

# Revitalizing Communities for All Generations: Visioning a Livable Wichita Region

**Workshop Report Eleven:**  
Enhancing Intergenerational Opportunities  
for Older Adults and their Community



*Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.*

**MetLife Foundation**



Through the generous support of MetLife Foundation, the eleventh regional workshop of the Aging in Place Initiative was held in Wichita, Kansas on June 23, 2009, at Wichita State University Metroplex.

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Left—Inese Alvarez for  
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For more information or resources relating to the  
Aging in Place Initiative, please visit:

**[www.aginginplaceinitiative.org](http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org)**

America is aging. Today roughly 37 million Americans age 65 and older represent slightly more than 12 percent of the country's total population. By the year 2030 the number of Americans in this age group will nearly double, accounting for one-fifth of the population. Due to the overwhelming desire of older Americans to age in place in their own homes, communities will face unprecedented challenges to providing the services and infrastructure that this population will demand. Yet if communities are resourceful, innovative and prudent, these challenges will be eclipsed by the enormous share of social and human capital that will be made available by the largest, healthiest, best-educated and most affluent generation of older adults in American history.

The Aging in Place Initiative was created by Partners for Livable Communities, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and other national civic groups to draw attention to the increasing aging demographic and to share information about how communities can achieve livability for all. With support from MetLife Foundation, the partners have supported the development of practical tools and resources to help communities jumpstart their conversations and take action to address the needs of older adults in their cities and neighborhoods.

### Simply put, Aging in Place is growing older without having to move

Aging in Place is a comprehensive community-driven strategy to give Americans the services, opportunities and infrastructure so that they can grow old with dignity in their own homes while remaining active and engaged members of their communities.

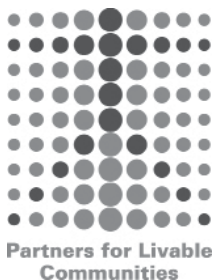
As part of this initiative, the partners supported *The Maturing of America* survey in 2006. This questionnaire found that although many communities have some programs to address the needs of older adults, very few have undertaken a comprehensive assessment of what it would take to make their community livable for all. As a result of these findings, the partners developed a comprehensive resource, *A Blueprint for Action: Developing Livable Communities for All Ages*, to provide communities with a concrete tool to help them plan for the future. The strategies and best practices outlined in the *Blueprint* can help communities make the incremental changes needed to create livable communities that are good places for the young and old alike.

Now, the initiative is on the road, hosting a series of regional workshops across the country that focus on one particular aspect or theme of Aging in Place. It is the goal of each workshop to bring together a diverse group of experts and stakeholders to share ideas and generate a local dialogue about Aging in Place efforts and challenges in the community. To help stimulate innovative ideas and new partnerships, workshop attendees are learning how they can receive small "JumpStart the Conversation" grants to fund their own projects. In addition, the initiative's website, [www.aginginplaceinitiative.org](http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org), has become an information and resource hub with a listing of the JumpStart grant winners along with best practices and the report from each workshop.

This report documents the Wichita workshop (the eleventh in the series) which focused on intergenerational opportunities as an Aging in Place strategy. Regardless of whether you attended the workshop, this report provides an understanding of the importance of intergenerational experiences for older adults and the community as a whole, along with what steps can be taken to enhance the intergenerational opportunities that older adults have in any community.

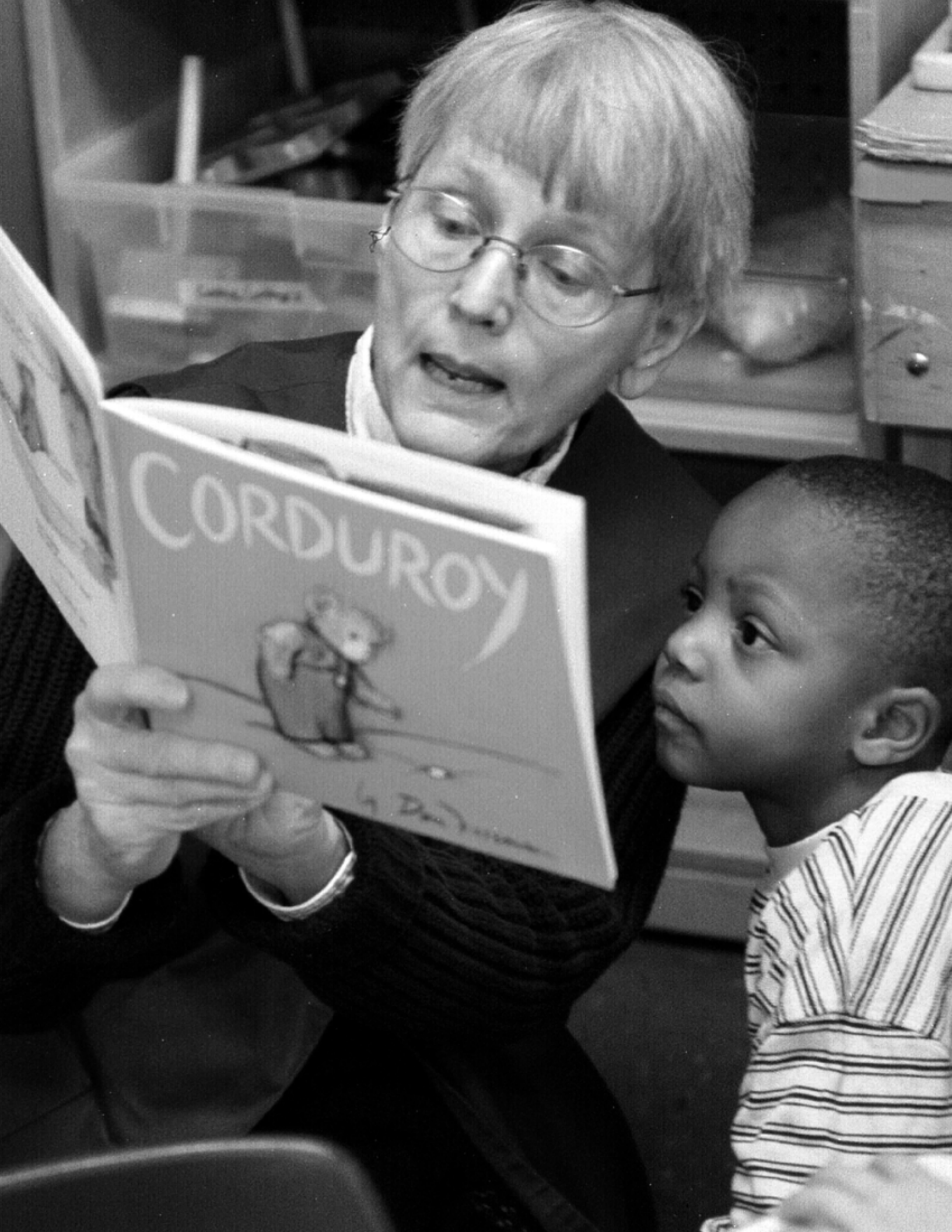
Making a community ageless requires the collaboration of numerous players from the public, private and nonprofit sectors. We hope that this report provides a better understanding of how Aging in Place can be incorporated into all aspects of community life.

Your national hosts,



Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.

MetLife Foundation



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On June 23, 2009, a group of more than 100 community members and experts packed a gymnasium at Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas to attend the 11th workshop of the Aging in Place Initiative. The workshop, *Revitalizing Communities for All Generations: Visioning a Livable Wichita Region*, focused on how to enhance the intergenerational experiences available to older adults and leverage them to strengthen the community as a whole. This important topic was the first of its kind for the Aging in Place Initiative, and the event served as a forum for national and local experts to highlight the invaluable role that intergenerational experiences can have for communities anywhere.

The workshop was hosted by the City of Wichita, Sedgwick County, the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging (CPAAA), and Visioneering Wichita, a civic partnership organization working to shape a common vision for the future of Wichita. The day began with welcoming remarks from Annette Graham of the CPAAA and Melody McCray-Miller, the State of Kansas Representative of the 89th District. Sandy Markwood, Executive Director of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, gave an inspiring and persuasive presentation about the impact that intergenerational experiences can have on older adults and their communities. Then, a panel of local and national experts took turns discussing three areas for intergenerational engagement: *Community Housing*, *Intergenerational Opportunities*, and *Neighborhood Planning*.

Speakers took time to emphasize the benefits of bringing together the young and the old, as well as how easy it can be to start an intergenerational program. For example, it can be as simple as finding ways to include a younger generation in the programs and gathering places that already exist for older adults. Once a meaningful intergenerational experience is created, communities will see a number of benefits including less social isolation and more fulfillment for older adults, along with a greater sense of appreciation and understanding on the part of younger generations. Countless other benefits have emerged from intergenerational programs in places across America and this report highlights many of them.

