

June

Intergenerational
/Quality Life Choices

2006

Advisory
Council
Intergenerational/
Quality Life Choices
Standing Committee's

Blue Ribbon
Report



*Riverside County Advisory Council on Aging
Riverside County Office on Aging*

Funding for this report was provided by the Older Americans Act.



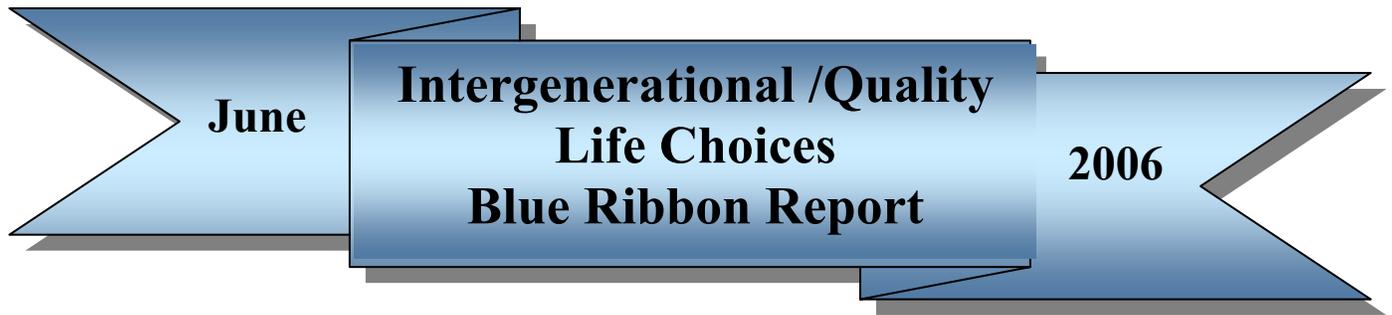


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Introduction

As a result of the development of the Riverside County Office on Aging's 2005 – 2009 Strategic Plan, *Strength in Aging*, the Intergenerational/Quality Life Choices Standing Committee was established by the Advisory Council on Aging. The mission defined by the Committee members is to "Motivate individual civic engagement and stimulate community-wide planning for diverse, intergenerational-friendly communities." The activities related to meeting the goals/objectives of this committee will be carried out over the course of the 4-year planning cycle.

Why Are Intergenerational Programs Needed?



The answer to this question was concisely stated by Mike Mullens, Pepperdine University (Feb. 2006 PowerPoint presentation, "Prepare for the Coming *Age Wave*") in that "Intergenerational programs build community by integrating the old with the young, transmitting knowledge and experience to future generations and re-enforcing the value of people of all ages."

Intergenerational programs can work towards debunking myths associated to aging, such as the ones identified below:

Myth: Older people are frail.

Fact: "Far from being frail, the vast majority of older people remain physically fit well into later life. As well as being able to carry out the tasks of daily living, they continue to play an active part in community life."

Myth: Older people have nothing to contribute.

Fact: "The widely held belief that older people have nothing to contribute relies on the notion that only paid occupations count. However, substantial contributions are made by older people in unpaid work including agriculture, the informal sector and in voluntary roles."

Myth: Older people are all the same.

Fact: "'Older people' constitute a very diverse group...People age in unique ways, depending on a large variety of factors, including their gender, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and whether they live in industrialized or developing countries, in urban or rural settings. Climate, geographical location, family size, life skills and experience are all factors that make people less and less alike as they advance in age."

(Source: World Health Organization Report: "Ageing – Exploding the Myths," 1999.)

Riverside County's Population

With the projected population growth in Riverside County as seen in the chart to the right, along with the extensive diversity of its population, Riverside County would only benefit from becoming an intergenerational-friendly county.



