Bridging the gap

“Age isn't how old you are but how old you feel”
Gabriel García Márquez

Some time ago, my grandfather moved into an old people’s home and I visited him there. He was sitting in the living room with other residents, half of them asleep. The room was clean and warm, with flowers and pictures, and the care assistants were kind and cheerful. The TV was on and the only other sound was snoring and embarrassing noises of digestion. It was depressing. Grandpa talked endlessly about past times and how much he missed his grandchildren, but I knew from my sister that they hated going to visit him there. And, to be honest, I could understand it perfectly.

At that time I came across a magazine article about a pre-school nursery set in an old people’s home. Just take a minute to think about that, young children and elderly people being cared for together, interacting together, teaching each other. Genius, isn’t it? But this isn’t just some Utopian dream, this set-up actually exists. The idea is simple but revolutionary: children and residents eat lunch together and share activities such as music, painting, and gardening. In the afternoons, the residents enjoy reading or telling stories to the children and, if a child is feeling sad or tired, there is always a kind lap to sit on and a cuddle to be given.

Intergenerational programs are nowadays growing in popularity all over the world and are grounded in the idea of bringing the old and the young together. Due to the fact that there is so little interaction between the generations, young people often don't understand the needs and abilities of older adults, and older adults often forget the positive emotional benefits of being around young children. These programs purposefully bring together people of different generations to share their talents and resources, supporting each other in relationships that benefit both the individuals and the community.

Successful programs are based on reciprocity, are sustained and intentional, and involve education and preparation for all ages. Young and old are viewed as assets, not problems to be solved!
Reading Comprehension (4 points)

1. - Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE according to the text? Find evidence in the text to support your answers. No marks are given for only TRUE or FALSE. (2 points)

1. The writer's nieces did not go to visit their grandfather because children weren't allowed at the old people's home:

2. Intergenerational programs benefit not only the people involved but also the communities they belong to:

2. - Answer the following questions in full sentences using information from the text. (2 points)

1. What was the article read by the writer about?

2. Why aren't young and old people seen as problems in the intergenerational schemes?

3. - Vocabulary. Find words in the text meaning the following: (2 points)

   a) intentionally
   b) hug
   c) mutual relationship
   d) A noise made by some people when they sleep

4. - Write a composition (100 words) on the following topic: (4 points)

   “There is nothing that young people can teach older people”
Reading Comprehension (4 points)

1. - Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE according to the text? Find evidence in the text to support your answers. No marks are given for only TRUE or FALSE. (2 points)

1. The writer's nieces did not go to visit their grandfather because children weren't allowed at the old people's home.
   **FALSE: I knew from my sister that they hated going to visit him there.**

2. Intergenerational programs benefit not only the people involved but also the communities they belong to.
   **TRUE: These programs purposefully bring together people of different generations to share their talents and resources, supporting each other in relationships that benefit both the individuals and the community.**

2. - Answer the following questions in full sentences using information from the text. (2 points)

1. What was the article read by the writer about?
   **The article was about an intergenerational program in which a preschool nursery was set in an old people's home**

2. Why aren't young and old people seen as problems in the intergenerational schemes?
   **Because they are seen as assets that can support and benefit the other.**

3. - Vocabulary. Find words in the text meaning the following: (2 points)

   a) intentionally (purposefully)
   b) hug (cuddle)
   c) mutual relationship (reciprocity)
   d) A noise made by some people when they sleep (snoring)

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