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**GENERATIONS UNITED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ACTION  
FINAL REPORT  
EPA AGING INITIATIVE**

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Recipient Contact Person: **Sheri Steinig**

Principal Investigator/Project Director: **Sheri Steinig**

**I. Progress Achieved in Accomplishing Project Goals/Objectives, Outputs and Outcomes:**

The goal of *Generations United for Environmental Awareness and Action* was to build capacity to develop and deliver intergenerational environmental health programs across the country and educate people of all ages about environmental issues in their communities. EPA funds were used to accomplish the three primary objectives of the project: (1) to provide seed grants to at least 5 groups including one rural and one urban project to develop and implement intergenerational environmental health projects, (2) to provide information and technical assistance to grant recipients and the general public interested in intergenerational environmental health, and (3) to determine the meaningful environmental results of the intergenerational environmental health projects to help identify project models and promising practices suitable for dissemination and replication in the future.

This project built upon the interest generated at the Intergenerational Environmental Programs Symposium held in conjunction with Generations United's biennial international conference in October 2003 and the resulting publication *Generations United for Environmental Awareness and Action*.

**Goal/Objective 1:** To provide up to 5 seed grants to develop and implement intergenerational environmental health projects.

**Actual Work Completed:**

The Generations United (GU) grant program distributed 5 seed grants of no more than \$5,000 each to not for profit organizations to implement intergenerational environmental health projects across the country, with at least one project in a rural setting and one in an urban setting. All grantees were required to implement intergenerational environmental health projects that address significant community needs and consist of activities that follow EPA's statutory guidelines for this project. The sponsoring organization had to be a local agency that has a 501(c) 3 status or equivalent tax exempt status. The grants were for up to 18 months beginning in January 2006 and ending no later than July 1, 2007. Grant recipients also received information and technical assistance through site visits, telephone, e-mail and GU's online resource center;

GU staff began the project in August 2005 by conducting a variety of outreach efforts to publicize the grant initiative and encourage organizations to expand their current programming to include intergenerational environmental health projects. GU staff worked with EPA staff to develop a press release announcing the grant program. The press release on the grant availability was distributed through GU press contacts and EPA News.

During the first quarter GU staff developed the grant guidelines and request for proposal (RFP). The grant guidelines and RFP clearly outlined the EPA's statutory guidelines for this project and identify 15 qualified sample intergenerational environmental health projects. Both the guidelines and RFP were posted on the Generations United website in September 2005. They were promoted in the GU magazine, *Together*, which reaches over 10,000 readers and to over 300 GU members through *Generations This Week*, GU's weekly e-mail alert. The National Council on Aging promoted the grant program through its weekly e-mail service NCOA Week and it was posted to the Corporation for National and Community Service's National Senior Corps listserv. The program also appeared in the monthly alerts from EPA's Aging Initiative.

GU staff also promoted the grant program at the 2005 GU International Conference with over 325 people in attendance and at 11 presentations and exhibits around the country that reached over 1,500 people.

The deadline for proposals was November 30, 2005. GU staff recruited outside experts in intergenerational programming, environmental programs and grant-making to serve as volunteer grant reviewers. The applications were sent to the reviewers in mid December. The reviewers were told to select grant recipients based on the following criteria:

- at least one project in a rural setting and one in an urban setting
- address significant community needs
- activities follow EPA's statutory guidelines
- involvement of young and old in all aspects of project development and delivery
- community involvement and coordination with local partners
- ability to leverage additional resources
- uniqueness
- not duplicating services
- potential for replication, and
- geographic diversity.

A conference call was conducted with the reviewers and GU staff on January 6, 2006. The review panel unanimously selected five projects. Two of the selected grantees were rural, two urban, and one suburban. Grant recipients were notified by January 13, 2006. GU staff conducted an orientation conference call with all the grantees on February 9, 2006. This call provided an overview of the project requirements and general overview of intergenerational programs. Dr. Abigail Lawrence-Jacobson noted intergenerational expert and author of the popular intergenerational bibliography on GU's website, presented the overview of intergenerational programs and best practices. Contracts were developed and mailed to the grant recipients on February 10<sup>th</sup> and the grant awards distributed upon receipt of signed contracts.

The following are detailed descriptions of the outcomes of the five grantee projects:

**Community Celebration of Place, Inc - Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Community Celebration of Place works with communities to use music, performance, art and oral history to bring together children and elders, and people of different backgrounds— economic, faith, racial, and cultural—to honor and celebrate our commonalities and differences. They work to create community-wide celebrations that include the music, art, and wisdom that exists within communities. Director Larry Long founded Community Celebration of Place in 1999 after 30 years of working in communities across the world as a Troubadour, activist, and educator.



The goal of the project was to work with youth at Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board park centers to raise awareness about environmental health issues and the extraordinary leadership of local elders in advocating for environmental health. At each site, the youth ages 10-14 conducted an hour-long interview with an elder who has been an environmental health leader/advocate. Working with Larry Long, each interview was turned into a song and choral reading that was performed at a community celebration. With help from the Alliance for Sustainability, students developed and implemented environmental health action projects based on what they learned from the elders.