RIVERSIDE COUNTY			
	2000 U.S. Census	2010 DOF*	% Increase from 2000 to 2010
Total Population	1,545,387	2,165,148	40.1%
Age 60+	250,010	381,875	52.7%
Age 85+	21,084	36,912	75.1%

* Department of Finance Projections -May 2004

First Steps

The Intergenerational/Quality Life Choices Standing Committee convened its first Forum, "You're Going to Age, You're going to Live Longer – Plan on It" on June 3, 2006. The focus of the forum was to educate individuals on proper nutrition, the need for financial planning, myths and facts about aging, effective intergenerational programs, and most importantly, to bridge the gap between the generations through open dialogue. The Committee attempted to bring to the forum a somewhat even mix of individuals from the following age categories: 14-24, 25-49, 50-65, and 66-plus. The actual attendance consisted of 16 individuals in the 14-24 age category; 22 in the 25-49 category; 31 in the 49-65 category; and 30 in the 66-plus category.



*"You're Going to Age,
You're Going to Live Longer --
Plan on It!"*

*"A Positive Step...to an
Intergenerational-Friendly County"*

A survey was developed in order to determine the effectiveness of the Intergenerational Forum and to assist the Intergenerational/Quality Life Choices Committee in identifying recommendations and next steps in the areas of intergenerational advocacy, coordination and education. Out of 99 Forum attendees, 73% filled out the survey. The survey results are included in this report starting on the next page. Based on the results of the survey, knowledge gained from existing intergenerational programs, and from dialoguing with Forum attendees, the Forum appears to have been a positive step forward to making Riverside County an "intergenerational-friendly" county.

Survey Analysis

June 3, 2006

Intergenerational/Quality Life Choices Forum: You're Going to Age, You're Going to Live Longer - Plan on It

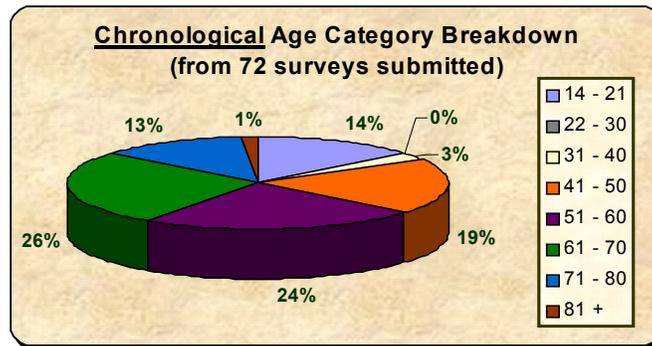
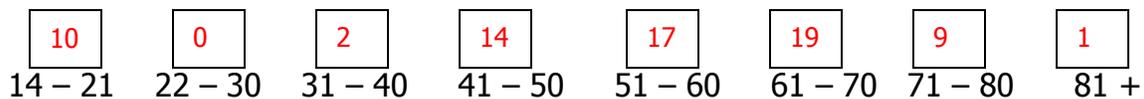
Forum Attendance: 99

Surveys Turned In: 72

This analysis is based on the culmination of responses received to some of the key questions asked in the survey. The responses were very helpful and will be useful in the planning of future Advisory Council on Aging (AC) and Office on Aging (OoA) intergenerational activities, advocacy efforts, and community education. Special thanks to all of the individuals who completed the survey!