## Key Findings:

- ❑ Intergenerational engagement benefits the entire community and is vital to an Aging in Place strategy
- ❑ Mixed use neighborhoods and intergenerational transportation programs can help connect older adults to the community at large
- ❑ Bringing people of all generations into the planning process ensures that everyone's voice is heard
- ❑ Friendly, intergenerational housing should be available to older adults as an alternative to retirement and nursing homes
- ❑ Harness creativity and plan carefully when starting a new intergenerational program

## Solutions from Wichita Workshop Participants:

- ❑ Reach out to the community to educate about Aging in Place
- ❑ Work to change the perceptions about the difficulties of using public transportation
- ❑ Lobby for local government support of an intergenerational transportation program
- ❑ Educate and promote the benefits of more friendly community housing options for older adults

### Workshop Details

**What:** A discussion about the importance of intergenerational opportunities and how to create them

**When:** June 23, 2009

**Where:** Wichita State University Metroplex

**Who:** A large and diverse group of citizens, community stakeholders and national and regional experts

*See Appendix, starting on p. 28, for the workshop agenda, speaker bios, a complete list of participants, and other helpful resources.*

The Wichita workshop was also a uniquely interactive experience, offering participants the opportunity to engage with panelists in smaller “breakout” groups and offer their own ideas for how intergenerational opportunities can strengthen the Wichita community. To close out the workshop, each breakout group presented their conclusions to participants, and collectively, these ideas contributed to the key findings of this report.

Speakers, panelists, and workshop participants agreed that intergenerational experiences can have an impact on each and every aspect of an Aging in Place strategy from planning issues and transportation, to the arts and lifelong learning. The time is now for communities to make a concerted effort at increasing the intergenerational opportunities available to people of all ages.

This report documents the workshop in Wichita and provides a comprehensive analysis of the ideas that were discussed, the recommendations made, and the programs and initiatives already underway to connect the young and old and make communities more livable for all.

To help set the stage for the discussion that took place at the workshop, the following “Backgrounder” section (p. 3) provides demographic and other key information about the Wichita region.

Critical findings and analysis from the workshop are found in the section, “Bridging the Generations: Strategies for Enhancing Intergenerational Engagement” (p. 5). This section discusses the benefits of intergenerational activities for older adults and communities, and provides key strategies for developing and sustaining an intergenerational program.

Finally, a listing and description of several nationally-recognized intergenerational programs and initiatives is found in the “Aging Friendly Innovations: Best Practices” section (p. 19).



**Photo:** Phil McCleary  
for Generations United



# Backgrounder: Snapshot of the Region

Situated alongside the Arkansas River in South Central Kansas, Wichita is a city with a fascinating history and a bright future. Wichita first made a name for itself during the post-Civil War period as a destination for cattle drivers coming from as far away as southern Texas to reach rail lines that would take cattle to Chicago and onward to other eastern U.S. markets. The cattle drivers earned Wichita a reputation as a boisterous frontier town that in turn attracted a larger mix of characters prominent in the American West. Homesteaders, land speculators, traders, Native Americans, and infamous lawmen such as Wyatt Earp all descended on Wichita from the time the city was incorporated in 1870 until the turn of the century.

The 20th century brought renewed fame to Wichita, this time as a global center of aviation. Aircraft manufacturers such as Cessna, Beech and Stearman each made Wichita their home in the twenties and thirties due to the city's proximity to a growing oil industry, an agreeable climate, and open spaces perfect for testing new planes. Before long, Wichita became known as the "Air Capital of the World," a moniker it retains today. During WWII, Wichita served as a major production center for bombers and other airplanes needed for the war. Learjet was founded in Wichita in the 1960s, and today more than half of the world's general aviation and military aircraft are supplied by aviation companies based in Wichita.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to its role in the aviation industry, Wichita has been an incubator for countless entrepreneurial ventures. Pizza Hut, the Coleman camping supplies company, and White Castle restaurants are just a few of the businesses that all trace their roots to Wichita.

From its humble beginnings as a small and proud cow town, Wichita has grown to become the largest city in Kansas, with approximately 360,000 people. The city serves as the county seat of Sedgwick County, which has 20 other cities over an area of around 1,000 square miles.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to its older adult population, Kansas ranks 11th among states in the U.S. in percentage of the population that is age 65 and older, and fifth for percentage of the population over the age of 85.<sup>3</sup>

The Census Bureau predicts that the number of older adults as a percentage of the Wichita population will continue to grow in the future (as it will in nearly all parts of the country), placing a greater burden on local governments and older adult service providers to meet the needs of older Americans.

Part of the way that this burden can be lessened is if communities come together around effective strategies for bringing the young and old together as a way to improve livability for all. Although it is difficult to determine the degree of intergenerational engagement taking place in Wichita today, this report will show that there is certainly more work to be done. Yet, the Wichita community is accustomed to making innovations and raising the bar of livability higher and higher. The Visioneering Wichita initiative is an example of just that, and as the community embarks on the process of shaping and meeting its long term goals, it will undoubtedly find that increasing intergenerational opportunities is a critical step.

## Snapshot of Wichita

Wichita was incorporated in 1870

Wichita is the largest city in Kansas, with approximately **360,000** people

The four-county Wichita metropolitan statistical area has an estimated population of nearly **600,000** people

Kansas ranks **11th** in the United States in percentage of the population that is age 65 and older, and **fifth** for percentage of the population over the age of 85

Wichita is known as the "Air Capital of the World"



# Bridging the Generations: Strategies for Enhancing Intergenerational Engagement

Sometimes the best inspiration for the future can come from looking at the past. This idea proved to be true at the Wichita Aging in Place workshop, titled *Revitalizing Communities for All Generations: Visioning a Livable Wichita Region*, where a diverse group of community stakeholders came together to discuss strategies for enhancing intergenerational opportunities. The day's event focused on *Neighborhood Planning*, *Community Housing*, and *Dedicated Intergenerational Programming* as the key areas in which intergenerational activities can be promoted in places throughout America.

In considering the kinds of changes that Wichita can make so that older adults have access to more meaningful intergenerational activities, one of the speakers at the workshop took the opportunity to remind participants of what life was once like for Wichitans in the early 20th century. Residential and commercial activities flourished on the same streets and neighborhoods of a vibrant downtown district. Shop owners often lived in apartments directly above their businesses and people of all ages mingled together either when walking to school, shopping for groceries, or visiting with friends and neighbors. A rather extensive urban streetcar network even connected city neighborhoods and made getting around quick, easy, and affordable for the city's population.

At the Wichita workshop, the city's current residents were amazed at the contrasts between historic Wichita and the city in which they now live. Undoubtedly, the city that has become known as the "Air Capital of the World" has witnessed enviable progress over the past hundred years. Yet, speakers and participants at the Aging in Place workshop recognized that Wichita's progress and achievements, like so many communities in America, have come at the expense of the meaningful intergenerational experiences that were once so commonplace.

The growth that America's cities have experienced over the past century has not just changed the size of their population, but it has completely transformed the way in which their inhabitants interact with one another. When once people would need only to walk short distances to run their daily errands, today cars and highways allow families to move away from densely populated neighborhoods, and technology enables people to do their banking and shopping from their own homes rather than venturing outside and into their neighborhoods.

One of the consequences of this dramatic shift in lifestyle is that a generational divide has been created between the young and old in America's cities. More and more older adults live or socialize in age-isolated facilities, essentially cut off from the greater community. With families as spread out as they are, assisted living facilities and nursing homes have become the de facto solution for older adults who might need only a minimal level of care. Yet, these "solutions" are anything but. They are financially burdensome and they leave older adults at risk of social isolation and other psychological and physical health problems. In fact, recent research has documented this risk, showing that rates of social

Photo: Jamie Brush for Generations United

## Welcoming Remarks

**Annette Graham**  
Executive Director, Central Plains Area Agency on Aging.

**Melody McCray-Miller**  
State of Kansas  
Representative, District 89

## Welcome from the Sponsors

**Helen Eltzeroth**  
Chief Programs and Communications Officer,  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

## Keynote Speaker

**Sandy Markwood**  
Executive Director, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

## Local Experts

**Dr. John D. Wong**  
Interim Director and Professor, Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs, Wichita State University

**Sheri Y. Steinig, MSW**  
Special Projects Director, Generations United

**Dr. Mary Corrigan**  
Expert and Advocate on Senior Issues

*“More and more older adults live or socialize in age-isolated facilities and programs, essentially cut off from the greater community.”*

**Creating Vibrant Communities: The Benefits of Intergenerational Engagement**

Participating children and young people receive extra love, attention and guidance from a caring adult

Youth gain self-esteem and self-worth, and demonstrate improved behavior, increased involvement in schoolwork, and a greater appreciation for older people

Older adults get enhanced life satisfaction, less isolation, as well as a greater sense of fulfillment and meaning

Older adults feel connected, valued, and invested in the future

Everyone involved becomes more connected to a dependable support system

Communities benefit when neighbors know one another, when residents are aware of and appreciate cultural heritage, and when local organizations are collaborating together <sup>5</sup>

isolation have grown dramatically in the United States over the past several decades, and that older adults in particular need strong social ties to maintain their mental and physical health.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, moving older adults into age-specific facilities further limits their interactions with children and young people, who suffer by not experiencing the value and wisdom of those in their upper years. Indeed, older adults can provide invaluable support, love, encouragement and inspiration to children in even the most casual of settings. Communities as a whole are strengthened when the young and old interact together and create an environment of understanding and collaboration.

