

## *Building Bridges is...*

- an intergenerational program
- a bi-state program
- a multi-cultural program
- a multi-disciplinary program
- a community-based program

The purpose of the Building Bridges program is to bring young and old together to have meaningful interactions and experiences.

These interactions offer the joys of teaching, learning and sharing which also promotes understanding, respect, compassion, caring and friendship between young and old.

## *What Activities Does Building Bridges Do?*

Arts and Crafts

Pen Pals

Intergenerational Internet

Living History

Storytelling

Fitness

Reading

Intergenerational Fair

Dancing

Cultural Exchange

Aging Awareness

## *Objectives*

### **For Older Adults**

- higher self esteem
- new friends and social contacts
- restored confidence
- shared skills and talents
- a chance to exchange affection

### **For Youth**

- broader view of life and of aging
- sense of caring, sharing, and respect for older adults
- acceptance of differences
- meaningful relationships with someone special
- interaction with positive adult role models



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## *How Does Building Bridges Work?*

- **Building Bridges** has involved 45 community partners and reached more than 12,000 children and older adults in the greater Kansas City area.
- **Building Bridges** major components are education, friendship and caring.
- **Building Bridges** provides orientation and resources needed to support participant's activities.
- **Building Bridges** creates opportunities for positive personal connections between young and old.
- **Building Bridges** matches children and older adults and arranges schedules.
- **Building Bridges** activities are determined by the needs of participants.
- **Building Bridges** time is flexible and fun for all ages.
- **Building Bridges** learns from the experiences and continues to grow.

*“To be young is to reach for the future; to be old is to possess the past. Old and young meet in the present and hold the key to the betterment of humanity.”*  
(Martha Tyler John)

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## Comments from Participants

### Students

*“I really enjoyed writing to the elderly. Also thank you for giving us a chance to meet and talk to nice elderly.”*

*“I liked the program when older people told us about their younger years.”*

*“It was fun to be with an older person because when we were teaching the internet, we were learning from them also.”*

### Teachers

*“Excellent program-gives the children a chance to experience several of the character traits our school uses – such as compassion, caring, respect and responsibility.”*

*“My students always looked forward to writing the cards to the senior citizens. They enjoyed making the senior adults feel loved by them.”*

*“The joy of giving! I have witnessed children growing comfortable and trusting of their elderly friends.”*

### Senior Citizens

*“I am impressed with the Building Bridges program. It was good to be with children that were interested in the lives of other people, especially older people.”*

*“I think Building Bridges is a wonderful program. It makes me feel, once again, that my life experiences are worth sharing and may even be of value to a new generation.”*

### Nursing Home Activity Director

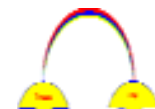
*“Most every senior who participated from the Hidden Lake Care Center walked away with a high self-awareness, a positive attitude, and various stories were brought back to friends and family. One of my residents experienced a rise in self-esteem from all the interest and compliments the class gave him.”*

**Building Bridges** was initiated,  
developed and field-tested by  
**University of Missouri Extension**

## Program Partners

- Attucks Elementary School
- Pleasant Hill High School
- Symington Accelerated Elementary School
- Johnson Elementary School
- Blackburn Elementary School
- Franklin Elementary School
- Graceland Elementary School
- Trailwoods Elementary School
- Santa Fe Trail Elementary School
- Faxon Montessori School
- Allen Village School
- Camp Fire, USA
- Carver Elementary School
- St. Ann's School
- Southeast Zoo Academy
- William Southern Elementary School
- McCoy Elementary School
- Whittier Elementary School
- Blue Ridge Elementary School
- Voy Spears Elementary School
- Grandview High School
- Lee's Summit West High School
- Lee's Summit High School
- Lee's Summit North High School
- YWCA of Greater Kansas City
- Blue Springs Care Center
- Wayne Miner Caring Communities
- Blue River Care Center
- Deaconess Specialty Care Center
- City of Blue Springs – Vesper Hall
- Hidden Lake Care Center
- The Palmer Center
- The Groves
- Shepherd's Center of Raytown
- Palestine Gardens
- Plaza Manor
- Robert J. Mohart Multi-Purpose Focus Center
- Nowlin Hall Apartments
- Independence Health Care Center
- Carmel Hills Living Center
- Life Care Center of Grandview
- Seasons Care Center
- Wilshire at Lakewood
- Senior Companion Program
- St. Mary's Manor
- Just Schooling Adult Day Care
- Woods Chapel United Methodist Church
- UMKC Staff Council
- Whatsoever Senior Center
- Monterey Park
- NCDC-Fairmount Community Center
- Homesdale Care Center
- Swope Ridge Geriatric Center
- Waterford Ladies Home

# Building Bridges



**An Intergenerational Program  
for Youth and Older Adults**