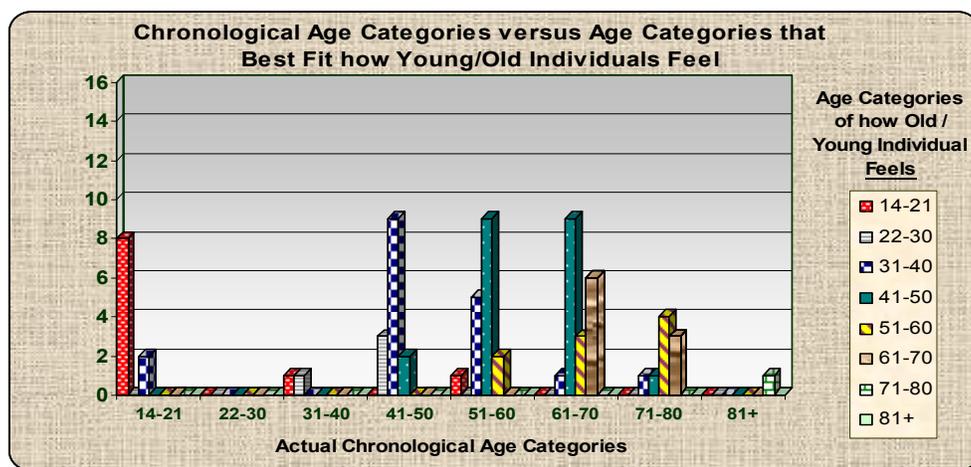
Survey Question 1 and Talled Responses

Please check the age category box that includes your **chronological age**:



Survey Question 2 and Talled Responses

Respondents were asked to identify an age category that **best fit how young/old they feel**:



Note in the above chart the number of older individuals who responded feeling younger than their actual chronological age and the two younger individuals in the 14-21 age category who responded feeling older than their actual age. The results of this survey support the idea that age is a "state of mind."

For Example: Start at the bottom row, "actual chronological age category - 61-70," then look at the teal/dotted color bar right above that age category (match color to the legend). In the legend, the teal-dotted bar represents someone feeling age 41-50 (therefore, 9 individuals falling in the age of 61-70 stated they feel age 41-50).

Survey Question 3 and Talled Responses

Please circle the number that best identifies the importance of the following items to you at this time in your life:

Rating Scale: 1 Very important 2 Important 3 Somewhat Important 4 Not important

	Talled Responses			
	1	2	3	4
Exercise-----	38	19	10	3
Education-----	43	15	9	2
Good Nutrition-----	49	19	0	1
Having a Good Job-----	35	18	7	9
Saving for Retirement-----	41	17	7	4
Spending Time with Friends-----	45	20	4	1
Helping Out in the Community-----	27	28	19	0
Learning about another Generation-----	23	34	13	0

The top items identified by respondents as "important" or "very important" are: 1st - Nutrition (68 responses); 2nd - Spending Time with Friends (65 responses); and 3rd is tied between Education and Saving for Retirement (58 responses each).

Note: Fifty-seven individuals (or 79% of total survey respondents) feel it is important/very important to learn about another generation.

Survey Question 4 and Talled Responses

Please answer the following by checking the box that best fits your opinion:

	Talled Responses		
	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
a. I can rely on Social Security for my retirement.	9	60	3
b. Most high school students eat healthy lunches at school.	2	65	5
c. People should retire as soon as they reach retirement age (approximately age 65).	7	57	8

Of the 9 individuals that agreed to statement 4a (re Social Security), 1 respondent was in the age category of 41-50, 1 in the age category of 51-60, 3 in the age category of 61-70, and 4 in the age category of 71-80.

Of the 2 individuals that agreed to statement 4b (re healthy lunches), 1 respondent was in the age category of 61-70 and the other in the age category of 71-80.

Of the 7 individuals that agreed to statement 4c (re retirement age), 2 respondents were in the age category of 51-60 and the remaining were in the age categories above 60.

	Tallied Responses		
	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
d. It's important for each generation to understand and learn from other generations.	71	0	0
e. This Forum has been helpful in beginning to understand other generations.	63	2	7
f. I would like to get involved with intergenerational projects/ activities.	42	3	22

Request for Comments

Attendees were asked to give some examples of intergenerational projects/activities that would be of interest to them or examples of projects they are already involved with. The main purpose of this request was to ascertain possible ideas for future intergenerational activities in Riverside County. **The comments are grouped below by age categories of respondents** (note the similar interests among the different age categories for continued intergenerational activities):

Age Category 14 – 21

- ❖ "Students helping out at elderly homes - community work in homes, students/adults."
- ❖ "Senior citizen dances - visiting with elderly."
- ❖ "Senior youth visits and dances."
- ❖ "...having a prom for the elderly would be such a great program..."
- ❖ "More interaction between generations."
- ❖ "... I am in Links Crew, we meet with younger generations and mentor them - I also would like to get further involved with this program because I have enjoyed it so much."
- ❖ "Things much like this activity (intergenerational forum)."

