Bridging Generations through Conversation

Fostering Meaningful Dialogue Across Generations

WHO TOOK PART

- **Students**: 30 grade 12 students from Prince Edward Collegiate
- **Senior Adults**: 17 participants (ages 65-85)
- **Format**: Structured conversations online

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM STUDENTS (23 responses)

Feeling More Positive About Older Adults

65% said they felt somewhat or much more positive about older adults after the conversations.

This shows that talking, listening, and sharing stories can really help challenge stereotypes and ageist assumptions.

> "I believe that the perspective of older generations can only enrich the way we look at the world and how we look at ourselves."

Willingness To Connect

78% said they are more willing to engage with older adults in the future.

Several participants (students and older adults) mentioned they'd like longer conversations or in-person meetings.

> "I really enjoyed our conversation and I think we could have talked for longer."

Recognizing Older Adults' Strengths

100% of students recognized the valuable contributions older adults make to the community.

Wisdom and life experience were the most frequently mentioned strengths — showing a shift from stereotypes to genuine appreciation.

> "She gave us great insight about her life, which I can apply to the decisions I make in the future."

Personal Growth

Students shared that the conversations:

- Influenced how they think about their future
- Encouraged reflection on career, family, and life choices
- Broadened their understanding of different perspectives
- Inspired confidence and personal growth.

> "It amplified my perspective on life, the world and the possibilities I have ahead of me."

The Prince Edward County Community Care for Seniors Association

A Prince Edward County Community Care for Seniors project, supported by the Ontario Seniors Community Grant program.

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WHAT WE LEARNED FROM OLDER ADULTS (13 responses)

Understanding Youth

85% said the conversations gave them a deeper understanding of young people.

Willingness To Participate Again

100% said they'd like to take part in similar projects in the future.

"It's the first time as a senior that I've ever been asked for my opinion on anything by young people. It was a pleasure and it has opened up a door that I would love to pursue with young people."

Overall Experience

- The project was described as fun, inspiring, and meaningful.
- Many older adults appreciated being heard and valued, sometimes for the first time.
- Students were praised for being polite, mature, and thoughtful.

"This was an excellent idea to engage with young people who would normally be a bit afraid to talk to older people. It is an excellent way to get younger people to broaden their horizons when contemplating career and life choices."

TAKEAWAYS

The project successfully:

- Strengthened understanding between generations
- Increased positive attitudes toward older adults
- Encouraged students to reflect on their future
- Highlighted the value of older adults as active contributors to the community.

Structured intergenerational conversations like this clearly make a difference — and there's value in doing more sessions in the future.

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LESSONS LEARNED & IDEAS FOR NEXT TIME

Participants were encouraged to share ideas for future conversations. Suggestions include:

- Offer longer sessions and, where possible, in-person conversations to allow for deeper connection and engagement.
- Schedule conversations over a longer timeframe to allow greater flexibility for participants.
- Provide a set of sample questions for both students and older adults to encourage a balanced, natural conversation and give participants a chance to reflect on their responses beforehand.
- For students who work in pairs, coordinate questions in advance to create a smoother, more conversational flow.

FROM CONVERSATION TO CONNECTION

The momentum is already building

Ms. Travers (teacher) has shared her enthusiasm for **running the program again**, noting, "It's the first exam period where I got misty eyed at the reading of their narratives. This has been an incredible experience for my class."

The impact is extending beyond the classroom. After hearing about this project, ROC Youth Services is eager to **expand intergenerational connections**, creating new opportunities for socialization, mentoring, and tutoring that extend the project's community impact.

The impact is extending beyond the classroom.