Now is the time when places throughout America are confronting changing demographics and thinking of ways to make their communities more livable for everyone. As they embark on this challenge, bridging the generational divide ought to be one of the highest priorities. From housing and transportation, to the arts and community planning, intergenerational activities can be made a part of any Aging in Place strategy, and communities that have experimented with intergenerational projects have seen tremendous success. Such initiatives make older adults healthier and happier by expanding social networks and support groups, as well as strengthen the community as a whole by enhancing the opportunities for civic and social engagement.

Additionally, intergenerational activities often do not require big budgets, government lobbying, or piles of new resources. Usually, all it takes to get a meaningful intergenerational program off the ground is a good idea, and across the country, communities are realizing just how valuable and easy it is to bring the young and old together.

In Wichita, the Aging in Place Initiative’s workshop came at a special time as the community has recently embarked on an aggressive campaign to shape the future of their region. The “Visioneering Wichita” effort has solicited feedback from thousands of Wichitans on what the biggest challenges are for the community and what objectives they should seek to achieve. Though the effort still has a long way to go, Visioneering Wichita is sure to have a tremendous impact on the future of the community, and the Aging in Place Initiative workshop was a success in generating even more ideas about how intergenerational opportunities can be expanded throughout the Wichita area and made part of a comprehensive Aging in Place strategy.

The following pages capture the ideas and issues that were discussed at the Wichita workshop, along with those from other communities that are working hard to bridge the generational divide and ensure that the future is brighter than ever.

## Neighborhood Planning

Intergenerational experiences happen first and foremost at the neighborhood level. While well-crafted programs and activities aimed at bringing the young and old together are an important part of an intergenerational aging strategy, older adults benefit the most when they can walk out of their front door and feel immersed in a vibrant and diverse neighborhood. Even though this neighborhood component of intergenerational living is arguably the most fundamental, it is also one of the most difficult to create. Over the past half century, America's communities have increasingly become more diffuse and divided along age, racial, and socioeconomic lines. Additionally, land use is overwhelmingly segregated in most suburbs, in the sense that single-family homes are concentrated in one area, shops and services in a different area, and offices and workplaces in other areas.

This community layout has numerous consequences for transportation habits and community health, but it also contributes to the growing generational divide in cities and towns across America. Indeed, the layout of many American suburbs, as just described, has had disastrous effects on how older adults engage with their communities and interact with others. Because of segregated land use, older adults are increasingly forced to rely on specialized services, programs, and facilities (such as older adult transit shuttles, senior centers, and older adult living facilities) to meet their needs. Though these initiatives can be effective, they isolate older adults and put them at great risk should their funding or support evaporate.

In Wichita, the emphasis was on how the city can improve existing neighborhoods, as well as plan future ones that enhance the intergenerational opportunities for older adults and cultivate the social ties that keep people healthy. Professor John D. Wong, of Wichita State University, discussed mixed use developments as a shining example of how neighborhoods can be planned to maximize intergenerational experiences. Mixed use developments are characterized as those that integrate homes, shops, schools, businesses and community centers—sometimes even in shared facilities—to create a desirable, safe and livable community for all. These neighborhoods serve as a public space or gathering area that lures people of all ages, and for older adults in particular, having services and retail options nearer to homes results in an increase in physical activity and less reliance on transportation.

**Challenge:** Most neighborhoods do not afford opportunities for meaningful intergenerational engagement.

**Solution:**

- Careful neighborhood planning can easily bring together people of all generations
- Intergenerational transportation programs enhance mobility and increase older adults' engagement with the greater community

### **In Swampscott, Massachusetts, the High School and Senior Center Share the Same Building**

When town planners faced difficulties finding the space and money to build both a new high school and a senior center, the two were put together under one roof. Older adults get to use all of the school's facilities, and they also serve students by volunteering in the library or sharing their experiences as guest speakers in the classroom. (See p. 25 in the *Best Practices* section for more information.)



## Zoning's Role in Mixed Use Developments

When one walks the streets of a mixed use development such as Old Town Wichita, the neighborhood's shops, homes and restaurants are all the result of years of careful planning. But they are also likely the result of much bureaucratic and legal wrangling. Many of America's community planning and zoning laws make it very difficult for mixed use or creative new developments to be built. Instead, the laws typically restrict lots and blocks to be in grid patterns, with specified setbacks and lot sizes for each living unit. The problem with these existing ordinances is that they are often too rigid to address America's contemporary land use issues and they stand in the way of innovative developments that can better serve the needs of older adults. At the Wichita workshop, Professor Wong discussed a few of the complex land use policy changes that can help make livable neighborhoods like Old Town Wichita possible.

**Flexible Zoning:** A blanket term for land use policy changes that are more permissive in terms of the types of developments that they allow. Flexible zoning can permit greater leniency in the zoning and rezoning process such as the transfer of development rights, among other measures that can promote mixed use projects.

**Planned Unit Developments:** A land use development approach that allows for a mix of uses, flexibility in the placement of buildings, and a relaxation of development standards. PUDs encourage creative opportunities for mixed use developments because land is allowed to be rezoned for a mixture of purposes and housing types, rather than segregated as traditional zoning dictates.

**Clustering:** A development technique that features smaller lot sizes for normal housing units, with the remaining land area of a development set aside as open space. For example, rather than requiring each dwelling unit of a new development to sit on 10,000 square feet, clustering the units would allow them to be placed on 5,000 square feet and preserve the saved square footage as community open space.

**Density Zoning:** A zoning technique that emphasizes the number of dwelling units per acre rather than the type of dwelling unit permitted. Density zoning is useful because it allows developers to focus on creating a blend of residential living options, rather than segregating single-family homes, apartments, and duplexes in different sections of a development.

None of these zoning policy changes will magically open the door for an increase in intergenerational living options. In fact some communities have been rightly cautious of allowing developers more leeway regarding the types of projects they can create. Every community has different considerations to make when thinking about changes to zoning policies that can have a significant impact on what neighborhoods will look like in the future. But more often than not, innovative communities that want to make intergenerational engagement a priority are finding that changes to antiquated zoning ordinances are a way to harness creativity and forge a better path for the future.

*To learn more about these zoning options and others, see Professor Wong's presentation at the Wichita workshop, available at [www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/WichitaPresentations](http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/WichitaPresentations).*

Surveys show that, not only are mixed use developments a good model for a livable neighborhood, they are also highly in demand when Americans make decisions about where they want to live. Dr. Wong identified “Old Town Wichita” as one such mixed use neighborhood that has received national recognition as a place that successfully attracts people of all ages.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to exploring mixed use developments as a way to plan for the future, speakers and participants at the Wichita workshop discussed important ways that older adults in existing neighborhoods can have access to intergenerational activities. Like most Aging in Place workshops, transportation emerged as the key challenge for older adults who struggle to access the intergenerational opportunities that they desire, let alone their other needs such as medical visits and shopping.

In Wichita, participants learned about some creative transportation partnership programs that have proven effective elsewhere in America, and they also produced a few ideas of their own that could jumpstart an intergenerational transportation initiative. For older adults who are accustomed to driving but are no longer able, public transportation can be an intimidating undertaking. In more cases, a spread-out community such as Wichita’s makes adequate public transportation service difficult to achieve. In these instances, rideshare programs—in which volunteer drivers provide rides for those who cannot drive themselves—can be an excellent means for older adults to secure safe, reliable, and friendly transportation.