The Minneapolis park system’s environmental specialist, Mary Lynn Pulscher, and Vicki Bonk, a volunteer and community elder, provided materials and guidance for summer participants in the three parks to grow and study the growth and migration patterns of monarch butterflies. It has been said that "no other animal is more typical of a healthy environment, nor more susceptible to change, than a butterfly." Educational kits were made available to families to encourage a healthy habitat where monarch butterflies can thrive. This included tips on providing food, water, and shelter for the butterflies and the dangerous effects of pesticides. The Alliance for Sustainability’s founder and president, Terry Gips, volunteered his time to present a workshop for youth and families in each of the three parks. The focus was on practical, every day, money-saving steps toward environmental health that can be made in the home, workplace and community.

In July 2006, Larry Long, involved 75 youth, some youth workers, and half dozen parents in the process of interviewing community elders and developing songs and choral readings from the transcripts of their words. Each elder was asked to “tell his/her story” and, particularly, to share his/her wisdom about



what's important – for youth, for life, and for the environment.

The interview and song-writing process involved one elder in each of the three parks. They were: Sharon Day, a member of the Martin Clan within the Ojibwa tribe of Native Americans, whose role as a spiritual leader is to teach others to protect the water; Vicki Bonk, a volunteer who has led habitat restoration around Lake Nokomis and started the Monarch Connection – teaching about the growth and migration of Monarch butterflies and developing garden kits with plants attractive to butterflies; and George Booker, an African American coach who volunteers 30 hours a week year-round with the football, basketball and baseball teams teaching youth the value of physical activity.

The culminating event of this project was the Elders' Wisdom, Children's Song Community Celebration the evening of Friday, August 11, 2006 at the Nokomis Community Center in Nokomis Park in Minneapolis. Five hundred flyers were posted and disseminated through the parks. News releases were sent by the Park Board's communications staff to neighborhood and city newspapers and radio/TV stations. The Nokomis Community Center was decorated with paper butterflies, and an arts table provided materials for people to make their own butterflies.



A traditional Ojibwa Feast prepared by the sister of Sharon Day (one of the honored elders) was served to 70 people in the community room of the center. Basic costs for the meal were covered by a Park Board contribution.

The program of celebration that followed was held outside the center, on a plaza overlooking the lake, with folding chairs and picnic tables used for seating. Over one hundred people attended and received the printed program that included a thank-you page, agenda, choral reading and song for each elder.

The following are highlights from the event:

- An Honor Song by the Neeconis Women Singers
- Procession of the three elders to their seats on a platform beside the audience
- Formal introductions of each elder, who were given a bouquet of flowers, and performance by students with parents and park board staff of a choral reading and song honoring each of the



elders

- A presentation by Pat Bellanger, matriarch of the American Indian Movement, about the importance of honoring the earth and water, and all of the elements of nature that provide the habitat for humans
- A “Protect the Water” Song by the Neeconis Women Singers
- The release of a monarch butterfly raised from a pupa at Nokomis Park, which fluttered up in the tree over the heads of the audience.

The following description from Jan Hively, MC of the event and Board Secretary for Community Celebration of Place, captures the impact of the event:

*Those who were present at the Celebration honored people with a deep passion for community and experienced a vision of cultural and eco-diversity to be carried in the hearts of the next generation. The audience “ooed” and “ahhed” when Vicki Bonk opened up her box and released the Monarch butterfly which had been born in Nokomis park, just as the audience sang the chorus of her song, “Butterflies dancing, Dancing in the sunlight, Butterflies dancing, Everything’s going to be all right.” Everyone watching appeared to identify with the butterfly, fluttering its wings, climbing to the top branch of the tree, preparing for the long journey back to Mexico. It was a beautiful, hopeful moment that none of us will ever forget.*

The photographs included in this report are from the Community Celebration. The first photo shows the elders being greeted by some of their special friends before the celebration begins. The second show the children singing the song written from their interviews with the elder in front of a capacity audience. The third shows the elder’s reaction to the singing and the song. And the final photo is of the Neeconis Women Singers leading the children, elders, and the community audience in song.

Following the celebration, the project planning committee met to evaluate the project. The following are some of the highlights from their meeting:

1. Celebration at Nokomis was a resounding success; a powerful experience.
2. Informing all park staff about this program needed more thorough effort... some staff did not seem to understand all its aspects, and how it would unfold.
3. Each park is very different; unique approach is needed in each one.
4. Overall concept included many, diverse aspects (Elder interview, Song writing, Environmental project, Monarch Butterflies, Community Celebration/ Performance) and was difficult for the public to grasp or understand how everything fit together; also difficult to promote coherently.

Possible solutions:

- Promote certain aspects of program separately, allowing for different participants in each.
  - Seek in-kind professional marketing advice, assistance
5. Leadership, facilitation, vision, faith, and perseverance of all partners were critical to final success.
  6. Determination, flexibility, and follow through of Park Directors were also vital to this success.

7. Suggested that an annual, large scale event such as a Monarch Festival at Nokomis could be incorporated into the program, including:
  - Encouraging public to grow butterfly gardens- Milkweeds, Black-eyed Susans, etc.
  - Cooperative, non-competitive games
  - Sustainability info/ projects
  - Gathering of Elders from various communities to share their wisdom.
8. Agreed that the program can be replicated or expanded to other parks; but, several considerations are important:
  - Sufficient lead/ planning time is crucial
  - Summer may not be the best season to do at some parks (Heat, A/C issue)
  - Determine exact values/ benefits of program & market them
  - Funding for staff leadership of program is needed for the parks in order to support the program
  - Environment/ Sustainability components could begin in Winter Season in order to start momentum for the program
  - Various methods/ ways to implement the program in parks need to be considered since they have only tried one model so far
9. It is important to have the support of Park Commissioners and for them to be engaged in sustainability in both educational and operational aspects.

