

LaST - Building intergenerational connections - face to face and online

A note from the author

I developed the idea for the Burnham Intergenerational Programme in partnership with Buckinghamshire Adult Learning in 2002. With the help of my colleagues from Burnham Health Promotion Trust (BHPT), I continued to run the project for 16 years until my retirement in January 2019. It was always a privilege and a delight to work with the children and staff from St Peter's CofE Primary School and the residents and friends of Perry House and I have so many treasured memories.



I have created the **LaST** Toolkit since I retired based on my experience in Burnham. I hope that it will encourage and enable others to set up projects of their own and so discover the lasting benefits, and the joy, that comes from building intergenerational connections. In these unprecedented times, these connections are more important than ever.

But with face to face meetings not being possible currently we have all had to find new ways of working. Since November 2020 I have been helping Marisa Di Bartolomeo (BHPT's Community Project Worker) to run the Burnham Intergenerational Programme using Zoom. We

have been delighted to discover that with just a few modifications the **LaST** Toolkit works very well online and it is still possible to capture the magic that comes from bringing children and older people together.



Shirley Shaw, February 2021

Introduction

‘Britain has been described as one of the most age segregated countries in the world. This can cause loneliness and exclusion, lack of trust, ageism and division between the generations’¹ (¹United for All Ages, January 2020 <https://www.unitedforallages.com/>)

But it doesn't have to be like this. Across the country imaginative projects have been established in a variety of settings enabling different generations to meet and share activities and experiences with well recognised and wide-ranging benefits for all.

One example is the **Burnham Intergenerational Programme** which, since 2002 has been bringing together children aged 9 to 11 with older people aged between 60 and 95. It is one of the longest running and most highly regarded initiatives of local charity **Burnham Health Promotion Trust (BHPT)**.



To date more than 600 children from Years 5 and 6 at St Peter's School and 50 residents and friends of Perry House in Burnham, Buckinghamshire have benefitted from the opportunity to enjoy



learning together through a range of shared activities and experiences. Clearly there are educational benefits for the children and older people in terms of knowledge gained but the positive impact of our Programme goes much deeper and includes:

- Greater understanding, tolerance and respect between the generations
- Greater sense of well-being for older people through increased connectedness with children and the wider community
- Capacity for children to gain a greater understanding of their local community and their place within it

We are passionate about the many benefits that can come from building intergenerational connections and would love to see our Programme replicated in other communities, so we have created the **LaST** Toolkit in order to share our experience, ideas and materials.

Whilst we have developed **LaST** based on our work with primary school aged children and older people in the community much of it could also be used in reminiscence sessions with older people in residential care or in hospital. Some parts could also be used to initiate intergenerational conversations within families or as a first stage in developing a memory book with older relatives.

The information in this Toolkit is divided into a number of sections:

- **Getting Started** – Information and guidance about setting up and running an Intergenerational Programme including aims, planning and preparation, risk assessment, safeguarding checklist, evaluation and role descriptions. Based on our recent experience of using Zoom there is a separate guide “**Delivering a virtual intergenerational project**”.
- **Resources** - A suggested plan for a school year based on 30 different topics plus ideas for “**Icebreakers, anytime activities and longer projects.**”
- **Modules** – Everything you need to run 30 different 1 ½ hour sessions. Topics fall into two main categories “Through the Year” and “Sharing Memories”
- **Impact** – What children, older people and staff say about the Programme and the wider benefits of the Programme including its links with the National Curriculum.



About Burnham Health Promotion Trust



Burnham Health Promotion Trust (BHPT) is a registered charity that was established in 1997. It owes its existence entirely to the great generosity and vision of the late Louis and Valerie Freedman who were local residents and patients of Burnham Health Centre in Buckinghamshire, where the charity has its office base.

The charity’s aim is to promote, sustain and enhance health and wellbeing in the community of Burnham. To this end it works in many different ways and at many different levels to positively influence the modifiable determinants of health and to create an environment where it is easier for people to make healthier choices.

BHPT has a tradition of partnership working and the Burnham Intergenerational Programme is an enduring example of the positive benefits that can be achieved in a community when different groups work together. Other examples of BHPT’s work have

been presented at public health and health promotion conferences and described in various publications, including a dedicated chapter in a Health Promotion textbook for medical students. ²

² *Health Promotion in Medical Education – from Rhetoric to Action*

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- the head teachers, staff and children of St Peter’s CofE Primary School, Burnham
- the management, residents and friends of Perry House sheltered housing scheme, Burnham
- the Trustees and staff of Burnham Health Promotion Trust

We are also very grateful to Buckinghamshire Adult Learning with whom we first set up the Programme in 2002. They provided tutors and resources in the early years and helped to shape the initial development of the Programme. As the Programme has developed the range of topics we have studied has increased and here we are indebted to Mandy Barrow, originally from Woodlands Junior School, Kent. Her excellent internet-based resources have been invaluable as the basis for many of our sessions and could certainly form the basis of many more in the future. <http://projectbritain.com/>

Other websites that have been very useful for developing resources for **LaST** are https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page for information and photographs
<https://wordmint.com/> for creating puzzles and games
<https://printablefreecoloring.com/> for drawings and pictures

We are also very grateful to Burnham Historians whose publications have provided us with so much excellent information about our local area. We would also like to thank everyone who has provided guidance on the development of **LaST**, in particular Aaron Mansfield at the Royal Society for Public Health and Denise and Stephen Burke at United for All Ages.