One such program, the Independent Transportation Network (ITN), provides free or low-cost rides for older adults by volunteers who earn credits for free rides should they require them in the future. *(See p. 23 in the Best Practices section for more information about the ITN program. Additionally, the Aging in Place Initiative’s seventh workshop report, Increasing Transportation & Mobility Options: Creating Livable Miami-Dade & Monroe Counties focuses exclusively on transportation and mobility issues and is available for download at [www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/WorkshopReports](http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/WorkshopReports).)*

Although programs such as ITN usually have an intergenerational component by virtue of the involvement of younger drivers, participants at the Wichita workshop saw an opportunity to create a dedicated intergenerational transportation initiative that may be the first of its kind. In a breakout group at the workshop, participants noted that Kansas state law requires young drivers to have a certain number of supervised driving hours before being eligible to receive a driver’s license. The group believes that a creative partnership is possible between young drivers and older adults that could fulfill the needs of both and provide an outlet for meaningful intergenerational interactions. Teens

### **A Great Neighborhood in Downtown Wichita**

Old Town Wichita is a vibrant 20-block neighborhood in the center of what was once the city’s industrial warehouse district. Today, the neighborhood’s brick-lined streets, apartments, plazas, restaurants and entertainment venues make it a livable destination for people of all ages, and a recognized “Great Place in America” by the American Planning Association. *(See p. 19 in the Best Practices section for more information.)*

## Looking to Wichita's Past as a Model for the Future



Photo: Seattle Department of Transportation

Passengers waiting for the Seattle Streetcar to arrive.

At the Wichita workshop, Professor John D. Wong treated participants to a brief presentation on the history of public transit in the Wichita area. Strangely, getting around in Wichita was arguably easier one hundred years ago—before the automobile and paved roads—than it is today. Although the size of the city was obviously smaller then, Wichita was one of the hundreds of American cities with a ‘hub and spoke’ streetcar system to transport residents around town. Professor Wong also noted that a higher population density in the city afforded residents easier access to the goods and services that they required.

Before the middle of the 20th century, however, Wichita went the way of most other American cities by dismantling its streetcar system in favor of public buses which were seen as less costly and more flexible. Ironically, after decades of suburban-style growth that has sprawled the size of American cities, many communities are once again turning to streetcars as one way of meeting the transportation needs of residents. Cities such as Seattle and San Diego have installed streetcars in downtown areas because they are quiet, they do not pollute, they easily share the road with other transit vehicles, and they have been shown to revitalize downtown neighborhoods.

Maybe Wichita too will take a page from its past and see the streetcar as a viable transportation solution for its future.

could volunteer to drive older adults to appointments or help them with their errands, and the older adults would supervise their driving at the same time.

It will no doubt require careful considerations and planning before a program such as this could get started, but the participants at the Wichita workshop proved that their community has the creativity and resourcefulness to make a good idea grow into a successful model for others. Indeed, communities across America ought to look for unique ways that they can bring older adults and youth together around an effective transportation program.

Finally, the Wichita workshop emphasized the importance of bringing all voices to the table when making any type of planning decision. Older adults, in particular, need to be consulted about how specific planning changes will impact their ability to interact with others, stay mobile, and remain healthy.

Wichita has learned that progress will not be made on neighborhood planning if people of all ages are not actively involved in making change. This is precisely what happened when community stakeholders came together as part of the Visioneering Wichita effort that began in 2004. To create a strategic community plan for the future of the Wichita region, Visioneering Wichita involved thousands of citizens in a process that selected a diverse steering committee and convened a great number of focus groups and breakout sessions with people of all ages to help identify challenges and shape community goals and objectives.

<b>Challenge:</b>	Community planning decisions do not always take older adult considerations in mind
<b>Solution:</b>	Bringing people of all generations into the planning process ensures that everyone's voice is heard

A key component of Visioneering Wichita is the Older Adults Alliance, one of a number of strategic alliances that focuses on a different goal of the Visioneering Wichita project. Other alliances run the gamut of important issues including infrastructure, education, economic development and healthcare. Through the Older Adult Alliance, Wichitans representing local nonprofits, health care providers, public and private agencies, and individual citizens come together to chart common goals for older adults in the Wichita area, and to coordinate their efforts towards achieving those goals.

For example, the Older Adult Alliance has determined that more needs to be done to retain retirees in the region and to expand older adult employment programs. Because learning from the success of other communities is one way to help accomplish these goals, the Alliance has organized visits to cities such as Chattanooga, Tennessee and Huntsville, Alabama to study their downtown revitalization efforts and see what effects they have had on the lives of older adults.

## Bridging the Generations



Photo: Karen Peterson for Generations United.

The Older Adult Alliance and the Visioneering Wichita process in general are both models of community-led planning that makes quality of life for all residents the number one priority. By actively soliciting the participation of individuals and community players around specific topics, Visioneering Wichita has found a way to efficiently and effectively conduct a large-scale community planning effort. *(See p. 20 in the Best Practices section for more information)*



## Community Housing

Older adults want to stay home. This message was as loud and clear at the Wichita workshop as it is in communities across America. National surveys from AARP indicate that 89 percent of adults age 50 and older want to stay in their homes for as long as possible. By taking measures that allow older adults to remain in their homes, communities can keep neighborhoods diverse places where people of all ages benefit from intergenerational engagement. At the same time, communities need to offer more intergenerational living options that can serve as alternatives to senior living facilities.

At the Wichita workshop, two key challenges were described that are making it difficult for older adults to stay in their homes for as long as they would like. The first is that many of the homes in which older adults live have not been designed or built with their needs in mind. Health and mobility problems can make it difficult to safely move about one's home, perform repairs, and maintain a yard. In response to these challenges, a nationwide movement has emerged to make homes safer and more livable for older adults. "Universal Design" is the practice of making minor changes to the design of a home that can have a major impact on its livability. For example, doorways and hallways that are a few inches wider can accommodate wheelchairs; thresholds that are flush with the floor reduce the risk of tripping; and lever door handles are easier to use than doorknobs. These measures can have a direct effect on the intergenerational character of a neighborhood because they can make the difference between an older adult staying at home or having to move. If homes are made friendly to people of all ages, then more older adults can remain active in their neighborhoods and avoid moving to nursing homes or other age-specific facilities. Furthermore, enhancing a home with universal design features benefits not only older adults but people of any age who may have a temporary disability or simply wish to grow old in their current home.

In Wichita, workshop participants were especially vocal in their support for universal design measures in their community. Developers in a number of U.S. cities have started to build and market universal design homes because of the appeal that they have to many homebuyers. In other places, local governments are taking the initiative to increase home safety features, such as an ordinance in Arvada, Colorado which mandates that 15 percent of new homes be built with universal design features. As universal design continues to become more common, homes will be made safer and neighborhoods as a whole will be friendlier places for people of all generations.

**Challenge:** Older adults are often unable to remain independently in their homes and neighborhoods for as long as they would like.

**Solution:** Home visitability and repair programs can allow older adults to live safely in their own homes, and have positive interactions with community members of all ages.

### Seven Principles of Universal Design

- Equitable Use
- Flexibility in Use
- Simple and Intuitive
- Perceptible Information
- Tolerance for Error
- Low Physical Effort
- Size and Space for Approach and Use

*To learn more, visit the Center for Universal Design on the Web at [www.design.ncsu.edu/cud](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud).*

**“More than 40 percent of older adults say that they have at least one problem with their home that is in need of physical repair.”**

—Sandy Markwood, Executive Director, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

At the Wichita workshop, participants noted how difficult it can be for older adults to keep up with yard work and home repairs, particularly if they are frail, or live alone. Sandy Markwood, the Executive Director of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging noted that more than 40 percent of older adults say that they have at least one problem with their home that is in need of physical repair. Just as crucial as the accessibility features that a home may have, pressing home repair or maintenance needs can often make the difference between an older adult being able to stay in their home, or having to move.

Fortunately, the challenge of home repairs for older adults lends itself perfectly to solutions with an intergenerational component. In places around the country, people have found that enlisting youth as part of a community-wide effort to perform home repairs is one of the best ways to strengthen neighborhoods and keep older adults in their homes. For example, as part of a nationwide initiative called Rebuilding Together, student volunteers helped spruce up and repair homes of older adults living in a mobile home park in Orange County, California. Projects like these provide tremendous support for older adults, cost very little, and are usually easy to organize. For young people, spending part of the day volunteering with friends can be a fun experience and it can instill a spirit of service that will endure for a lifetime. *(See p. 24 in the Best Practices section for more information on Rebuilding Together)*

**Challenge:** Many older adults are forced to move to age-specific living facilities where they feel isolated from other generations and from the community at large

**Solution:** Explore the possibilities for more friendly, intergenerational housing options

Though older adults want to stay in their homes, they also want quality and friendly alternatives to traditional senior living facilities in case they have to move. In fact, the same surveys showing that older adults want mixed use developments also reveal that intergenerational opportunities come second only to sidewalks as the highest consideration that older adults make when moving

into a new neighborhood.<sup>7</sup> Dedicated senior living facilities should always be an option for those who choose them, yet in many communities it is sadly the only option for older adults who are moving out of their homes.