### **Friends of Blackwater Canyon - Charleston, West Virginia**

The North Fork of the Blackwater River is impacted by Acid Mine Drainage (AMD), and associated metal deposits caused by runoff from abandoned deep and surface mines from the early 1900s. The North Fork Watershed Project, established in the summer of 2002, by Friends of Blackwater Canyon, is working to find creative community-based solutions, taking into consideration the rich historic and cultural resources of the North Fork watershed. Water treatment systems combined with historic preservation and interpretation restore and enhance the beauty and recreational potential of the North Fork and adjacent land.



The goal of the project was to implement a community-based intergenerational environmental monitoring project that enabled older and younger generations alike to participate in activities that raise awareness and appreciation for the local environment, history, and culture, eventually leading to better environmental stewardship. The North Fork of the Blackwater River is impacted by Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) and associated metal deposits caused by runoff. Currently the North Fork of the Blackwater River supports no aquatic life and is considered unfit for drinking or recreational activity. The project's objectives included hands on monitoring on the North Fork and its tributaries, data entry and public outreach and education; presentations on water quality to school children; presentations on acid mine drainage pollution at senior centers

and nursing homes; and the collection of oral histories of mining industry in the area from area seniors.

The North Fork Watershed Project (NFWP) worked to effectively raise community support by holding community presentations. During the course of the project they spoke with hundreds of people about the watering monitoring project and the state of the North Fork River. In addition to the community presentations, the North Fork Watershed Project gave a brief presentation to the high school environmental science class and informed local teachers about the monitoring program, in hopes of recruiting many more volunteers; young and old. The Project completed training in ArcView (graphic information systems) to create maps of the Blackwater Watershed and the water monitoring sites. They shared these maps with local citizens as a way of teaching the members about the entire watershed.



As the project progressed, staff shifted from setting up the monitoring project to active participation by the community. During the course of the project, 12 intergenerational water monitoring days were held. They monitored both ground water and drinking water for signs of AMD including pH levels and heavy metals. The staff recruited additional volunteers who were reliable and dedicated to helping clean up their watershed.

The monitoring volunteers ranged in age from 4 to 60 and were residents of Tucker, Randolph, and Garrett counties. The project worked with a local home school group and trained nine home-schoolers – ages 6 to 10 – on how to measure water quality. They also trained older adults and college students to help with water monitoring.

Judy Rodd, director of the Friends of Blackwater North Fork Watershed Project provided the following feedback on their monitoring volunteers:

*The high school age volunteers were very enthusiastic to learn about water monitoring, to be out in nature and to learn how to use scientific instruments to measure the quality of the water in their “backyard”. We thank Generations United for pointing us in this direction because it has been very fruitful for our outreach efforts.*

The staff conducted outreach workshops on water monitoring at several locations through out the county. In July 2006, NFWP staff educated 100 youth at YMCA Camp Horse Shoe on ways in which they can measure water quality. One VISTA member showed the kids how to use benthic macroinvertebrates as an indication of water quality and the Project Leader demonstrated how to use water monitoring equipment to measure levels of AMD the major water pollutant in the

North Fork. She also demonstrated tie-dying headbands a bright orange with AMD degraded water.

The staff developed a partnership with Cortland Acres, the county's nursing home, and conducted discussions with the seniors there on the state of the watershed and explaining what the project was doing and why.

The staff delineated the watershed by creating an interactive map which they took to the retirement community and school groups. Students and adults of all ages used the map to identify their homes in location to the watershed and to document water pollution problems.

During the final months of the project, NFWP staff brought the young volunteers together with older adults to share mutual concerns about water quality. The older people told stories about their history with the river and the younger ones explained the water monitoring program. They took the large map of the watershed to these "listening sessions" so the older adults could show where they had lived, where they worked and where various events along the river (like train wrecks) took place. They then marked these sites on the map. They also took an old panoramic photograph of the town and river as a basis for this conversation.



The intergenerational listening project has brought the community closer together around the issue of water pollution. They plan to continue these valuable sessions beyond the life of the GU grant project.

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Tony, a 91 year-old, life-long resident of Douglas, WV:

*Tony grew up in Douglas, WV. His father worked in the deep mines mining coal. Later Tony worked for the mines too as a tippie operator. He worked there until being drafted into the military. When he returned to Douglas the deep mines were becoming tapped and the process of strip mining had begun. Tony shared that the water was in great condition until the strip mining began. They used to swim at several different places along the river. You could have swum anywhere you wanted to as long as the water was deep enough. Around the late 40s and early 50s the quality of the water began to deteriorate.*

The first photograph in the report shows AMD in the North Fork River. The second photo is of an intergenerational presentation about the river and the final picture shows youth collecting macroinvertebrates.

## **The PEAK Center - Lansdale, PA**



The Peak Center is a multi-service senior center outside of Philadelphia. The PEAK Center's Senior Environment Corps (PSEC) is an active volunteer organization that performs chemical, biological, and bacterial monitoring of local streams. It does this as part of the Environmental



Alliance for Senior Involvement, a national organization, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. PSEC also has an educational outreach program using a groundwater test model. This model is used at various schools, municipalities, and civic groups.

