



Barbara & Jack Kay Early Childhood Learning Center

INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM

L' Dor Va Dor – From Generation to Generation

The Intergenerational Program brings Volunteer Grandparents into the preschool classrooms on a regular weekly basis to provide the children with another layer of adult interaction. Interaction between the generations helps the children thrive in an environment enriched by the presence of committed volunteers willing to share their life experiences.

Description

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them
- Intentionally collaborating across age groups/boundaries is not just a nice, collegial thing to do, it helps us flourish.
- Cohesion and empathy between the generations helps to develop a strong community spirit.
- Developing and connecting families while supporting seniors to mentor and celebrate their legacies and discoveries is a gift.
- Intergenerational programs give retired community members, both men and women, a focus and a place to make their contributions of time meaningful.
- The 60's and 70's are the new 50's and age is not a consideration.

- Children thrive with stories, attention, an extra lap, an extra person who can radiate warmth and joy.
- The volunteer grandparent feels useful by providing a relaxed, unconditional and nonjudgmental presence to children seeking connection.

GOALS

- Enrich the experience of our children by involving people of different ages who have lived through different historical experiences
- Reach out beyond our school families in order to strengthen our community
- Create and provide meaningful opportunities for retired men and women in our community
- Connect families beyond the walls of the school

PROFILE OF THE VOLUNTEER GRANDPARENTS - What is the ideal match ? Who are we looking for?

Volunteer Grandparents possess the following traits: love of children, joy, warmth, patience, self-respect, respect for young children, empathy, highly relational, energetic, ability to listen, kindness, non-judgmental attitude, flexibility, emotional responsibility, affection, care, and have had rich life experiences to share with the children.

Volunteer Grandparents exemplify the core values/lenses of our school: brit, kedusha, drash, masa, hitorerut, b'tzelem Elohim, tikum olam. (see attached document with a brief explanation of them)

We are initially seeking a total of up to 7 Volunteer Grandparents, one per class: Galim (one to two year olds), Teva (two to three year olds), Adama (two to three year olds), Nofim (three to four year olds), Shorashim (four to five year olds) and Ilanot (four to five year olds).

Note that being a grandparent is not a pre-requisite to be a part of this program; the word was chosen because of its rich connotation.

ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER GRANDPARENTS

Each selected Volunteer Grandparent will join an assigned classroom on a weekly basis to be available to the children in the class. Regular weekly participation will be for a two hour period on assigned mornings. Some responsibilities will include but not be limited to: share/tell stories, read stories, engage in conversation, engage in play, facilitate an exploration, aid development of a skill. All of these activities will be under the guidance of the classroom teacher.

EXPECTATIONS — COMMITMENT

Each Volunteer Grandparent will:

- Participate in a comprehensive application process
- Attend two 1 ½ hours training sessions prior to the beginning of the program
- Commit to regular weekly participation in the program
- Attend monthly briefing and debriefing meetings, where they will actively reflect on the process/implementation of the intergenerational program
- Complete reading assignments in the form of articles or a book
- Abide by the **Intergenerational Project handbook**
- Understand and accept the role in the classroom as a volunteer as opposed to a teacher
- Contribute to the creation a a community of Volunteer Grandparents

WHAT WILL THE SELECTION PROCESS ENCOMPASS

1. Completion of a comprehensive **application form**, including the following questions:
 - What is your experience with children? What is your main motivation to apply for this program and how do you expect participation in it to impact you? What skills do you possess that make you a great candidate for this program and why should we choose you to participate?

- Which age group would you prefer to work with (1 to 2; 2 to 3; 3 to 4; 4 to 5 years old)
- What is your availability to participate as a Volunteer Grandparent from 9 to 11 AM, and on which days of the week? Commitment is for one day a week.
- Are you available to participate throughout the school year (September through May) and, if not, during which months are you available?

2. Review of Applications by the Program Committee

3. Interview with the Program Committee

4. Spend a morning in the classroom

5. Selection of Volunteer Grandparents by the Program Committee, and immediate letter of acceptance or rejection to be sent to each applicant.

6. Once the Volunteer Grandparents are selected they will have to satisfactorily complete the **Health Department Compliance/Clearance packet**

TRAINING—Providing the skills and training needs of adults to effectively assume Volunteer Grandparent roles

Topics will include but not be limited to:

- What is developmentally appropriate; range of expectable behaviors of children
- What is acceptable and what is not acceptable in the role of a volunteer; boundaries in regards to discipline and classroom leadership
- How to engage with the children in play and in conversation (authenticity vs. “childish” talk and behavior)
- How to read a book to the children
- The image of the children; understanding that the way we view children determines our interactions with them.
- How Behavior Management is being done in the school

- Understanding the fact that you are role models: children and parents will look at the Volunteer Grandparents as role-models. This is created by their interactions with the children, in the way they talk, relate, listen, observe, give eye contact, set boundaries, bring a joyful non-judgmental attitude, give love and warmth...
- Components of a community of volunteers: communication, as it is the foundation of effective partnerships; life long learning; listening; confidentiality in regards to the children, their families and the teachers (whatever happens in the classroom stays in the classroom); appreciating others for where they are right now, in this season; consistency and reliability

MONTHLY BRIEFINGS AND DEBRIEFINGS

Members of the intergenerational program, the Volunteer Grandparents, will meet on a monthly basis. These forums will be a safe place to talk about what the volunteers notice and feel. These will be an opportunity to share experiences, moments in which Volunteer Grandparents weren't sure what to do, etc. Meetings will be also an opportunity of establishing ways for volunteers to offer feedback on why and how well program experiences are meeting their needs.