Fortunately, there are several leading examples of intergenerational housing options that are attracting attention throughout the country by providing a meaningful, close-knit community of friends and neighbors that break through traditional generational divides. These housing models are based on the idea that a mixing of families, students, and older adults creates an atmosphere of mutual understanding and a diverse social support network where people can

## Accessory Dwelling Units Help Older Adults Remain in their Homes

Local government decision making can have a big impact on whether older adults are able to stay in their homes for as long as they wish. In many places in America, community zoning laws forbid so-called accessory dwelling units. ADUs are private housing units, complete with separate kitchen, sleeping and bathroom facilities either in or adjacent to a single-family home. They are becoming increasingly attractive to older adults as a way to share the financial or physical burdens that come with staying at home, or as an affordable way to remain in one's neighborhood. For example, older homeowners can supplement their monthly income by renting out an ADU or it can serve as a living space for a needed caregiver. Alternatively, older adults who want to downsize can become tenants of an ADU to remain in their neighborhood or be closer to family. Some older adults in need of home repairs or maintenance have made arrangements with ADU tenants to exchange household chores for rent.

ADUs open up a world of possibilities for older adults who would otherwise be forced to abandon their homes and neighborhoods, and they almost always give older adults a better chance to have a special intergenerational experience than they would otherwise have at most senior living facilities. Nevertheless, ADUs have sometimes faced intense suspicion from community zoning boards because of the fear that they will attract rowdy college students or unwelcomed strangers into quiet neighborhoods. It will take involvement from older adults and the community as a whole to make the case for ADUs. They can provide a lifeline for older adults, as well as provide more affordable housing options without government subsidies, increase property values for entire neighborhoods, and enhance the security and safety of everyone by having known tenants nearby.

*For more information on an innovative ADU program in the city of Santa Cruz, California, see p. 20 in the Best Practices section.*

share and connect with one another on a daily basis. Some intergenerational living models have taken the concept one step further by bringing together specific members of the older adult and youth communities such as formerly homeless young people, or low-income older adults.

The following are a few examples of successful intergenerational living programs that are serving as models for communities throughout the country:

### **Hope Meadows**

In Rantoul, Illinois, an intergenerational community has taken shape with the purpose of creating a permanent home for foster children. Families and older adults live side by side in the same neighborhood, and the older adults volunteer their time to support the children in exchange for discounted rent. The program has been enormously successful in building a loving and caring community for all, and there are plans to expand the concept to 11 other states.

### **The Nathalie Salmon House**

In Chicago, the Nathalie Salmon house is operated by H.O.M.E.—Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly—and is dedicated to providing an opportunity for intergenerational living. The building’s five floors contain apartments for older adults, families, and students, along with communal areas for dining, recreation, or study.

### **West End Intergenerational Residence**

Founded in 1989, the West End Intergenerational Residence provides multi-age housing for young, homeless mothers and low-income older adults. It is the only program of its kind in the state of New York and relies on contributions from the community.

*To learn more about these and other intergenerational housing programs see the Best Practices section starting on p. 19.*

## **Dedicated Intergenerational Activities**

**Challenge:** Opportunities for meaningful intergenerational activities are still lacking for many older adults

**Solution:**

- Be creative to find ways for the young and old to connect!
- Reach out to relevant community stakeholders and carefully plan and prepare before launching any intergenerational program

Neighborhood planning and community housing issues are ripe with opportunities to help older adults age in place while enriching their lives with intergenerational experiences. But these are not only type of intergenerational engagement that ought to be available to America’s older adults. Intergenerational activities are not just a means to an end, but an end in their own right, and communities ought to be doing everything they can to provide as

many opportunities for intergenerational engagement as possible.

At the Wichita workshop, participants heard from Sheri Steinig, the Special Projects Director for Generations United, an organization dedicated to enhancing the intergenerational opportunities available to older adults and vice versa. Steinig began her presentation where the other speakers left off by enumerating the various benefits that intergenerational activities have for older adults and their communities. Among them, participants in intergenerational activities forge stronger ties to one another and become more committed to strengthening their community. Young people gain a greater appreciation for older adults, and older adults feel less isolated, more valued, and learn new insights about youth.

The benefits are clear, but where is one to begin when planning and implementing a new program for intergenerational engagement? First, it is important to understand the different kinds of intergenerational programs that one can consider. Generations United classifies programs into one of four categories: Older Serving Younger, Younger Serving Older, Younger and Older Serving Together, and Shared Site Intergenerational Programs.

When choosing one of these programs, it is important that communities take stock of their assets and determine which type of intergenerational program would be most effective. For example, a community with a large number of healthy and active older adults may find the most success by launching an Older Serving Younger program. On the contrary, places with large numbers of isolated or frail older adults may want to find a way to enlist young people in serving their community through intergenerational engagement. In places where demographic shifts are shuttering schools or leaving libraries and community centers with extra space, a Shared Site Intergenerational program could be the way to go.

## Generations United: Because We're Stronger Together

A one of a kind organization, Generations United has been a champion for intergenerational engagement since 1986. The organization was originally created by the National Council on the Aging and the Child Welfare League of America to educate about and promote intergenerational activities as a way to improve the lives of children and older adults, and create vibrant, healthy communities. As Generations United started to make waves, AARP and the Children's Defense Fund joined the cause to create a broad-based, collaborative effort to make intergenerational activities a policy instrument in communities across America.

Today, Generations United represents more than 70 million Americans as the country's only membership organization promoting intergenerational public policies, programs, and strategies. The organization serves as a resource for educating policy makers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. Generations United's success has continued to attract the support of countless foundations and funders, and the organization has won several awards for innovation and excellence in intergenerational programming.

Visit [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org) for more information about Generations United, and to access a comprehensive body of resources and publications related to intergenerational activities. A searchable listing and description of over 1,400 intergenerational programs from all over the world is also accessible on the Generations United website.



*“The hardest part of getting intergenerational programs off the ground is getting everybody in the same room!”*

—Sheri Steinig, Special Projects Director, Generations United

### **Foster Grandparents Provide Support for Children in Wichita**

In Wichita, Catholic Charities operates the Foster Grandparent Program to connect older adults with disadvantaged or disabled children. The adult volunteers provide an array of support services to the children while serving as mentors and role models. (See p. 19 in the Best Practices section for more information)

Next, program organizers need to decide what kind of activity they want to have older and younger people engaged in. Will it be an intergenerational arts project with older adults at a senior center, an outdoor recreation program, a mentoring project for at-risk youth, or a home maintenance program for isolated older adults? The possibilities are truly endless, and the ideas presented in this report and in other resources from organizations such as Generations United represent just the tip of the iceberg of potential intergenerational programs.

Finally, Steinig reminded workshop participants that there are some key strategies to remember when developing an intergenerational program that apply to any community-based Aging in Place effort. For instance, be sure to take stock of the community’s strengths and see what existing programs are already in place. Form new partnerships with community stakeholders and explain how their organization’s goals can be advanced through successful collaboration around an intergenerational effort. Steinig notes that many youth-focused organizations do not have experience with older adults, and likewise, organizations that cater to the needs of older adults often do not understand the concerns of schools or childcare programs. Intergenerational programs have enormous potential to bridge this gap, but it will take dedication, careful preparation, and planning to recruit partners, get started, and attract the support needed for lasting success.



Photo: Vincent O’Hare for Generations United.

# Aging Friendly Innovations: Best Practices

## Wichita Best Practices

The following are programs, initiatives, or projects, within and beyond the Wichita area, that serve as models to communities anywhere of how to advance intergenerational engagement.

### **Foster Grandparent Program**

*Wichita, Kansas*

For more than three decades, the Foster Grandparent Program has been providing opportunities for older adults in Wichita to serve youth with special needs. The program, operated by Catholic Charities, places foster grandparents in volunteer stations such as schools, shelters, daycare centers and hospitals where they provide one-on-one attention to children reading or exercising, tutoring, or even just talking and listening.

The program provides nurturing support for youth to help with their physical, psychological, educational and social development, and instills an appreciation for the wisdom and caring support of older adults. For foster grandparents, they are left with the satisfaction of making a positive contribution to the community, along with a number of other benefits such as training sessions, transportation assistance, and meals. Each year, foster grandparents provide more than 100,000 hours of service to youth in the Wichita community, and the program is sure to have continued success in the future.

