



ORANGE TREE
LIVING



THE UNIQUE BENEFITS OF INTERGENERATIONAL LIVING

IT TAKES A VILLAGE...

They say it takes a village to raise a child. At Orange Tree Living, we believe it is important for everyone, no matter their age, to have a village supporting them through the phases of life.

Intergenerational programming and living brings together people of all ages to foster relationships, understanding and improve health. Children, teens, adults, and seniors coexist under one roof, creating a depth and richness in these relationships, which supports a true sense of family and community.

How Does Intergenerational Living Impact Seniors?

59% of adults over 55 are volunteers. Those volunteers view retirement as a time to be active and involved in the community and to begin new activities.¹

Homes with children in them are more vibrant and full of life. Seniors who work with children and youth live longer and boast better physical and mental health than those who do not, and those in intergenerational living arrangements experience innumerable benefits, including:

- **Improved cognitive functions:** Intergenerational living increases seniors' personal social network. Regular participation in the activities of a social network helps to keep them "sharp" as they age and has a positive impact on those with dementia.
- **Decreased incidence of depression and less social isolation:** seniors want to remain productive and they want to know that they are making worthwhile contributions. Working with children and youth promotes social interaction, increases feelings of self-worth, and helps reduce feelings of depression.

- **Lifelong learning:** Older adults have a lot to teach children and teenagers, but youth can be teachers, too. Seniors can learn about technology and other innovations from their younger friends.

- **Improved health:** Seniors who work with children are in better health than their counterparts. They burn 20% more calories, become less reliant on canes, experience fewer falls, and perform better on memory tests.

Are There Benefits of Intergenerational Communities for Children?

The benefits of intergenerational communities are clear for seniors. However, there are also proven benefits for the children, including:

- **Increased self-esteem and confidence:** The skills children learn from regular interactions with older adults helps them develop their own social networks and improve communication and problem solving skills.

- **Social maturity:** Children who interact with older adults in an intergenerational community experience higher personal and social development by 11 months compared to their counterparts. These children also have a more positive attitude towards ageing and develop a strong sense of community.

- **An increased sense of belonging in their communities:** Children who participate in intergenerational programming develop a sense of purpose. As their intergenerational social network becomes ingrained in their daily lives, that sense of purpose becomes clearly tied to their place in the community.

Benefits for the Entire Community

The benefits of intergenerational living do not end with individuals. Programming also positively impacts the community through:

- **More vibrant and cohesive communities:** Intergenerational programs break down barriers and help promote tolerance and understanding. As different age groups mix, bond, and discover common interests, it creates a strong group



identity. People who once felt alienated now belong. People who were once isolated are now active members of a network.

- **Preservation of cultural traditions:** Seniors can pass down historical traditions, cultural traditions, and personal stories to children outside of their own family. This helps to build a sense of identity and encourages tolerance while preserving traditions for future generations.

- **Increased collaboration between local organizations:** Successful partnerships between senior and youth organizations and schools demonstrates what can happen when local organizations come together. Those successful relationships encourage other groups to forge relationships that benefits the entire community.

- **Greater community support for children and youth programs:** As the community enjoys success in intergenerational communities, individuals are more likely to support such programs. Additionally, the children in intergenerational communities are more likely to volunteer in the community as they get older and support community groups, creating an ongoing cycle of giving back.

When generations come together under one roof, there are proven benefits for everyone. Not only do these programs help older adults stay active, healthier, and connected to their communities, they improve educational outcomes for children, strengthen tolerance and cooperation, and foster a lifelong desire to give back. When it comes to senior living, older adults and their families have a lot to consider. Choose intergenerational living — what you give and what you get back is a part of a wondrous bigger picture. 🌱

¹ Glass, T.A. (2003). *Successful Aging*. Brocklehurst's Textbook of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology, 6th ed. London: Harcourt Health Sciences

² The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. (January 2007). A Portrait of "Generation Next" How Young People View Their Lives, Futures and Politics.

³ Glass, T.A. (2003). *Successful Aging*. Brocklehurst's Textbook of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology, 6th ed. London: Harcourt Health Sciences

⁴ Zedlewski, S.R. & Schaner, S.G. (May 2006). Older Adults Engaged as Volunteers, The Retirement Project Perspectives on Productive Aging. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

⁵ Glass, T.A. (2003). *Successful Aging*. Brocklehurst's Textbook of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology, 6th ed. London: Harcourt Health Sciences

⁶ Jarrott, S. & Bruno, K. (2003). *Intergenerational activities involving persons with dementia: An Observational Assessment*. American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 31-37.