Means Happiness*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 16 pages.

Spinelli, E. (1991).

*Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch*. New York: Bradbury Press, 31 pages.

Another alternate activity might be to write down any biased statements group members have heard about older people and talk about why such statements are "put downs." For example: "She's too old to get married again" or "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." Members might work in pairs to prepare skits in which one gives a situation where the statement might have been used and the other explains what might be wrong with it. How do they think older people feel about such statements?

## Fun with My Friend: "Getting to Know You" Card Game

The "Getting to Know You" Card Game is designed to help children and their senior adult friends get to know each other in a fun, low-key way. All the cards from the member's guide should be photocopied and cut out in advance. The young person and the older adult should take turns picking up cards and asking questions of each other. If someone doesn't want to answer a question, that's fine—just go on to the next question or card.

## After the Visit

The young people should write down information they learned from their older adult friends. They should write about how the visit went, and start jotting down some special things they would like to do with their friends in the future. All of this information should be put in their reports (located in the back of the member's guide). A short report should be made after all their group work and their visits. Before or at your next meeting help participants make arrangements for their next visits and plan a fun activity that they might do with their special friends.

# 2

## Session 2: Aging and the Media

### Background Information and Advance Preparation

Television, newspapers, magazines, movies, and other mass media are powerful shapers of attitudes among old and young. Sometimes there is a fine line between what the media reflect of contemporary attitudes and what they influence. It is important to look critically at the attitudes toward aging and aging persons projected by television and other forms of mass media.

Collect and have your members read several different types of magazines and view a variety of television programs, keeping a critical eye on ways older persons are depicted. Keep the following questions in mind as you read and watch:

- How wide of a range of roles is shown for older people? Are they portrayed with both strengths and weaknesses, or are they one-dimensional?
- Are older women shown almost exclusively as wives, mothers, and grandmothers, or are they shown making a variety of contributions in paid and volunteer settings? Do older men seem to command more respect than older women?
- Are older people shown doing a variety of things, like active sports, using special skills, helping others, and interacting with spouses and families? Do they wear different styles of clothing? Do they have a diversity of hair colors and hairstyles?

- Are older people treated in a demeaning manner? Do others call them “dear,” “sweetie,” or “honey,” or refer to them as “little” or “over the hill”? Do people joke about having “senior moments”?
- Are older people portrayed as helpless, poor, sick, weak, incompetent, sexless, laughable, or isolated? What products are advertised by older people?
- How much do media portrayals of aging apply to the older persons you know in your own family and community?
- Can you point to examples in which older people are portrayed realistically, with feelings, hopes, relationships, and problems much like those experienced by adults of any age?

As you become aware of aging as depicted in the media, see how well the following facts correspond to what you see:

- 75 percent of older people age 65–74 feel healthy; 66 percent of those older than 75 feel healthy.
- 75 percent of men and 41 percent of women 65 and older live with their spouses.
- 9.9 percent of men and 18.6 percent of women 65 and older live with other relatives or nonrelated persons.
- 40.8 percent of older women and 15.5 percent of older men live alone.
- 5 percent of all people over 65 live in nursing homes at any one time.
- 12.9 percent of older adults have incomes below the poverty line, while 27.6 percent live “near poverty.”

(U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996).

## Activity 1: Spotlight on You

(member's guide, page 12)

Introduce the session as follows: If we listen and watch very carefully, we will become aware of many different attitudes toward aging. Many of our attitudes are formed by what we see, hear, and read in the media.

Give members an opportunity to express their attitudes toward the way the media depict aging and older people using the exercises given for this activity. Explain any words younger members may not understand. If they are frustrated by what is asked for, tell them to skip that item. This is not a test!

There are no right or wrong answers in this exercise because it deals with attitudes. Encourage members to discuss how much they agree or disagree with each statement and share reasons for checking the boxes as they did. This will help to bring out the influences on their thinking. Move along rather quickly with this discussion, because it leads into a related activity for which you will need a larger amount of your time.

## Activity 2: Media Watch

(member's guide, page 13)

This activity helps members decide how aging is depicted in the media. Divide the group into pairs and give each pair two newspapers or magazines with at least one article or story about older people. Ask each 4-H'er to read both articles and answer the questions in the member's guide. On completion, have teams share what they have read and the reactions they have recorded. A similar process can be followed for television shows: have participants discuss their answers to the "Television Watch" questions in the member's guide. Reserve at least 45 minutes for the entire activity. This can also be done by older adults and youths working together.

## Activity 3: Advertising Watch

(member's guide, page 14)

Go through taped movies from a number of years past or have members watch television for a prescribed amount of time before or during the meeting. Discuss what was found in their informal survey and what they would do if they were advertising the product shown.

## After the Visit

On the page titled, "Fun with My Friend," the young people will record the activities they enjoyed together and what was learned from their experiences.

## Alternate Activity: More Media Watch

The member's guide offers an alternate media watch experience that involves both the youth and the older adult. This activity expands what was learned through discussion and having the older adult friend express his or her point of view.

Assign "More Media Watch" (member's guide, page 15) so that members can follow up what you started during group time. Explain what they are to do during the week for this segment and answer any questions they have.

Preparing the 4-H members for Fun with My Friend: Sharing Fun Together.

Before the next session, have members arrange a time that they can meet with their friends and plan an activity that they will do together. Members need to plan in advance what they will bring, and think about how to make the visit a shared experience. The activities in the member's guide are only suggestions.

Start now to arrange the group's nursing home visits that will follow Session 5 of the project. Select a nursing home known for providing a high level of care and one where visitors are welcome. Call or visit the home administrator and explain the Generation Celebration project and its objectives. Ask if you can arrange for the group to visit the home and have some orientation from a staff member, a brief tour, and an opportunity to visit with some of the residents individually or in small groups. Send the administrator a copy of the member's guide so that he or she will know what experiences the young people have had prior to the visit. Also arrange that a thank-you card be sent following the experience.

# 3

## Session 3: What about the Senses?

### Background Information and Advance Preparation

What should you and your 4-H'ers know about normal, age-related changes in the five senses? These are important to understand, because it is through our senses that we stay in touch with the world around us and are able to enjoy life. The following information summarizes normal age-related changes in the five senses.

- The efficiency of vision, hearing, taste, touch, and smell declines with age, but the age that decline begins and the rate of decline differ markedly among people.
- Changes can be made in the environment to ease a person's adjustment to sensory losses.
- Although most older people function very well, sensory changes may mean reduced mobility, increased dependence on others, inaccurate perceptions of the world around them and of what is said to them, reduced ability to communicate with others, frustration, difficulty in doing tasks or not being able to do them at all, and not feeling good about oneself.
- When we are able to understand the effects of sensory loss, we are better able to provide positive support for an older person, avoid unreasonable expectations, and keep ourselves from mistakenly labeling an older person (particularly the hearing impaired) as "senile," "confused," or "failing."
- Changes in vision and hearing are especially critical because they may create isolation as well as difficulty functioning in the environment.
- Despite the sensory changes that older adults experience, many are able to function more effectively than younger people. They are able to draw upon skills, knowledge, and a lifetime of experiences, and to detect subtleties in a person's tone of voice, expression, and body language. Have young people focus their attention on the older adult's abilities rather than their disabilities.

### Changes in Vision

#### Acuity

Gradual loss of the ability of the eyes to see clearly after about age 50.

Farsightedness (presbyopia).

Diminished ability to see close objects becomes noticeable in the 40s and 50s. Even with bifocals, many older people find it difficult to see small details (hole in needle, directions on medications, numbers in a telephone directory, and so on).

#### Color Perception

The lens of the eye yellows with age and filters out colors at the blue end of the light spectrum. Blues, greens, and violets are hard to distinguish. This can affect matching of clothes in one's wardrobe and makes it hard to distinguish a blue flower from a green leaf in a bouquet. It is easier for older adults to see yellows, oranges, and reds.

Decreased sensitivity to light and increased sensitivity to glare.

The eye loses ability to adapt to changes in light level. When entering or leaving a darkened room, an older person usually needs more time than a younger person to adjust to changes in light level. This condition can cause momentary blindness during night driving. Night driving can also be hazardous because of the glare from oncoming headlights on wet roads.

It helps when light is of sufficient brightness and is distributed evenly. Shiny surfaces, which cause glare, should be minimized.

Cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration are three other conditions more common among older people.

## Changes in Hearing

Hearing loss affects more people than any other chronic condition. It rarely inspires sympathetic understanding. Thirty to fifty percent of older people have hearing loss that affects communication and relationships with others.

Older men generally have greater hearing loss than older women, probably because of job-related noise.

Hearing loss can lead to isolation, anxiety, and depression. Even a slight hearing loss can be upsetting if it interferes with understanding normal conversation.

There are two types of hearing loss:

### Conductive hearing loss

Sound waves are not properly conducted to the inner ear; all sounds seem muffled. Caused by an obstruction or middle ear problem.

### Sensory-neural loss

Sound waves reach the inner ear but are not properly converted to a message that can be passed on to the brain. Presbycusis (“pres-bi-coo-sis”) is age-related sensory-neural loss in which low-pitched sounds can be heard, but the high-frequency sounds of speech are distorted. Vowels are low-pitched sounds; consonants are high-pitched sounds. Therefore, a hearing-impaired older person may hear “dead” instead of “bed” or “fill” instead of “pill.” High-tone loss is universal in old age, but there are wide differences in the degree of loss.

## Changes in Taste and Smell

Reductions in taste and smell affect the ability to enjoy food. Taste sensitivity is usually not serious until the seventh decade of life. Smoking and poor dental hygiene can also affect the sense of taste.

Taste receptors that identify sweet and salty foods appear to decline sooner than those that identify sour and bitter flavors. No wonder some older people say that their food tasted better when they were younger!

Decline in the sense of smell may further suppress an older person’s appetite. The person may also be unaware of body odors or household odors that are offensive to others. This loss can be dangerous if a person cannot smell the warning odors of smoke, gas, or spoiled food.

## Changes in Touch

Research is limited, but there seems to be an age-related change in the ability to detect pain. Skin sensitivity decreases and it becomes harder to distinguish certain textures and objects from touch alone.

Some older people may not be able to detect hot temperatures in bath water and are susceptible to burns. Those with diabetes may have little or no feeling in their feet. They may need to wear shoes that cover much of the foot and have someone check their feet often for infection.

To prepare for this session, read the Generation Celebration member’s guide and plan to carry out the activities suggested. They are designed to help your group become more empathetic toward older people with sensory changes. Have the following materials on hand in sufficient quantity for your 4-H meeting: yellow cellophane (or petroleum jelly) and sunglasses, pages of a phone book, disposable earplugs, and surgical gloves or tape.

You might also like to bake some tasteless cookies according to the following recipe (also found in the member’s guide):

Sift 1 cup flour and 1/4 teaspoon of baking powder together (you can stir the flour in the 1 cup measure and level off—do not pack the flour down). Pour in the bowl and mix with the measured baking powder. Blend in 1/4 cup shortening. Add 1 egg. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour. Roll into small balls and press flat with a fork, dipped in flour. Bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 6–8 minutes. Makes 20 cookies about 1 inch in diameter. You can double the recipe if needed, but a few go a long way! (Adapted from Schmall, 1986.)

## Activity 1: How Aging Affects Our Senses

(member's guide, page 16)

Talk with the group about experiences you've had with an older person who has trouble seeing or hearing. Help members understand that since many of these changes come gradually, older people can adjust quite well, but some things in daily life might be a little harder. Emphasize that sensory losses are unrelated to a person's ability to think or to know how to do something.

Guide the group through the exercises in the member's guide to help them get an idea of what it is like to experience some of these age-related changes. Encourage members to describe their feelings as they experience each of these changes.

## Alternate Activity: Three Views of Aging

A different member of the group should read each case study aloud and answer questions as a group. Have members record answers to the last two questions individually and share their ideas with the group if there is time. (This could be an activity that members complete on their own.)

## Fun with My Friend to Complete before Session 4

Go over the directions for Session 3, Fun with My Friend activity in the member's guide. The emphasis is on doing something helpful for the member's older friend. If the friend is active and healthy, the help needed might be something quite different from that given to a person who cannot rake leaves or weed the garden. Ask for ideas from the group and help young people be sensitive to safe kinds of assistance appropriate for their older friends' special needs.

If you have time, you might arrange to visit a physical therapist or review catalogs to see what tools help older people remain active and independent. The physical therapist may suggest some simple flexibility, strength, and endurance exercises that can help all of us retain our physical fitness.

If the 4-H member wishes to make their older friend a gift, the book *Easy Things to Make To Make Things Easy* by Doreen Greenstein (Brookline Books, 1997) is an excellent resource.