The goal of this project was to reduce nonpoint source pollution in the North Penn area watersheds through educational programs for youth while creating an

understanding across different generations. Two broad objectives were defined to meet this goal, 1) develop a water quality testing and macroinvertebrate collection and identification education program for youth that will reinforce the nonpoint source pollution and water facts presentation, and 2) develop an understanding between generations.

The outcome of objective one was the development and delivery of five workshops. Five adults from The PEAK Center's Senior Environment Corps (PSEC) and 15 youth from the North Penn Valley Boys & Girls Club participated in the workshops. The first workshop taught details on nonpoint source pollution, watersheds, the earth's water supply, the water cycle, groundwater principles, surface water principles, source water protection and water conservation. The last four workshops taught the youth how to conduct water quality testing and macroinvertebrate collection and identification. These last four workshops also reinforced what was covered in the first workshop.

The outcome of objective two was achieved during the last four workshops. The adults and youth were split into four groups. Each group consisted of one adult and depending on the number of youth at a workshop three to five youth. In these group situations the generations learned to cooperate, trust and respect each others ideas, opinions and knowledge in order to complete the tasks. Additionally, they were able to discuss topics not related to the workshop and hear someone else's opinions and ideas.



The following highlights from the project were reported by the project coordinator:

- The director of the summer camp program telling us how much the youth enjoyed the program and how eager they were to go to the outdoor workshops. She said its almost

impossible to get the youths out of the air conditioned building in the summer, however for this project they were lined up on time and ready to go each day.

- The trust between the youth and adults seemed to grow with each outdoor workshop. It appeared the youths felt they could talk about other subjects than just the topics in the workshop.



The greatest challenge of this program was that the four outdoor workshops coincided with the arrival of two heat waves. The temperature during each workshop was in the high 90's. The extreme heat could have caused health problems for both the adults and youths. To counteract the hot weather during these outdoor workshops the project coordinator monitored each participant's ability to cope with the

heat, made sure everyone had enough cold water to drink and a towel to cool off with, kept all activities in shaded areas and reduced the planned workshop time from 2 hours to 1½ hour.

Another challenge was the youth to adult ratio. During this project, each adult was teamed with 3-5 youth. Based on the young age of most of the youth, the adults felt that it would have been better to have one adult with one or two youth in each group. Although they felt that this program reached its objectives, everyone could have gotten more out of it with a smaller ratio between the generations. In the future they will try to recruit more adults and if not successful, attempt to limit the youth to adult ratio to 2 to 1.

During the course of the project, five workshops were held with youth from the North Penn Valley Boys & Girls Club as part of their summer camp program. The first workshop consisted of a MS PowerPoint presentation on Nonpoint Source Pollution and Water Facts. Groundwater and nonpoint source pollution surface water simulators were used to enhance the presentation. The four other workshops covered water quality monitoring at a local stream.



**Workshop 1:** The intent of the MS PowerPoint presentation was to give the youth insight into basic environmental principles and facts concerning water and watersheds and what endangers them. The presentation covered: nonpoint source pollution; watersheds; the earth's water supply; the water cycle; groundwater principles; surface water principles; source water

protection, water conservation and contact information for local watershed groups and local, state and federal environmental agencies.

An EnVision groundwater simulator with dyes was used to create a thorough understanding of: groundwater flow; the water table; the different types of aquifers; artesian wells and flowing artesian wells; springs; recharge and discharge areas; how pollution can enter groundwater and the various speeds it can flow through groundwater; and how extraction wells can be used to cleanup contaminated groundwater.

An EnviroScope simulator covered with green cloth, except for the stream and lake areas, replicated a natural watershed. By developing the watershed in steps (roads, farm, business, houses, sewage plant, golf course and construction site) the youth could see a watershed change over time and how it can be impacted by those changes.

**Workshops 2 – 5:** The four stream side Water Quality Monitoring workshops were conducted using the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection protocols to teach the physical assessment of the water and surrounding land use, chemical testing, habitat assessment and macroinvertebrate collection and identification. The youth were divided into four groups with one adult in each group. PSEC used the term ‘group’ instead of team, because they did not want the youth to feel this was a contest. The number of youth in a group allowed all of them to participate in each phase of the water quality monitoring program and develop a relationship with the adult in the group.

These workshops were conducted in Lansdale Park on Towamencin Creek. Although these workshops primarily covered water quality monitoring, the park was a good setting to demonstrate what a natural watershed would look like before it became developed. By focusing just on the park area it was easy for the participants to see how a natural watershed protected a stream from runoff with various forms of vegetation and well developed riparian zones. Expanding their focus beyond the park showed a developed watershed and various causes that promote runoff and nonpoint source pollution.



The water quality monitoring in these workshops consisted of the physical assessment of the stream and surrounding land use, chemical testing of the stream water, habitat assessment and macroinvertebrate collection and identification. A review and question and answer period on the topics covered was conducted at the end of the program.

Although the youth were not formally evaluated on the subject matter provided in these workshops, it was apparent by their questions and comments they experienced an understanding or better understanding of nonpoint source pollution, what a watershed is, why a watershed should be protected, and the role water quality monitoring has in a comprehensive

watershed protection plan. And, a mentor relationship between the adult and youth in each group became more evident with each session.