Age Category 41 – 50

- ❖ "Teach how to use money to create financial freedom - 90% of people who reach 65 years old will not have the funds saved to retire."
- ❖ "Think and grow rich."
- ❖ "Reading or playing games at a senior citizens home."
- ❖ "Involved in Community Theater and activities at church."
- ❖ "Presentation of health topics: diabetes, asthma, healthy life style through the life span - picnic or outdoor activity."

Age Category 51 – 60

- ❖ "Big brothers / big sisters."
- ❖ "Rotary International – Intergenerational activities."
- ❖ "Retirement home visitation - pet therapy - volunteer driver."
- ❖ "Mentoring."
- ❖ "I would like to see a stronger mentoring program – preferably with seniors taking on and "adopting" single parent families."

Age Category 61 – 70

- ❖ "Mentoring girls in high school."
- ❖ "Any activity that would include older adults passing on their skills, knowledge, etc."
- ❖ "Forum - round table discussion."

Age Category 71 – 80

- ❖ "I currently work as a substitute teacher (pre-school – 3rd grade) in Riverside Unified School District. I also teach Sunday school at St. Michael's Episcopal Church - additionally, I am a child care worker (on call) with Olive Crest, an organization providing residential care for teenagers on probation."
- ❖ "Train young people to become involved as instructors to conduct effective exercise classes for older adults."

Additional Intergenerational Forum Comments

"...I got to really connect with elder generations and understand different positions as to how they view younger generations, current and global events, and what solutions they offer."

Age 14-21

"...I learned the lesson of tolerance from the youngest member outlook with other generations and I learned proper nutrition from the oldest member..."

Age 41-50

"Intergenerational programs build community by integrating the old with the young, transmitting knowledge and experience to future generations and re-enforcing the value of people of all ages."

Mike Mullins

"...I am in total agreement in the concept of intergenerational interaction."

Age 61-70

"...glad I now know about the 'intergenerational' initiatives."

Age 71-80

Recommendations for Next Steps

Advocacy

- Advocate for a program to engage seniors as mentors for youth emancipated from the Foster Care system.
- Advocate for funding sources to support replication of successful intergenerational mentoring programs.
- Advocate for financial support from financial planning companies to convene workshops for youth/young adults.
- Advocate for a “reverse” mentoring program where youth would provide training to seniors who are interested in learning more about information technology and its uses, such as navigating the Network of Care.

Coordination

- Coordinate with school districts to determine what is currently being covered in the school curriculum in regards to proper nutrition and financial planning. Advocate for inclusion, if curriculum is determined to be lacking.
- Continue to coordinate with the Regional Access Project (RAP) on the California Endowment Fund childhood obesity initiative.
- Coordinate with existing intergenerational programs to determine possibility of replicating them throughout Riverside County.
- Continue to coordinate with Youth Commission/youth organizations on intergenerational initiative.
- Coordinate with community groups and organizations to provide opportunities for civic engagement for all age categories.

Education

- Provide presentations to the community (with a focus on boys and girls clubs/organizations, faith based organizations, senior clubs/organizations) about the myths/facts of aging and the need for Riverside County to become an “intergenerational-friendly” county.
- In collaboration with financial planning companies, convene creative workshops that would educate youth about financial planning.
- Coordinate with the Advisory Council on Aging’s Health/Wellness Standing Committee to convene the second intergenerational-related forum, “Aging as a Lifelong Process” (as identified in OoA’s 2005-2009 Strategic Plan, Objective HW.9a).

Advisory Council on Aging Intergenerational/Quality Life Choices Standing Committee

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