



The award-winning, evidence-based BRIDGES Program Curricula Suite unites older adults and young people in their own communities for shared experiences and cooperative learning. Through the BRIDGES Programs, generations grow in mutual respect, understanding, and friendship. Positive attitudes about aging are fostered and both youth and mature volunteers are supported in their socio-emotional development. Studies have shown that positive attitudes about aging and social engagement can improve health and longevity. Additionally, the BRIDGES programs support national Common Core education standards as the students and older adults engage with one another through shared experiences and collaborative learning.

Groups of about eight mature adults volunteer in the young people's classroom, library, or community center over several weeks. Under the guidance of the teacher or trained staff member, the volunteers work in pairs with small groups of students. Together, the volunteers and students share their own life experiences and those of their families. These discussions are supplemented with creative, educational, fun projects that promote shared learning.

The BRIDGES Program Suite curricula are innovative and have a proven track record. This unique intergenerational program model was first piloted by Andrea J. Fonte Weaver in 1991 and has been successfully implemented in public schools, private schools, libraries, community centers, and senior centers, engaging more than 20,000 youth and older adults.

Four unique and innovative BRIDGES programs are available. Each is focused on a different student population and were designed to be developmentally appropriate. These curricula overlap as different school systems are organized in different ways. On the following pages you will find a short description of each of our four programs:

- BRIDGES: *Our Stories* (K-3)
- BRIDGES: *Growing Together* (3-6)
- BRIDGES: *Our Smarts* (7-8)
- BRIDGES: *Lifelong Journeys*. (9-College)

We have a uniquely tailored program for each age group that applies to age appropriate interests, themes and emotional intelligences.

Goals for BRIDGES

The BRIDGES Programs empower professionals to engage older adults and children in order to:

- Build relationships across generations in the community and in families
- Help all participants realize that as human beings, we have much many more similarities than differences
- Support volunteers' and youths' socio-emotional development as they meet new friends (both "old" and "young"), reconnect with "old friends", review their lives and share their wisdom & experience
- Promote a positive attitude about aging for all participants – children, staff and volunteers
- Foster an inclination for children to spend time with older adults, as well as dispel fears of aging and ageist stereotypes
- Expand learning opportunities that support the national core educational standards.

BRIDGES is critical for improved health and longevity as the program promotes positive attitudes about aging and supports social engagement. Through the BRIDGES programs, communities become not just more age-friendly but also more age-integrated.



Est. 2014
Bridges
Our Stories

**For Children in
Prekindergarten through Grade 3**

In BRIDGES: *Our Stories*, picture books provide the theme. Components of each session typically include:

- a movement activity;
- interactive book discussion;
- sharing family stories; and
- a related art projects.

Participants will:

- experience how a book can ‘come to life’;
- learn about their family histories; and
- enjoy ‘classic’ activities such as making newspaper hats and playing musical chairs.

Specific books, along with their themes, include:

- *The Story of Ferdinand* (by Munro Leaf, Drawings by Robert Lawson) with the theme of each person is special;
- *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel* (by Virginia Lee Burton) with the theme that each of us works hard to accomplish a goal;
- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (by Judith Viorst) with the theme that sometimes we experience difficult days, but we also have wonderful days;
- *A Chair for My Mother* (by Vera B. Williams) with the theme of saving money and also there are always ‘helpers’ should a crisis occur;
- *Miss Rumphius* (by Barbara Cooney) with the theme that each of us can make the world a more beautiful place;
- *A Wonderful World* (by George David Weiss and Bob Thiele, illustrated by Ashley Bryan) with the theme of identifying the wonderful things in our world;
- *Grandpa Green* (by Lane Smith) with the theme of exploring our family trees and favorite trees.



For Children in Grades 3 through 6

In *BRIDGES: Growing Together*, participants explore different aspects of their own life stories along with those of their families and the greater community through:

- interactive discussions; and
- a variety of projects utilizing the different multiple intelligences, including creating graphic organizers, drawing, and activities with movement. Favorite activities include sharing about an heirloom, a student-led tour of the school and/or community center, and teaching about a favorite topic.

Participants will:

- learn about their family histories;
- have the opportunity to lead and teach;
- discuss changes in our world over time, such as the way we celebrate holidays;
- recognize the way people are the same and different regardless of our ages.

Session titles include:

- Learning About Older Adults;
- Getting to Know You;
- Schools Then & Now;
- Ethnicities, Heirlooms and Traditions;
- Learning from Each Other;
- Introduction to The Multiple Intelligence 'Smarts' Theory;
- How Old is Old?;
- Celebrations.



Est. 2012
Bridges
Our Smarts

For Youth in Grades 6-8

In BRIDGES: *Our Smarts*, tweens and teens along with older adult volunteers will explore Gardner's Multiple Intelligences "How We Are Smart" Theory using different aspects of nature as the theme for each session. This theory states that people have eight different types of intelligences, or "smarts": body, logic, music, nature, people, picture, self, and word. This theory and how we use our smarts will come alive through:

- Hands-on art, music, and science projects;
- Interactive discussions; and
- A variety of nature activities.

Participants will:

- Recognize how they are smart and how their 'intelligences' can shape their hobbies, careers, and volunteerism;
- Learn about their family histories and cultivate the character trait of resilience; and
- Increase their knowledge of nature and nutrition.

Sessions include:

- Learning About Our Smarts (assessment – logic and picture smarts);
- Family and Favorite Trees (visual art project – picture smarts);
- Seasons (taking a walk outside and writing poetry – body, nature, and word smarts);
- Resilience (creating a movement to music – body, music, and nature smarts);
- Using Our Hands (hand sculptures – body and picture smarts);
- Field Trip to a Farm (nature smarts);
- Rainbow Plates (planning healthful meals – logic smarts);
- Our Garden (planting a tree or garden – body, logic, and nature smarts);
- Using Our Smarts (in our free time, careers and communities – logic, people, and self-smarts);
- