

March 13, 2017

Linking Generations is a wonderful initiative that gives our students an opportunity to connect with seniors and to recognize that they are an important source of knowledge and wisdom. The interactions that our students have with the seniors teach them life lessons that they will carry with them through the years. With their seniors, our students learn to be patient and compassionate. They begin to empathize with the challenges that aging adults face. They learn that as we get older, our bodies don't work as fast or as well as they used to but that it doesn't mean that our desire for life, for love, for companionship and for fun disappears.

This program allows our students to reflect upon and to appreciate all the blessings in their own lives as they learn what it was like to grow up in a past generation. Through their interactions, our students learn how little their seniors grew up with. They had no phones, no computers, no weekly allowance, no private chauffeurs, and they didn't get to travel around the world...They worked hard, they walked to school, had many chores to do at home or on the farm. Yet, they were happy.

Here is what some of our students have to say about Linking Generations:

*'The experience of Linking Generations helped me to really value older people and their experiences. I am incredibly thankful to all the people who make this program possible.'*

*'We get to give back to the community. We hear stories from the past and we get to make new friends.'*

*'We get to have fun with our seniors while learning new things and giving back to the community.'*

*'I enjoy Linking Generations because we get to talk to the seniors and get to know another generation. We learn what they did in their time. The seniors learn a lot from us as well and they like hearing about our school, technology and what is going on at the school. The activities are always new and exciting. My favourite activity was when we got to design and make our own park.'*

As a school, this program adds such an authentic life experience for our students' education. What our students receive from being a part of Linking Generations goes way beyond the textbooks and the school experience.

It teaches them many important life lessons that can only be found at the root of this program ; linking one generation to another. We, at École Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School, feel so blessed to be part of two Linking Generations programs. We can now offer twice as many students the privilege of this authentic and fulfilling life experience.

We are thankful for all the knowledge and life experience that these gentle men and women share with the younger generations. What a fantastic way to be reminded that life is precious and that we should cherish every minute of it. If you'll allow me, I would like to finish with a quote from Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta: *'We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.'*

Julie Lafrance

Principal, École OLPH