## Before the Next Meeting

Ask as many youths as possible to bring a portable tape recorder and a blank audio cassette to the next meeting. The group will be practicing proper use of tape recorders for a storytelling session with their older friends the following week. The tape recorders aren't required, but they will help the young people improve their interviewing skills. Photocopy questions or cards that young people may want to use to ask the questions.

Also, make sure the members write a summary of their Fun with My Friend visits and other club experiences in the back of the member's guide as they did for the previous session.

# 4

## Session 4: Storytelling

### Background Information and Advance Preparation

Storytelling is an activity that transcends generations. It binds people together in a special, warm way and it never goes out of style. Storytelling enriches listeners' lives and reinforces the storyteller's self-concept. Stories may teach history, impart values, be creative expressions of the storyteller's imagination, or be told just for fun.

Storytelling is an especially valuable intergenerational activity because it's a natural way for each generation to learn about the life experiences of the other. For older people, it's an effective way to share a sense of history with younger people who cannot get this perspective from textbooks. It's also a way to pass down information about one's family to younger generations who may have no other way of learning about their ancestors.

There's another reason to encourage storytelling among older people: Reminiscing is good for mental health! Pulitzer Prize winner Dr. Robert Butler has written about the need for older people to look back over their lives, reminisce about the past, and, in most cases, feel assured that their lives have been worthwhile. When family members and friends encourage reminiscing, they are really saying, "I value what you have to tell me and I value you for the person you are." This is an attitude that you, as a leader, can help instill in 4-H members as you prepare them for a storytelling visit with their older friends between Sessions 4 and 5.

At your practice meeting, allow members to practice using a tape recorder until it is second nature. Think about the most helpful seating arrangement for your meeting. A circle would be best for carrying out storytelling practice activities and for being able to see if each member is comfortable handling his or her tape recorder.

Gather other materials and ideas you will need for the Fun with my Friend activities.

### Activity 1: Storytelling Ideas

(member's guide, page 20)

Follow the activities outlined for Session 4 in the member's guide. Be sure each youth tries out his or her tape recorder to be certain it's working properly.

- A. Story Circle: titles or subject are included to get the group started.
- B. Story Song: copies of songs that tell a story. Lead the group in learning the songs or arrange for someone else to do this. Country and western songs or ballads that are easy to understand and not too gory are best.
- C. Happenings: on slips of paper, write statements like the funniest thing that ever happened to me, the most embarrassing, the weirdest, and the scariest. Then each participant draws a slip of paper and takes a few minutes to think of details of a story for the statement he or she has drawn. In turn, each person tells the group a short story about the incident. More ideas are outlined in the member's guide.
- D. History Tales: be prepared to demonstrate how to conduct an interview. Interview one of the members yourself to begin the activity.

## Fun with My Friend: Storytelling

Remind youths to let seniors know that the storytelling will work both ways, with the seniors having a chance to prompt the youth participants to tell their stories and vice versa. Encourage youth to ask follow-up questions to elicit details and feelings. You may also want the youths and older adults to alternate questions to each other.

Young people might even help their friends put together a memory book or go through an album as a means of telling a story.

Youth should ask their older friends beforehand if they mind being taped. They should also ask them again at their visits before they start interviewing. Be sure to tell the older adults how the tape will be used and offer them a copy of the tape. If the older person does not wish to be taped, ask if it is possible to write down their stories. The young people should bring a note pad, just in case.

## Follow-Up: Story Report

(member's guide, page 21)

Explain thoroughly your expectations for the Story Report (member's guide, page 21). Encourage members to ask additional questions of their older friends if they wish. (Some ideas are presented in the alternate interviewing activity, member's guide page 21.) Remind them to tape-record their storytelling sessions and to write down their favorite stories on the page provided in the member's guide when they return home. If they have mechanical problems with the tape recorder, they can either go back at another time or continue enjoying their storytelling sessions and write down their favorite stories as soon afterward as possible, while they are still fresh in their minds.

## Alternate Interviewing Activity

Invite two or more older adults to your meeting and have members practice asking them questions they will use in the storytelling sessions with their older friends. Each member could ask one or two questions so everyone will have a chance to participate. This is another opportunity to practice using tape recorders.

# 5

## Session 5: Making Visits Count

### Background Information and Advance Preparation

While only 5 percent of adults age 65 and older live in nursing homes at any one time, one in four people 65 years or older will spend time in a nursing home at some point in their lives. In addition, for each decade over 65, the proportion of adults living in nursing homes increases. For all of these reasons, it's likely some of your 4-H members know someone in a nursing home.

