Civic Engagement for Capacity Building for Age-Friendly Communities

A Multi-Generational Approach

Laura B. Wilson, Ph.D. Professor and Principal Investigator
Jack Steele, M.A., Project Director
Linda Siegel, B.S., Field Manager
The Challenge

Research Findings

- 23+ years of research reveals that baby boomers are searching for meaningful civic engagement opportunities

- Baby boomers do not want to be siloed into a single age group experience
What Attracts Older Adults to Volunteer Service?

University of Maryland Center on Aging

ENGAGING THE 50+ POPULATION

Personal Development – Life Long Learning

Meaningful Roles

Purposeful Social Networking
The Opportunity

Create new meaningful service experiences for multigenerational volunteers to serve side-by-side to build and sustain age-friendly communities.
Commitment to Test New Models of Service

- The University of Maryland – Dept. of Health Services Administration tested and implemented several volunteer service models that network across generations and diverse communities.
- Legacy Corps for Health & Independent Living is a multi-generational, age-friendly, community based model.
Legacy Corps for Health & Independent Living

- Respite Care in our national service intervention

- Respite care is an intermittent service to an individual/family living in the community to provide support services to sustain and enhance the quality of life of the caregiver thereby reducing the burden of the care giving task.
Legacy Corps Model Key Components

- Federal Program – AmeriCorps
- Serves caregiver families of low to moderate incomes
- Diverse communities (urban, rural, Native American, faith-based)
- Diverse members: retired health workers, students, non-English speaking, foster care teens, empty-nesters, farmers
- Commit to 450 hours of service for one year
- Receive a small stipend
- Serve two caregiver families (10-12 hours a week)
- Engage in co-learning experiences
- Receive an Educational Award (transferable to child or grandchild)
- Participate in national research
- Diverse recruitment strategies
Sometimes we trade earrings!

When Luke, 17 and Mildred, 61 make their entrance, they make an impression people don’t forget.

Especially caregivers of elderly relatives who need a break.
Legacy Corps for Health & Independent Living

“Building Age-Friendly Communities”

20 Programs
11 States
A Policy Model for Civic Engagement through Multigenerational Service Teams

Sustainable Communities

Social Policy Changes

Lifelong Learning/Personal Development

Age 50+ Volunteers

Purposeful Social Networks

Meaningful roles/civic engagement

Unmet Service Need

NGOs

Enhanced Infrastructure

Civic Engagement and Lifelong Learning

Age 16-49 Volunteers

Social Inclusion

Employment and Education Transitions

Expanded Employment Opportunities
Design and Measurement Process and Goals for Members

- Baseline administered at first interview. (We no longer use separate forms for different age groups and we no longer use baseline or followup knowledge forms) Aging attitudes survey will be deleted in 2011
- First followup administered 5-6 months into project
- Exit interview administered at end of contract (1 or 2 years into program)
- Revisit interview administered 3-5 years after leaving program (Conducted by evaluator)

- GOAL: 1) Improve scores in community attachment, knowledge acquired while in program, and net positive change from baseline to revisit interview.

- 2) Demonstrate ongoing and improved levels of participation in community or government service, lifelong learning and informal caregiving to support families of dependent elders.
Alpert and West Palm Beach Sites report oldest average age among the sites with mean ages of 68.2 and 66.8 years. Average for all sites is 55 years. San Diego has youngest mean of 41 years.
Racial/Ethnic Composition of Members in Legacy Corps Sites
Level of Education of Members in Legacy Corps Sites
Gender Composition of Members in Legacy Corps Sites
Involvement in Volunteer Activities Prior to Legacy Experiences, All Sites (Respondents 24 and Older)

Among youngest cohort, age 18-23, 48% had never volunteered. Among the experienced volunteer group, 5% indicated it had been required and 44% reported that some of the volunteer activity part had been required.
After Legacy, Would Rely on Person As Working Partner

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree/Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
After Legacy, Would Talk about Personal, Family Issues with Person
After Legacy, Would Go to Social Occasions with Person
Community Attachment Changes For Single Provider and Multigenerational Team Sites

![Graph showing attachment changes for traditional and multigenerational teams with different follow-up types: Baseline, 1st Followup, Exit, LT Followup.]
Long Term Activities

- Continue After Stipend
- Earn Ed Award

Percent

54
52
50
48
46
44
42
40
Types of Long Term Activities

- Work FT
- Work PT
- Commun Serv
- Academic Cred
- Noncredit
- Gov. vol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work FT</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work PT</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commun Serv</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Cred</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncredit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. vol</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Long Term Activities cont.
Does The Multi-generational Model Work?

- Flexible model: adapts to local community needs
- Demonstrated to attract diverse volunteers
- Cost Efficient
- Applicable to any service area
- Integrates life-long learning and meaningful civic engagement
- Promotes age-friendly communities
International Research Findings and Implications for Service

www.amazon.com

For more information on Legacy Corps:

www.sph.umd.edu/hlsa/aging/legacycorps