

PEOPLE OF ALL AGES

An intergenerational program mixes people of different ages... in this case, the very young and the very old!

Did you know that in the United States, over 25 percent of senior citizens (people over 65) live alone? Without enough friends and family nearby, seniors are at risk for depression.¹

5 This is a serious problem. Studies show that people with depression are more likely to have other health problems as well.

Now, many communities are trying to find a solution to this problem. Providence Mount 10 St. Vincent, a retirement home near Seattle, Washington, has recently launched an intergenerational program. Over 400 senior citizens live at Providence Mount St. Vincent, and over 40 children from a few months old 15 to age five go to daycare there. The children spend the day there with the senior citizens while workers look on.

¹A person with depression feels very unhappy and unable to do anything.

An intergenerational program like the one at Providence Mount St. Vincent has clear 20 benefits. For the older people, their social life improves; they read to and play games with the children and encourage them in a wide range of other activities. Being involved with the children makes the seniors feel useful and 25 happy, and if they feel happy, their overall mental and physical health may improve.

The children also benefit from the program. They have an enthusiastic and patient group of people to play with in a safe environment. 30 Some of the seniors are also disabled,² and

²A disabled person has an illness or injury that makes doing certain physical or mental activities (like walking or thinking) difficult.

studies also show that if children are exposed to people with disabilities at a young age, they will learn to be more tolerant and understanding of people 35 like this.

Providence Mount St. Vincent was even featured in a documentary film called *Present Perfect*. As families of both the young and the old see the benefits, intergenerational 40 programs are expanding. The film's message is starting to spread: even if the very young and the very old don't have a shared past or future, their shared present can be perfect.

Infer meaning. Read the article. Then match the words (1–4) with the correct definitions (a–d).

1. at risk (line 4) _____
2. launched (line 11) _____
3. be exposed to (line 31–32) _____
4. tolerant (line 34) _____

- a. started
- b. in danger of something bad happening
- c. be given the chance to experience something new
- d. able to accept different ideas and situations

What are the benefits of the program?

Can you think of any challenges?