The following note was sent from the staff coordinator at the Boys and Girls Club expressing their appreciation for the project:

*The kids at the North Penn Valley Boys and Girls Club loved the water treatment program!! Going to Whites Road Park was an excellent opportunity to work with the environment for everyone. Some of the activities that the kids were able to enjoy were taking water samples, doing water tests, exploring through the creek, and searching for water creatures. Their favorite part was being able to walk through the creek and look for living creatures. The instructors and helpers of the program were extremely helpful and friendly. The kids were able to grasp an understanding of the importance of the environment and the significance of conserving water. They gained great knowledge on water and how it affects us. I, myself enjoyed the program too!! I thought it was a great idea. Thank you for providing the club with an exciting and VERY informative program.*

The photographs included in this report are from the workshops. The first photo shows the intergenerational team in the park after collecting and testing water samples. The second shows two of the young people collecting samples. The project coordinator remarked that the older adults all enjoyed the children's enthusiasm for getting into the water and wearing the boots. The third photo shows one of the older adults conducting the ground water simulator in the Boys and Girls Clubs for the youth participants. The fourth picture shows an older volunteer demonstrating the chemical testing of the stream water. The final picture shows the participants intent on identifying and counting macroinvertebrates.

### **Tricycle Gardens - Richmond, Virginia**

Tricycle Gardens started as a community garden located in the urban neighborhood of Church Hill in Richmond, Virginia. They have expanded to numerous urban gardens throughout the city. The goal of the organization is to provide garden building design, resources and technical support, while helping neighborhood volunteers who build and manage community gardens with student volunteers from Virginia Commonwealth University.

The goal of the project was to engage intergenerational community gardens in raising the awareness of using non-chemical alternatives to pesticides through Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principals in the house and garden. Additionally they aimed to raise awareness about the important social and environmental benefits of community gardening and IPM.



Tricycle Gardens began working with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to develop a comprehensive plan for community gardens throughout Richmond, Virginia and an integrated pest management presentation and materials for all ages. They explored ways in involve VCU students in community gardening efforts around the city. Two new gardens were developed – one in the diverse neighborhood of Carver and the other at Bainbridge Boys and Girls Clubs. Both gardens involved people of all ages. One workday, the oldest participant was over 80, while the youngest was 3.



At a children’s learning garden they worked with a group of seniors and a Girl Scout troop on IPM and organic gardening. Tricycle Gardens developed an Integrated Pest Management Intergenerational Workbook for use between the generations in all gardens and programs. This is now part of their library and an asset in expanding their educational programming. The workbook was designed to be produced as needed and be part of the program offering to other gardens. While they are working to ensure intergenerational interaction in the future, most of

this activity was spontaneous.

The photos in this report show the original Tricycle Garden and the new Children’s Learning Garden.

### **Youth Count – Prescott Valley, AZ**

Youth Count helps communities across Yavapai County create nontraditional solutions to the unique challenges facing youth today. Their primary purpose is to **mobilize** and **energize** collective efforts to improve the lives of young people.



The goal of the grant project was to develop environmental awareness in the community through a three phased project that included education, prevention and service activities. The project aimed to educate youth and seniors through a series of six environmental classes of two hours each that culminated in an intergenerational Green Bus Tour to visit local environmental businesses.

The project addressed prevention by conducting a Green Flag survey to assess environmental hazards around senior gathering centers and developing a plan to address the issues found. The survey focused on indoor air quality issues including mold, pesticide use and toxic cleaning materials which add to the breathing problems of seniors and youth.



Finally, the project originally planned a community service day with over 1,000 intergenerational participants working together to create defensible spaces in senior's yards to combat forest fires. Youth Count experienced an unforeseen challenge when AmeriCorps NCCC (the National Civilian Community Corps), with whom they were

partnering on their community service project, were deployed to the Gulf States to help with Hurricane Katrina clean-up. With the approval of Generations United and the EPA, Youth Count revised their outcomes to establish an E-Cycling program. This intergenerational computer and electronic recycling business was built around a partnership with retired baby boomers working with teens to run a business and help the community by keeping the landfills clean from toxic wastes.

During this project, Youth Count received a national Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership from the Center for Health, Environment and Justice ([www.chej.org](http://www.chej.org)). The award was due largely to the success of the grant project which included a survey of environmental hazards around places where older adults live and congregate, a series of intergenerational classes, and the new e-cycling business. The project and their Green Flag Award were highlighted in a story appearing in the *Prescott Valley Tribune*.



Youth Count conducted six intergenerational environmental classes with the Yavapai College Osher Life Long Learning Institute. Older adults and youth spent six Saturday mornings learning about environmental issues in their community. During the first class, students learned about their environmental footprint to become aware of how their personal choices affect the environment. Students were asked to take actions on the personal habits to improve their footprint. Students took field trips to Whipstone Farm in Chino Valley to learn about organic farming; the Electric Companies Solar Panel field to learn about solar energy; and the Chino Valley Agribusiness Center where they toured a Green Building and learned about indoor air quality and environmental issues in the



home affecting their community such as lead paint, asbestos, mold and radon. Students visited Watson Lake where they went out in kayaks and canoes to clean up trash around the lake. Students also participated in Join Hands National Day of Service to clean up the town of Prescott Valley and learned about



Courtesy Photo  
Members of Youth Ventures, Unlimited, a youth-operated recycling business, unload a donation of old computer equipment for their e-cycling business. From left, Matt Abbott, Jason Sanchez and Daphne Fleischer.

## Youth Corps Volunteers gets Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership

*Students recycling donated computers in their new business*

By Sue Tone

Prescott Valley Tribune

Local students involved in an environmental program are filling a storage shed in Prescott Valley with old computer equipment that they will soon transport to Phoenix for recycling.

