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 Science
- 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

How Does Building Bridges Work?

- Building Bridges has involved 70 community partners and reached more than 30,000 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.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI Extension
extension.missouri.edu/jackson
Nina Chen, Ph.D., Human Development Specialist
816-252-5051

“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)
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.”

---

**Program Partners**
- Allen Village School
- Blue Springs High School
- Boone Elementary School – Caring Communities
- Border Start Montessori
- Boys and Girls Club - Thornberry Unit
- Boys and Girls Club – Leslie Unit
- Faxon Elementary School – Caring Communities
- Foreign Language Academy – Caring Communities
- Holliday Montessori School – Caring Communities
- Johnson Elementary School – Caring Communities
- Southwood Elementary School
- Truman Elementary School – Caring Communities
- Whatsoever Community Center – Youth Group
- Woods Chapel United Methodist Church
- Carmel Hills Living Center
- Carondelet Manor
- City of Blue Springs – Vesper Hall
- Corner Brook Place
- Golden Living
- Hidden Lake Care
- Homesdale Care Center
- Independence Manor
- Just Schooling Adult Day Care
- Life Care Center of Grandview
- Maywood Terrace Nursing Center
- Missouri Master Naturalist Program
- Monterey Park
- Nowlin Hall
- Palestine Gardens
- Plaza Manor
- Rehabilitation Center of Independence
- Robert J. Mohart Multi-Purpose Focus Center
- Seasons Care Center
- Senior Companion Program
- Shangri-La Rehab & Living Center
- Shepherd’s Center of Raytown
- Swope Ridge Geriatric Center
- The Groves
- The Palmer Center
- Villages of Jackson Creek
- Waterford Ladies Home
- Whatsoever Community Center

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

An Intergenerational Program for Youth and Older Adults