To learn more, visit [www.catholiccharitieswichita.org/cc.php?name=Foster%20Grandparent%20Program](http://www.catholiccharitieswichita.org/cc.php?name=Foster%20Grandparent%20Program).

### **Old Town Wichita**

*Wichita, Kansas*

Old Town Wichita traces its origins back to the 1870s when the city was a booming frontier town and the downtown neighborhoods flourished with retail locations, warehouses and transit lines. After decades of decline during which historic buildings were boarded up and vacancy rates skyrocketed, an effort was launched in the 1970s to revitalize Old Town Wichita. After a lengthy process that involved selecting developers, changing zoning ordinances and environmental cleanup tasks, restaurants and businesses began to open up in the area in the early 1990s. The City of Wichita and Sedgwick County were instrumental in supporting efforts to improve streets, sidewalks and parking facilities to help the area grow into a livable and attractive neighborhood.

Today, Old Town Wichita has all the amenities that make it a walkable and vibrant neighborhood that lures people of all ages: wide sidewalks, bike-friendly streets, large public plazas, a local farmer's market, theaters, restaurants and over 100 businesses. Apartments, condominiums and hotels are also present in Old Town Wichita, making the neighborhood a concentrated mixed use area where residents have convenient access to everything they need. The city and county's efforts to revitalize a treasured part of Wichita's past have earned numerous awards and accolades including a designation as one of the "Great Places in America" by the American Planning Association.

To learn more, visit [www.planning.org/greatplaces/neighborhoods/2008/oldtownwichita.htm](http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/neighborhoods/2008/oldtownwichita.htm), or [www.oldtownwichita.com](http://www.oldtownwichita.com).

### **Visioneering Wichita**

*Wichita, Kansas*

Visioneering Wichita is an ambitious project to build consensus and set objectives and benchmarks so that the Wichita region can continue to grow and thrive in the future. Begun in 2004 with the support of the City of Wichita, the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce and a number of other civic groups and foundations, Visioneering Wichita started producing a strategic plan by aggressively pursuing input from all segments of the community. A diverse, 50-person steering committee was convened, along with 30 focus groups and 52 breakout sessions to identify strengths and weaknesses and highlight pressing issues that the community should tackle.

In no time, 15,000 participants had signed on to become partners—working with community organizations and businesses to make the change that will improve the quality of life for everyone. Areas of improvement that partners are working on include education, economic development, infrastructure, and quality of life issues such as health care, diversity, and support for older adults.

With meetings being held at least once a week on various topics to evaluate progress and chart new strategies, Visioneering Wichita remains an active effort that is leaving its mark on the future of the community through grassroots, citizen involvement.

To learn more, visit [www.visioneeringwichita.com](http://www.visioneeringwichita.com).

## National Best Practices

### **Accessory Dwelling Unit Development Program**

*Santa Cruz, California*

For some time now, the City of Santa Cruz, CA has endured being one of the most expensive housing markets in the U.S. With less than seven percent of residents easily able to afford to buy a median-priced home in the community, the city was having trouble retaining teachers, firefighters and service workers and it decided to act. In 2003, city officials created the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Development Program to make it easier for homeowners to create a separate housing unit attached or adjacent to their home.

There are over 18,000 single family lots in Santa Cruz and the city believed that through more development of ADUs, the community could minimize the impact of population growth and also help homeowners supplement their mortgage payments. In addition, city officials identified ADUs as a way to provide more rental housing in the core of the city and to foster the use of public transportation.

As part of the ADU Development Program, the city revised several zoning ordinances and released an ADU “How To” manual featuring a number of ADU prototype designs. The City also sponsors an ADU loan program which offers loans of up to \$100,000 through the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union. In its first year alone, 35 ADUs were constructed and the program has since received several distinctions from organizations such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the American Planning Association and others.

To learn more, visit [www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/pl/hcd/ADU/adu.html](http://www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/pl/hcd/ADU/adu.html).

## **Backyard Homes**

*Pacoima, California*

Pacoima, in the northeast San Fernando Valley, exemplifies the LA region's housing shortage. Much of the community is zoned for single-family residential development, but high real estate prices and dense population have led to an extreme shortage of affordable housing. However, the city does have a valuable asset; there are over a thousand extra-large single-family lots of more than 10,000 square feet, nearly twice the size of an average Los Angeles residential lot. After much study, design, and community interaction, cityLAB, an innovative think-tank at UCLA, has proposed a feasible way to provide for-sale, workforce infill housing in the "backyards" of existing residential sites.

The objective of the project is to develop innovative, environmentally sensitive, and affordable solutions to the regional housing shortage that can help expand housing choices to older adults and others in need. It responds to the significant need to revise those planning and zoning practices that have left a sprawling region with unmet community needs and opportunities. The multi-disciplinary project team includes the community organization Pacoima Beautiful, ICON, senior staff from the LA Planning Department, Council District 7, the CRA, for-profit and non-profit developers, and staff and graduate student researchers at UCLA's cityLAB.

To learn more, visit <http://citylab.aud.ucla.edu/10kpacoima.html>.

## **Circle of Care**

*Boulder, Colorado*

Circle of Care is a nonprofit organization in Boulder, Colorado that helps prevent isolation and loneliness of older adults with low or moderate incomes, or those with physical or cognitive disabilities. By connecting older adults to the arts, education, and to the community at large, Circle of Care provides enlivening experiences to foster self-worth, creative expression, community partnership and a renewed sense of aliveness for all those who participate.

Intergenerational experiences are key components to all of Circle of Care's programs, particularly because the organization's offices are located on the campus of the University of Colorado. Older adults have the opportunity to audit courses at the university along with a volunteer companion if they need help. Art programs through Circle of Care introduce older adults to student artists and performers, and a host of other intergenerational programs (including mentoring opportunities) are available with university students as well as younger schoolchildren.

To learn more, visit <http://www.circleofcareproject.org>.

### **Cornerstone Theater Company**

*Los Angeles, California*

The Cornerstone Theater Company is a community-based theater headquartered in Los Angeles, California that brings together performers of all ages, ethnicities and experience levels in productions of both new plays and contemporary adaptations of classic works. Although now based in L.A., the company spent five years in the late 1980s working on 12 musical productions in rural areas of ten different states, including Kansas.

Today, Cornerstone Theater Company continues to build bridges between and within the diverse communities of L.A. by producing plays that reach out to a new generation of community performers. Their work has touched older adults by encouraging them to participate in new productions, and also by using experienced actors to connect with a younger generation of aspiring performers.

To learn more, visit [www.cornerstonetheater.org](http://www.cornerstonetheater.org).

### **Experience Corps**

*Nationwide*

Experience Corps is a national service program that places older adults age 55 and older in elementary schools to help tutor children who are learning to read. Experience Corps members work an average of 15 hours per week and earn about \$200 to \$250 per month. Today there are over 2,000 Experience Corps members in 23 cities across the United States.

Experience Corps strengthens schools and communities by capitalizing on the experiences and talents of engaged older adults. The program is supported by funding from a number of national advocacy and philanthropic organizations including Civic Ventures, AARP and The Atlantic Philanthropies.

To learn more, visit [www.experiencecorps.org](http://www.experiencecorps.org).



## **Hope Meadows**

*Rantoul, Illinois*

Hope Meadows is a residential community in Illinois that has received international attention and earned countless awards for its model of a diverse, intergenerational neighborhood to support families of adopted foster children. A five-block neighborhood on the grounds of a former air force base offers homes for adopted children and their families along with older adults. In exchange for reduced rent, retired older adults serve as “honorary grandparents” and agree to volunteer for at least six hours each week helping children with homework, playing games, or supervising outdoor activities. An Intergenerational Center at Hope Meadows houses a library, computer room, a kitchen and common space, which serves as the social hub of the community and hosts more than 90 activities each month.

At Hope Meadows, intergenerational relationships evolve naturally in an environment where three generations learn from and support one another. Adoptive families receive the support and information they need, children have a loving place to call home, and older adults find purpose and meaning in helping others.

Hope Meadows is operated by Generations of Hope, a parent organization that is working to replicate the Hope Meadows model in other sites throughout the country.

To learn more, visit [www.generationsofhope.org](http://www.generationsofhope.org).

## **ITN America**

*Nationwide*

The Independent Transportation Network (ITN) started operating in Portland, Maine more than 15 years ago as a service to provide low-cost rides to older adults and those with disabilities. Rides can be arranged 24 hours/day, seven days/week for a cost that is typically less than half that of a taxi. Furthermore, the organization uses donated, private cars and volunteer drivers to provide the service. Volunteer drivers receive either a cash reimbursement or an equivalent credit for every mile they drive. They are then able to save the credits for their own transportation needs when they choose to limit their driving, or they may donate them to family members or friends.