It's all part of a new business called Youth Ventures Unlimited. This business and other efforts by the Quad Community Youth Corps Volunteers and Youth Count earned them national recognition Tuesday.

Youth Volunteer Corps students received the Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership during a celebration at Yavapai College which honored students' commitment to the environment. The national Green Flag Program highlights the environmental strides students are making in their schools.

Youth Volunteer Corps is proud to be part of this coordinated national effort, said Cindy Craig, director of Youth Volunteer Corps.

"The students started their own business with grant money. They researched and decided on a business. It's up and running now with a storage shed packed with computers. They are collecting from all over the tri-city area."

Students combined their new business skills with what they are learning through the Green Flag Program.

In the Green Flag Program, students proactively investigate potential environmental hazards in their school, such as pesticide spraying and toxic cleaning products. Through research and mentoring, they negotiate other alternatives.

The program encourages students to work with teachers, administrators, maintenance workers, parents, businesses and community members to ensure that their school environment is safe and healthy for kids.

The Green Flag Program was founded in 2003 by Lois Gibbs, the activist and housewife who nearly 30 years ago battled toxic waste in Love Canal, New York, and won.

"There are many school programs

that teach young people about the environment. The Green Flag Program is the first that teaches them how the environment affects their health," Gibbs said.

YVC recently completed activities in two of the Green Flag Program's environmental issue areas, recycling and integrated pest management. They unveiled their Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership at Tuesday's ceremony.

YVC students also recently concluded the first intergenerational environmental class in collaboration with Yavapai College's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. OLLI and YVC students spent six Saturday mornings learning about organic farming, agribusiness, and solar energy. They also helped clean up litter around Watson Lake and participated in the clean-up efforts in Prescott Valley.

Two other organizations earned Green Flag Program awards. The Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire included a panel discussion on campus sustainability featuring three speakers from Green Mountain College as part of their awards ceremony.

Herndon High School in Herndon, Va., a Green Flag School since 2003, plans its event for June 20.

In collaboration with a student environmental group, Students Against Global Abuse (SAGA), the Green Flag team will host the Sixteenth Annual Locker Cleanout at Herndon High School.

Based on the totals from previous years, SAGA anticipates the collection of 6-10 tons of white paper, mixed paper, cardboard and newspaper; an estimated 1-2 tons of clothing and school supplies; one-half to one ton of aluminum cans; and one ton of non-recyclable material.

The Green Flag Program is a project from the Center for Health, Environment, and Justice's Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which works with communities to reduce environmental health hazards in schools. Since its debut in 2003, the Green Flag Program has helped nearly 50 schools in 14 states create safer and healthy learning environments.

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Visit [www.greenflagsc hools.org/](http://www.greenflagsc hools.org/) and [www.chej.org/](http://www.chej.org/) for more information.

recycling centers for various products.

*The environmental classes were for me not only educational and fun but unlike any other environmental class I have ever taken. It was very hands-on and completely interactive. The older adults and the youth that participated had meaningful lasting connections. It really felt like we were there to learn and experience together not on separate levels divided by age or experience. It was great!*

– Kayla Mueller, Youth Participant

Youth Count expanded their e-cycling program by coordinating an Environthon Workathon Day. On September 30, 2006, they gathered approximately 50 people at the Youth Ventures Unlimited site where over 8,000 pounds of e-cycling material was sorted, shrink-wrapped, placed on pallets and loaded on to two trucks to go to the nearest recycling center in Phoenix. Major muscle was provided by the high school football team. A team from Juvenile Probation helped along side with the Youth Volunteer Corps members. Community seniors, adults and AmeriCorps members worked together as team leaders for this massive project. Youth Count had planned that the event might take all day, but with all of the people working together, the project was completed in two and a half hours.

Even though the grant deliverables were completed, Youth Count continued to plan and implement intergenerational environmental health activities. On Martin Luther King Day, they partnered with another organization to conduct eight home inspections for seniors. Four intergenerational teams each conducted two basic inspections which included yard clean up, inspections and repairs. The

inspections consisted of checking the house for working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. They replaced batteries if needed. They also looked for proper ventilation and sealed windows such as windows painted shut that could pose a health risk.

Youth Count completed their deliverables for the environmental health grant and did so under-budget. GU approved a modification to their subgrant to increase their travel line-item and use their remaining grant funds to support travel costs to present their project at the National Afterschool Association Conference in Phoenix, AZ in March 2007 and at the Generations United International Intergenerational Conference in Washington, DC in July 2007. Cindy Craig, the project coordinator, and Kayla Mueller, a youth volunteer conducted the sessions. The NAA presentation was very well attended and the evaluations were quite high. In particular participants commented on the value of having a youth presenter and how poised and prepared she was. The presentation given at Generations United, "Environmental Leadership and Stewardship in Communities for All Generations," was also a great success and received positive reviews.

The photos included in this report show the intergenerational team with their Green Flag and the groups during the different environmental classes.

**Goal/Objective 2:** To provide seven forms of information and assistance to grant recipients and the general public interested in intergenerational environmental health.