The material that follows and the activities described in Session 5 of the member's guide will help you prepare for this session.

This session's meeting should be viewed as preparation time for the group to go to the nursing home you've arranged to visit. Call to confirm the visit, letting the administrator know how many will be coming and the approximate ages of the 4-H'ers group.

As you prepare for the meeting, ask yourself how you can help your 4-H'ers perceive older adults in nursing homes as people much like themselves in their need for friends and family. Nursing home residents need to know what's going on in the community of interest to them, to express how they feel, and to have some beauty in their lives. Depending on each resident's ability, he or she may be more or less able to get out and have regular contact with the community. Some residents depend on visitors, books, and television to keep them in touch with the community and the world beyond.

One reason for taking your group to a nursing home is to help residents stay in touch with their environment. 4-H'ers can help by finding ways to stimulate residents' senses. The group already learned about important sensory changes in Session 3. Now they'll learn about the need of older people to use their senses as much as possible so they can better feel a part of the world around them. Nursing home residents have fewer opportunities to get around to see what's happening. Their sight may make reading difficult, and if their hearing is impaired, it may be hard for them to understand a conversation and contribute to it.

### Activity 1: Stimulate the Senses

(member's guide, page 23)

Remind the group of Session 3, when you dealt with losses in the five senses. Suggest ways to stimulate each sense, then divide the group into smaller groups. Assign one or more of the five senses to each group. Ask groups to come up with several things they could do to stimulate these particular senses when they visit a nursing home. Have members write these things in their guides. Afterward, have each group share their ideas. Give all members a chance to suggest additional ideas after each group's report. Ask members to add these ideas to the ones written under each of the four lists.

### Activity 2: Celebrate with Your Friend

(member's guide, page 25)

If some members can't attend, discuss ways they can give a gift of time to their older friends this week.

# 6

## Session 6: Foxfire: A Generation Celebration

### Background Information and Advance Preparation

Foxfire provides a chance for 4-H members and their older friends to come together as a group and for the adults to share skills learned over a lifetime. It's also a fine opportunity to involve parents as you plan a festive climax to the project. Make it a real celebration!

The term "foxfire" comes from a series of books with that title. They describe traditional Appalachian crafts and customs that older adults shared with young people.

Session 6 of the member's guide lists examples of skills that the 4-H'ers older friends might share. Discuss these and the following with your planning group:

- Time, place, and program length
- Invitations to the older friends to participate and share skills
- Invitations to parents to attend
- Transportation (arrange rides, if needed)
- Program: How many older people will participate? How much time will you give each participant? Will participants sit at tables around the room, with the group circulating to each, or will each participant have a certain amount of time to demonstrate before the entire group? Who will type up the program, listing the older friends' names and the skills they are demonstrating?

- Facilities: Room selection and arrangement, equipment, tables and chairs, microphone, podium, lighting, room temperature, videotape player, etc.
- Hospitality: Greeters, name tags (large print), introductions, refreshments, decorations, etc.

Arrange with the planning committee for someone to call each participant a week before your Foxfire meeting. Reinforce your appreciation for their contribution to the event and check on any special needs they may have: transportation, carrying materials, etc. Inform those responsible for providing transportation.

In the weeks preceding the Foxfire, check that all responsibilities are being carried out: invitations sent out on time, program designed and copies made, refreshments arranged, etc.

On the day of Foxfire, ask those taking care of hospitality and room arrangements to come early so that everything is in place, all equipment is in working order, each person will be greeted upon arrival, and all will be ready to start on schedule. This is an opportunity to teach members good meeting preparation skills.

### Activity 1: Learning New Skills

(member's guide, p. 27)

This activity is designed to encourage 4-H youth members to share skills and to learn from others.

Carry out your Foxfire celebration as planned. Encourage members, friends, and parents to become acquainted with people they don't know. Remain alert to anyone who seems to be alone and begin to talk with that person. Adhere to the time allotted for the program. If you've planned individual presentations, ask someone to be the time keeper, or do this yourself, to ensure that each participant will have enough sharing time and that there will be time for refreshments and informal conversation.

### Activity 2: You and Your Friend in the Future

(member's guide, p. 28)

Discuss the importance of maintaining a friendship. Brainstorm ways youth can keep in touch with their older friends.

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