



Mount Kisco Child Care Center inc.
A Not-for-Profit Early Care & Education Program serving families since 1971



Intergenerational Interaction Proves Beneficial to all Participants *Results of Intergenerational JEWEL Study Presented*

Mount Kisco, NY (March 26, 2009) – Mount Kisco Child Care Center (MKCCC) and Family Services of Westchester’s My Second Home (MSH), recently hosted a breakfast at which the results of a cutting edge three-year intergenerational study were presented.

Study authors Janna C. Heyman, Ph.D., and Irene A. Gutheil, D.S.W., of the Ravazzin Center on Aging at Fordham University, presented their results of a three-tiered study of The JEWEL Intergenerational Program.

A collaborative program between MKCCC and MSH, the intergenerational JEWEL (Joining Elders with Early Learners) program was established 10 years ago to bring children and older adults together to learn, nurture each other and develop meaningful relationships.

The program was recently awarded one of five Intergenerational Shared Site Best Practice Awards from Met Life and Generations United, a Washington, DC-based organization that promotes intergenerational public policies, programs and strategies.

JEWEL’s Diamond Component assessed whether intergenerational programming makes a difference in children’s attitudes towards older adults. The component found that the JEWEL preschoolers felt that the elders were healthier and their overall view of older adults was more positive as compared to preschoolers not involved in programming with elders.

The Opal Component measured the satisfaction of all program participants, including children’s caregivers, older children, elders, elders’ caregivers and staff. It found that children enjoy being with older adults and that the elders enjoy being with the children, because it makes them feel younger. “I can see the past in a different way when they tell me,” said one child.

According to one parent, “My daughter says that it makes up for her not having a Grandma.” Finally, one caregiver said, “My elder always loved children but she and her husband did not have children. Being with young children was always something she enjoyed, and I am glad she can still experience the love and joy a child brings.”

The staff involved in the study said that they enjoyed “watching the children’s eyes light up when they realize they get ‘Grandma/Grandpa’ time. It’s very uplifting to watch.”

Additional Opal Component results included an increase in the elders’ energy and happiness levels as a result of interacting with children through dancing, gardening and arts & crafts. The older adults also developed closer relationships with the children through those daily activities and small group settings.

Perceived benefits of the Opal Component include the benefits of the children learning the importance of sharing and compromising; older adults feeling helpful and valuable; and the staff recognizing that children enjoyed the seniors' talks about their pasts. Caregivers felt that the elders' attitudes were more positive on days they interacted with children.

"When he has interacted with the children, he seems more animated when he comes home," said one caregiver.

The Sapphire Component evaluated small group intergenerational interactions to demonstrate their effectiveness. It found that small group interactions deepened the relationship between elders and children and that there was an increase in the rating of the relationship at the end of the study versus the beginning of the study. Nearly 80% of the activities were rated positively, and 94% were rated as activities the staff would recommend.

Overall, the study concluded that intergenerational programs are important for strengthening relationships between elders and children and enhancing their experiences; that annual surveys are critical to understanding the experiences of participants; and that progress of children and elders must be monitored.

About Mount Kisco Child Care Center: Mount Kisco Child Care Center is a licensed nonprofit, non-sectarian childcare facility that has served the working families of Northern Westchester since 1971 by providing exceptional and affordable, early-care and education to a diverse group of children three months to five years, with an expanded school-age program serving children up to 12 years of age. For additional information about Mount Kisco Child Care Center, visit www.mkccc.org or call 914.241.2135.

About My Second Home: Founded in 1998, My Second Home offers a day program for seniors that includes nutritious meals, door-to-door transportation services, and a variety of wellness activities like cards, yoga, and singing. Older adults interact with children to enjoy supervised activity options including art projects, gardening in the vegetable beds planted behind the building, and preparing simple snacks together using the freshly harvested produce.

About Family Services of Westchester (FSW): Founded in 1954, Family Services of Westchester is a not-for-profit agency dedicated to strengthening and supporting families, children and individuals through all stages of the life cycle. FSW provides a broad range of social and mental health services to nearly 30,000 people each year. Its offerings include early childhood programs, adoption services, family and individual counseling, youth development initiatives, elder services, employee assistance programs, and support programs for families living with HIV/AIDS. For additional information about Family Services of Westchester, visit www.fsw.org.

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Dick, Jane and Spot were created by children and older adults in the intergenerational JEWEL program.



Left to right: Rina Bellamy, Director, My Second Home; Linda White Ryan, Fordham University; Dottie Jordan, Executive Director, Mount Kisco Child Care Center (MKCCC); Janna C. Heyman, Ph.D., Fordham Univ. Ravazzin Center on Aging (study co-author); Susan Wayne, President/CEO Family Services of Westchester; and Irene A. Gutheil, D.S.W., Fordham Univ. Ravazzin Center on Aging (study co-author), at the JEWEL breakfast that took place at MKCCC



Left to right: Susan Wayne, President/CEO FSW; Dozene Guishard, Program Coordinator, Westchester County Department of Senior Program Services (WCDSPS); Colette Phipps, Research Analyst, WCDSPS; Janna C. Heyman, Ph.D., Fordham Univ. Ravazzin Center on Aging (study co-author); Dottie Jordan, Executive Director, Mount Kisco Child Care Center (MKCCC); Erin A. Purcell, Aging Services Representative, New York State Office for the Aging; and Rina Bellamy, Director, My Second Home, at the JEWEL breakfast that took place at MKCCC



Left to right: Liset Reid, United Way; Linda G. Collura, Intergenerational Coordinator for the JEWEL program; Dawn Meyerski, Program Director Mount Kisco Child Care Center (MKCCC); Dottie Jordan, Executive Director, MKCCC; Karen Bonaparte, United Way; and Rina Bellamy, Director My Second Home, at the JEWEL breakfast that took place at MKCCC