**Actual Work Completed:**

In order to build and support the development and implementation of intergenerational environmental health initiatives, Generations United provided seven types of information and technical assistance to grant recipients and the general public interested in intergenerational environmental health. We used the new tools available through GU's new on-line resource center launched in September 2005. The seven types include:

1. Dedicated section of the GU website
2. On-line program directory
3. Resource materials
4. Responses to specific information requests
5. Site visits and consultation
6. GU's biennial conference
7. On-line chats

***Website:***

During this grant period, GU launched a new website ([www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org)) with the support of the Verizon Foundation. The new website features technologies to support the development of intergenerational projects and connect people interested in intergenerational strategies from around the world including the only national directory of intergenerational programs, an on-line resource library, message forums, chats and e-newsletters. The new GU website served as a key tool in building the capacity of organizations to develop and deliver intergenerational environmental health programs across the country and educate people of all ages about environmental issues in their community. In September 2005, we added intergenerational environmental health information to the website including our guidebook *Generations United for*



*Environmental Awareness and Action* and a link to the EPA's Aging Initiative website. GU's website receives over 40,000 visitors each month.

***On-Line Program Directory:***

During this project, GU launched a new on-line intergenerational program directory. GU built the environmental section of the directory by developing a category entitled ***environment***. Twenty-eight intergenerational environmental programs in all were added to GU's on-line directory. All five grantee projects are included in this valuable resource.

***Resources:***

GU developed and shared resource materials on intergenerational environmental health initiatives including GU's guidebook, *Generations United for Environmental Education and Action*. Printed in 2004, this guidebook is available to download for free at the GU website and continues to be one of our most popular downloads. During this grant period, the publication was downloaded over 1550 times. GU staff also distributed over 100 copies of the publication during the National AfterSchool Association conference, the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference, the Search Institute Conference, and the Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging and National Council on Aging.

GU also developed a fact sheet on intergenerational environmental health that was disseminated through the national network of members and partners across the country. This fact sheet was developed in the second quarter of the grant and then revised in the final quarter of the second year to include new models including some grant projects. The fact sheet was posted on the GU website, distributed to the grantees, and shared through the EPA Aging Initiative Listserv. During this grant period it was downloaded over 1100 times from the GU website and over 300 copies distributed alongside the GU exhibit at 10 conferences and meetings.

GU also utilized our magazine *Together*, with a distribution of over 10,000, to support this project. GU staff announced the grant recipients in the winter 2006 issue and profiled two of the grantee projects in the winter 2007 issue. The magazine is also disseminated through the GU website.

***Technical Assistance:***

GU staff promptly responded to questions and requests for technical assistance from the grantees and the general public. To further support the projects, Sheri Steinig scheduled technical assistance calls with all of the grantees during the grant project. These calls helped both to identify technical assistance needs and to provide consultation on the projects over the phone.

***Site Visits and Consultation:***

GU staff conducted site visits with three of the five grantee projects. Sheri Steinig visited Community Celebration of Place in August 2006 to meet with staff and participate in the project's culminating celebration. In September 2006, Sheri visited Montgomery County Senior Environment Corps in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. During that visit, she met with the project coordinator, the older adult volunteers, and staff from the Boys and Girls Club. Sheri visited Youth Count in Prescott, Arizona in December 2006 to meet with staff. During that visit, she met with the project coordinator, youth volunteers, and staff from Youth Count and their

partners. These visits were instrumental in learning about the successes and challenges of the projects and to provide further guidance on the continuation and future sustainability of their efforts.

Due to conflicts with staff schedules and project timetables, GU staff did not visit the two remaining sites (Friends of Blackwater and Tricycle Gardens). In lieu of visits, GU staff conducted outreach and technical assistance calls with both grantees as well as maintained regular email communications.

***GU Biennial Conference:***

GU included two sessions on intergenerational environmental programs and strategies at our 2005 International Conference. Additionally, the EPA's intergenerational exhibit was featured prominently at the conference and was received very positively.

Cindy Craig, project coordinator, and Kayla Mueller, a youth volunteer, from Youth Count in Prescott Valley, Arizona joined EPA's Kathy Sykes for a presentation GU's 2007 Conference. The session entitled, "Environmental Leadership and Stewardship in Communities for All Generations," was a great success and received positive reviews.

***On-Line Chats & Forums:***

GU also has invited grantees to participate in all on-line chats conducted during the grant period, including one on staff development and training and one on how to capture the stories and impact of your project through photography. Due to unforeseen technical difficulties with our new chat software, we were unable to schedule as many chats as originally planned. GU staff also created an on-line message forum for grantees to communicate with each other and GU project staff. Although, this was believed to be a good idea and actively promoted in the early part of the grant, it was never fully utilized by the grantees.

***Outside Partnerships:***

Interest in intergenerational environmental work continues to grow. In addition to the above activities, Donna Butts was invited to join a panel on environmental issues at the 2007 annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America. She shared information from this project and GU's resources on this topic. GU has been contacted by American Community Gardening Association and Cornell University to partner on a new multigenerational environmental initiative and by a group developing intergenerational Earth Councils.

**Goal/Objective 3:** To determine the environmental results of the projects and public education and to identify project models and promising practices suitable for dissemination and replication.

**Actual Work Completed:**

GU staff developed and collected quarterly reports from all grantees. The reporting form complimented the information the EPA requires of GU and includes progress towards environmental results. The reports were due quarterly in time for the information to be shared in GU quarterly reports to the EPA. Through the report form, site visits, and technical assistance efforts, GU collected information from the grantees on their program models, implementation challenges, successful activities, and environmental results.

