



Connecting Generations Through Intergenerational Programs

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Ka 'Aha

Weaving Generations to Build Healthy Communities

An Intergenerational and Aging Program

Fun, daily activities that focus on strengthening connections between different generations help to build strong, healthy communities.

For more information about the Ka 'Aha program and other intergenerational programs, visit www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/kaaha

Intergenerational programs bring people of different ages and generations together to learn, teach, and share with one another. They can be formal programs, such as older adults mentoring young students at a school, or informal programs, such as neighborhood youth helping kupuna with yard care. The four most common types of intergenerational programs are

- youth serving elders
- elders serving youth
- elders and youth working together
- youth and elders sharing a facility (example: a child-care facility in a senior center).

In 1963, the Foster Grandparent Program became the first national intergenerational program. Today it continues to offer lower-income seniors a stipend in exchange for volunteering in schools to help struggling students. Since the 1960s, intergenerational programs have become more popular because they help build stronger, more connected communities, increase collaboration between generations, offer meaningful service opportunities for youth and kupuna, contribute to improved test scores for youth, and contribute to improved health for kūpuna.

Because the programs benefit everyone, you may be asking: How can I get involved? There are many natural places to look for intergenerational opportunities. Consider the following:

Schools: most schools are glad to have adults tutor or read with students; contact the main office of your local school to learn about volunteer opportunities.

Long-term care and assisted-living facilities: most of these facilities have an activities director or volunteer coordinator who can help find a fulfilling project, whether it is playing games, reading, or talking story with residents.

Tip

A generation is a group of people who were born about the same time. Each generation shares similar childhood and adolescent experiences that shape the way they view the world. Examples of experiences or events may be growing up during the Great Depression, during the birth of rock and roll, or during the age of computers and the Internet. Find someone who is at least 20 years older or younger than you. Then, both of you take a few minutes to think about and write down three important events that took place during your childhood. Afterward, share those events and explain why they were important to you.