ITN has since grown into ITN America, the first and only national nonprofit transportation system for older adults in America. In Portland, ITN provides nearly 17,000 rides each year to almost 1,000 older adult members, and the ITN America national network of affiliate chapters provided nearly 26,000 rides in the last year.

Aside from providing an affordable and reliable way for older adults to get around, the project also creates a unique opportunity for intergenerational experiences. Because most of the drivers are younger, everybody who participates in the program benefits from a chance to serve their community and interact with those of another generation.

To learn more, visit [www.itnamerica.org](http://www.itnamerica.org).

### **The Nathalie Salmon House**

*Chicago, Illinois*

The Nathalie Salmon House opened in 1994 in a neighborhood on the North Side of Chicago and is owned and operated by H.O.M.E.—Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly. The 54-unit building provides affordable housing for older adults with and without disabilities, young families, and some students.

To foster intergenerational engagement, the building has a number of shared spaces that everyone is invited to use, including kitchens, a dining room, community space, recreation area, a garden, and a library. The Nathalie Salmon House is the largest of three intergenerational residence facilities operated by H.O.M.E. in Chicago, and its long waiting list is testament to the growing popularity of intergenerational housing.

To learn more, visit [www.homeseniors.org/display.aspx?pointer=7245](http://www.homeseniors.org/display.aspx?pointer=7245)

### **Rebuilding Together**

*Nationwide*

Rebuilding Together is a national nonprofit whose mission is to preserve affordable housing in America by mobilizing volunteers to modify and repair the homes of low-income and older residents. The organization, based in Washington, DC, began in 1988 and has since spread to 225 affiliates serving more than 955 communities.

Rebuilding Together focuses on four national initiatives: Veterans Housing, Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction, Safe and Healthy Homes, and its signature event, National Rebuilding Day. Each April, as part of National Rebuilding Day, Rebuilding Together affiliates across the country repair and refurbish the homes of the low income and older adults in their community at no cost. Volunteers who take part in National Rebuilding Day are of all ages and occupations, including a great number of students and young people who are eager to take part in a meaningful intergenerational service project.

To learn more, visit [www.rebuildingtogether.org](http://www.rebuildingtogether.org).

## **Swampscott, MA High School and Senior Center**

*Swampscott, Massachusetts*

A small town of about 14,000 people on just three square miles, Swampscott, Massachusetts has put itself on the map as an innovator for intergenerational engagement. Open space is hard to come by in Swampscott, so the advocates for a new high school and a new senior center decided to join forces and propose a new facility that could serve as both. In 2007, the Swampscott High School and Senior Center opened its doors and the experiment has been an overwhelming success.

Older adults have a separate entrance and parking lot to access the senior center at the school, and they can take advantage of most of the school's resources including the indoor track, the dance and exercise spaces, and the computers rooms. Students also participate at the senior center by performing at special events and helping older adults with computers and other needs. In return, the students benefit through their interactions with the older adults who share their experiences as guest speakers in classes and as volunteers in the library. In fact, if it were not for the older adults volunteers, the library would be forced to shut its doors several days a week because of paid staff shortages.

The Swampscott High School/Senior Center model has created a unique atmosphere in which people of all generations feel extra support and understanding and benefit from daily interactions. Indeed, the lesson from Swampscott is not just that shared schools and senior centers bring generations together, but that innovative communities can find ways to create more active, intergenerational civic spaces. There are endless ways for older adults and youth to interact on a regular basis and the Swampscott model is just one example.

To learn more, visit <http://highschool.swampscott.k12.ma.us/pages/index>.

## **West End Intergenerational Residence**

*New York, New York*

Located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, the West End Intergenerational Residence describes itself as “a unique mixed-age housing facility catering to three generations.” West End serves young homeless mothers age 18-24 with one or two children age 0-7, who are referred to the residence by the New York City Department of Homeless Services. These families share West End with low-income older adults age 55 and older who are in need of permanent affordable housing.

Supported by contributions from the community, West End also provides a number of services to residents of all ages. For young families, West End offers educational and child development programs, counseling, recreational activities, parenting classes, and others. Older residents are particularly happy to be living among young families at West End, where they have the opportunity to participate in a Foster Grandparenting program and have access to on-site medical services, health and legal workshops, and recreational programs.

The West End Intergenerational Residence sees itself as a community, not just a housing facility, and residents of all ages say that the intergenerational character of the building makes a big difference.

To learn more, visit [www.intergenerational.org](http://www.intergenerational.org).

# Appendix: Workshop Agenda

## Revitalizing Communities for All Generations: Visioning a Livable Wichita Region

Wichita State University Metroplex

June 23 2009

**9:30 a.m. Welcoming Remarks and Introductions**

Annette Graham, *Executive Director, Central Plains Area Agency on Aging*

Representative Melody McCray-Miller, *State of Kansas Representative, District 89*

**9:40 a.m. Creating Livable Communities for All Ages: National Perspective**

Helen Eltzeroth, *Chief Officer, Programs and Communications, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging*

**9:45 a.m. Visioning a Livable Wichita Area for Everyone**

Sandy Markwood, *Executive Director, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging*

**10:10 a.m. Local Experts' Perspective**

Moderator: Annette Graham

- Opportunities for Community Housing: Dr. John D. Wong, *Interim Director and Professor, Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs, Wichita State University*
- Opportunities for Intergenerational Experiences: Sheri Y. Steinig, *MSW, Special Projects Director, Generations United*
- Opportunities for Neighborhood Planning: Dr. Mary Corrigan, *Expert and Advocate on Senior Issues*

**10:40 a.m. Charge to Breakout Participants**

Annette Graham

**10:45 a.m. Breakout Sessions**

- Community Housing
- Intergenerational Experiences
- Neighborhood Planning

**11:30 a.m. Group Reports and Facilitated Discussion**

Facilitator: Sandy Markwood

**12:15 p.m. "JumpStart the Conversation" Grant Overview**

Irene Garnett, *Chief Operating Officer, Partners for Livable Communities*

**12:20 p.m. Wrap-Up**

Annette Graham

**12:30 p.m. Lunch and Networking Opportunities**

## Appendix: Speaker Bios



**Dr. Mary Corrigan,**  
Expert and Advocate on  
Senior Issues

**Dr. Mary Corrigan,** Expert and Advocate on Senior Issues

Mary Corrigan is the former Program Coordinator for the Gerontology Program at Wichita State University. As Program Coordinator, she guided the master's level program through a conversion to an online degree which was approved by the university's accreditation body, the Higher Learning Commission. The program conversion resulted in a 200+ percent increase in student enrollments in Gerontology courses. Mary also developed and taught 12 different classes in online formats. Prior to her work at Wichita State University, Mary was Director of Gerontology for HCA Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, Kansas. During that employment, she worked with a team to develop both in and out-patient assessment services, and a senior membership program. At the present time, she teaches on an adjunct basis for local colleges.



**Sheri Y. Steinig, MSW,**  
Special Projects Director,  
Generations United

**Sheri Steinig,** MSW, Special Projects Director, Generations United

Sheri Steinig is the Special Projects Director at Generations United, the national membership organization focused on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies. For the past eight years, Sheri has been responsible for providing leadership for GU's ongoing efforts to promote and support the development of intergenerational programs including GU's intergenerational shared sites initiative. She has both national and local experience in intergenerational programs as well as community service efforts. Prior to joining GU, Sheri spent several years with Intergenerational Innovations in Seattle, Washington, where she was responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating a variety of different school and community-based intergenerational programs.



**Dr. John D. Wong,**  
Interim Director and  
Professor, Hugo Wall School  
of Urban and Public Affairs,  
Wichita State University

**Dr. John D. Wong,** Interim Director and Professor, Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs, Wichita State University

Professor Wong's primary teaching responsibility is in the areas of public finance and public policy. He has taught graduate level courses in public sector economics, public finance, local government finance, state and local financial systems, urban and regional economic development, policy analysis and program evaluation, and public works. Professor Wong has also taught several classes in the areas of criminal justice and law and gerontology.

Professor Wong coauthored State and Local Government Capital Improvement Planning and Budgeting and Public/Private Partnerships and has written extensively on public finance and policy issues including several articles on revenue forecasting, taxation, electric utility deregulation, health care finance, and contributions to the Handbook on Taxation and the State and Local Government Debt Issuance and Management Service.