The following are the primary environmental results from the 5 grantee projects:

- Educated 140 youth and 70 older adults about the impact of Acid Mine Drainage on watershed and ways to monitor water quality
- Conducted 12 water monitoring session which involved 50 young people and 50 older adults.
- Conducted 12 oral history listening sessions where 10 older adults shared their stories related to the community river and 10 youth explained the water monitoring program.
- Five older adults guided 15 youth on water quality testing and macroinvertebrate collection and identification during 4 sessions over the summer.
- Three older adults educated 15 youth on water facts and nonpoint source pollution through a presentation and hands-on demonstration using models.
- Seven youth and 10 older adults participated in intergenerational environmental classes which included assessment of environmental footsteps; field trips to learn about organic farming, solar energy, and agribusiness; and service projects.
- Youth and older adults assessed environmental hazards around senior gathering places focused on indoor air quality issues including mold, pesticide use and toxic cleaning materials.
- As part of a youth-developed and led E-cycling business, 35 youth and 6 older adults reduced toxic waste in landfills by developing, collecting and recycling 8,000 pounds of materials during one service day in 2006.
- 75 youth interviewed 3 elder environmental community activists; composed songs of their life stories; and performed those songs live during a community celebration.
- Educated over 110 community members on environmental issues through community celebration of elder environmental advocates as told by youth voices.
- Educated 106 older adults, 58 youth, and 20 family members about practical, everyday, money-saving steps toward environmental health in the home, workplace, and community.
- Provided materials and guidance to over 100 children in summer programs at parks to grow and study the growth and migration of monarch butterflies.
- Educated families on backyard gardening strategies that foster sustainable habitats for monarch butterflies and other wildlife.
- Educated 10 groups on how to engage youth and seniors in Integrated Pest Management at community gardens
- Developed Intergenerational Integrated Pest Management Workbook to be used by intergenerational participants in community gardens.

The environmental results of GU's public education activities are as follows:

- Educated 1,500 people on intergenerational environmental health projects through presentations at 11 conferences and events.
- Featured intergenerational environmental projects in two issues of GU's magazine *Together* reaching over 10,000 readers each time.
- Distributed over 1,600 copies of the guidebook *Generations United for Environmental Action and Awareness* electronically through the GU website and in print at four national conferences.
- Distributed over 1,400 copies of the fact sheet electronically through the GU website and in print alongside the GU exhibit at 10 national conferences.

Based on this project GU determined the following promising practices for intergenerational environmental projects:

1. The environment is an excellent vehicle for building intergenerational relationships. Both younger and older people have strong commitments to environmental issues and to working to improve the environment.
2. Intergenerational environmental projects resonate with older adults. This may be because this is the stage in their life where as Erik Erickson described it “Generativity” or “I am what I leave behind me” becomes of the utmost importance.
3. Both older and younger people appreciate volunteering outdoors and with hands-on environmental projects.
4. Intergenerational environmental projects can utilize both arts-based and science-based methodologies to successfully engage and educate participants of all ages.
5. The summer can be a good time to conduct intergenerational environmental programs working with partners like parks and recreation departments and Boys and Girls Clubs.
6. Both younger and older participants need proper orientation and preparation to the project and to working with the other generation.
7. Successful intergenerational environmental projects understand and recognize the strengths of each generation.

## **II. Budget:**

GU expended all of the grant funds during the grant period.

## **III. Discuss and Project Terms and Conditions required for this Agreement**

GU provided quarterly reports on the project to the EPA during the course of the agreement.

## **IV. Report any Key Personnel Changes concerned with the project:**

There were no key personnel changes during the project. The project coordinator, Sheri Steinig, was on maternity leave for two and half months during the summer of 2007. During that time, Donna Butts, GU’s executive director oversaw the project and Roxana Martinez, GU’s program resource assistant maintained communication with grantees.

## **V. Difficulties Encountered:**

GU staff identified minor challenges with some of the activities for **Goal/Objective 1:** To provide up to 5 seed grants to develop and implement intergenerational environmental health projects.

We would recommend a shorter time frame for the seed grants. We developed an 18-month grant period to allow grantees plenty of time to plan and conduct summer or school-year projects. Most grantees completed their grant deliverables within one year of funding and were able to successfully conduct both summer and school-year projects. GU staff believes that some grantees were challenged to maintain the momentum of the project over the longer time period.

Additionally, GU staff worked with some grantees to improve their understanding of the differences between intergenerational and multigenerational environmental initiatives. The key difference being that intergenerational programs intentionally bring members of the different generations together to build mutually beneficial relationships. Whereas a multigenerational

initiative would engage members of multiple generations, but not necessarily plan for or encourage interaction between the younger and older participants.

Also, two grantees experienced difficulty with extreme heat that affected their summer projects. The grantees recommended that program planners develop contingency plans for high temperatures such as back up days or indoor activities.

GU staff also experienced minor difficulties with **Goal/Objective 2:** To provide seven forms of information and assistance to grant recipients and the general public interested in intergenerational environmental health.

Specifically we planned to provide training to grantees using our new on-line chat software and message forums integrated into our new website. Unfortunately, we experienced numerous technical difficulties with the software which made it a more cumbersome means of communication. Instead of a web-based chat, we conducted training via conference calls and shared resources and information through e-mail and technical assistance calls with all of the grantees. We did conduct two successful on-line chats during the grant period which grantees were invited and encouraged to participate in.

Signature (Recipient Authorized Official): Donna M. Butts (electronic signature)

Date: March 28, 2008