# Appendix: Workshop Participants

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Visioneering Wichita

**Sahar Amini**  
CPAAA

**Amanda Applegate**  
Sedgwick County Health Department

**Sonja Armbruster**  
Sedgwick County Health Department

**David Babich**  
Wichita Independent Neighborhoods

**Janet Bahl**

**Alice Barsamian**  
Foster Grandparents

**Mitzi Beach**  
Lifesizing

**Zola Beeson**  
Mental Health Association

**Holly Bellora**  
Right at Home

**Kandace Bonnesen**  
Sedgwick County Transportation

**Janet Brandes**  
Wichita State University

**Larry Brown**  
Delano Neighborhood Organization

**Cale Brown**  
New England Financial

**Roy Bruckmeier**

**Carol Kay Bruckmeier**

**Tom Byler**  
Wichita Housing Authority

**Gaye Calhoun**

**Gary Calkins**

**David Calvert**  
David P Calvert, PA

**Frank Chappell**  
Primary Residential Mortgage Inc.

**Sue Christensen**  
Wells Fargo Home Mortgage

**Monica Cissell**  
Central Plains Area Agency on Aging

**Brandi Clarke**  
Sedgwick County Division of Human Services

**Harry Clements**  
Central Plains Area Agency on Aging

**Bruce Cloyd**  
CPAAA

**Kathryn Coit**  
KDOA

**Scott Colby**  
New England Financial

**Martin Cook**  
Cook Insurance

**Mary Corrigan**

**Cindy Crangle**  
Afford A Care/Arbor Homes

**Evelyn Davis**  
Key Management

**Katie Dexter**  
Home Buddy Medical Alert

**Sue Dondlinger**  
Asbury Park

**Lyndon Drew**  
Catholic Charities Foster Grandparent Program

**Mike Elder**

**Helen Eltzeroth**  
National Association of Area Agencies

**Michael Epp**  
Envision Low Vision Rehabilitation Center

**Sharon Everhart**  
Mental Health Association

**Barbara Fizer**  
Long Term Care Ombudsman

**Joan Flynn**  
Central Plains Area Agency on Aging

**Carrie Ford**  
Mennonite Housing

**Steve Fortine**  
Computer Consultants llc

**Rebecca Funke**  
Active Aging

**Christine Gafford**  
ResCare Home Care

**Irene Garnett**  
Partners for Livable Communities

**Shana Gatschet**  
Home for Life by Heartland Home Improvements

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ResCare Wichita

**Vallerie Gleason**  
Asbury Park

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Goertz Homes, Inc.

**Annette Graham**  
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Harvey County Department on Aging

**Teresa Hatfield**  
Sedgwick County Department on Aging

**Cathryn Hay**  
Counseling Resources

**Cheryl Higgins**  
Winfield Area Chamber of Commerce

**Ray Huber**  
Advisory Council on Aging

**Randy Janssens**  
Team-Worx

**Shirley Jefferson**  
Senior Services Inc. of Wichita

**Cindy Johnson**  
Senior Transition Management

**Sally Johnston**  
Comfort Keepers

**Tonya Junod**  
COMCARE

**Belinda Kelley**  
ResCare Wichita

**Vern Klassen**

## Appendix: Workshop Participants *Continued*

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City of Derby

**Russell Koff**

**Gregory Lakin**  
Family Health and Rehab

**Cathy Landwehr**  
CPAAA

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Lawrence Rentals

**Julie Linneman**  
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Woodlawn United Methodist Church

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**Richard Miller**

**Frankie Moore**

**Judy Morris**  
Council of Residential Specialists

**Kerry Mosely**  
Catholic Care Center

**Tim Nikkel**  
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**Craig Perbeck**

**Katherine Powney**

**David Rader**  
Meadowland Fine Remodeling

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Inter-Faith Ministries

**Gayla Ratzlaff**  
Dept for Elderly

**Brad Raymond**  
Via Christi HOPE

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Arrowhead West

**Teresa Rupp**  
Child Start, Inc.

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Brookridge Plaza Apartments

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Tri-City Senior Director

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Builder/Real Estate

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Sedgwick County Extension

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**Donna Travis**

**Wendell Turner**  
CPAAA

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**Thuy Van**  
Sedgwick County Health Department

**Kim Walker**  
Sedgwick County Health Department

**Kelly Wendeln**  
COOL

**Pamela White**  
Peer Support for Older Adults

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**Tom Williams**  
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**Dee Williams**  
City of Derby Senior Services

**Keith Williams**  
Inter-Faith Ministries

**John Wong**  
Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs,  
Wichita State University

**Orlyn Zehr**  
Central Plains Area Agency on Aging

# Appendix: Resources

## Wichita Region Links

### Central Plains Area Agency on Aging

<http://cpaaa.org>

### City of Wichita

<http://www.wichitagov.org>

### Old Town Wichita

<http://www.oldtownwichita.com>

### Sedgwick County

<http://www.sedgwickcounty.org>

### Visioneering Wichita

<http://http://www.visioneeringwichita.com>

### Wichita Workshop Speaker Presentations

<http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/WichitaPresentations>

## National Links

### Aging in Place Initiative: Developing Livable Communities for All Ages

<http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org>

### Partners for Livable Communities

<http://www.livable.org>

### National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

<http://www.n4a.org>

### Center for Universal Design

<http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud>

### Generations United

<http://www.gu.org>

### Intergeneration Day

<http://www.intergenerationday.org>

### National Association of Counties

<http://www.naco.org>

### National Council on Aging

<http://www.ncoa.org>

### National League of Cities

<http://www.nlc.org>

### Penn State University Intergenerational Programs and Aging

<http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu>

### Temple University Center for Intergenerational Living

<http://templecil.org>

# End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> **“History of Wichita.” Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce.**  
[www.wichitakansas.org/experience\\_wichita-moving\\_here-history\\_of\\_wichita.php](http://www.wichitakansas.org/experience_wichita-moving_here-history_of_wichita.php)
- <sup>2</sup> **“Sedgwick County Profile.” Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce.**  
[http://www.wichitakansas.org/experience\\_wichita-county\\_profiles-sedgwick\\_county\\_profile.php](http://www.wichitakansas.org/experience_wichita-county_profiles-sedgwick_county_profile.php)
- <sup>3</sup> **Presentation by Sandy Markwood at the Wichita Aging in Place workshop. June 23, 2009.**  
[www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/WichitaPresentations](http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/WichitaPresentations)
- <sup>4</sup> **Taking Control of Brain Health. AARP.org.**  
[www.aarp.org/health/brain/takingcontrol/stay\\_socially\\_connected.html](http://www.aarp.org/health/brain/takingcontrol/stay_socially_connected.html)
- <sup>5</sup> **Adapted from “Linking Generations for a Stronger Community.” 3rd Briefing in a Series for Grantmakers: Connecting the Young and the Old. Engagement: An Initiative of Grantmakers in Aging. 2006. Page 2.**  
[http://ipath.gu.org/documents/A0/Issue\\_Brief\\_3-Linking\\_Generations.pdf](http://ipath.gu.org/documents/A0/Issue_Brief_3-Linking_Generations.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> **National Association of Realtors and Smart Growth America. American Preference Survey, 2004**
- <sup>7</sup> **National Association of Realtors and Smart Growth America. American Preference Survey, 2004**





## About the Aging in Place Initiative Team

**Partners for Livable Communities (Partners)**—A national, non-profit organization working to renew communities for all ages. Partners has over twenty-five years of experience in solving community problems by providing information, leadership and guidance that help communities help themselves. [www.livable.org](http://www.livable.org)

**National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)**—A leading voice on aging issues for Area Agencies on Aging across the country and a champion for Title VI-Native American aging programs in our nation's capital. Through its presence in Washington, D.C., n4a advocates on behalf of the local aging agencies to ensure that needed resources and support services are available to older Americans and their caregivers. [www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org)

**ICMA (International City/County Management Association)**—The premiere local government leadership and management organization. <http://icma.org>

**National League of Cities (NLC)**—The largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)

**National Association of Counties (NACo)**—A national organization representing county governments in the US. [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)

### Made possible by a grant from:

**MetLife Foundation**—Established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its long-standing tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation has been involved in a variety of aging-related initiatives addressing issues of caregiving, intergenerational activities, mental fitness, health and wellness programs and civic involvement. Since 1986, the Foundation has supported research on Alzheimer's disease through its Awards for Medical Research program and has contributed more than \$11 million to efforts to find a cure. [www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org)



Partners for Livable Communities

1429 21st Street, NW  
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202-887-5990  
[www.livable.org](http://www.livable.org)

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-872-0888  
[www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org)

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[www.aginginplaceinitiative.org](http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org)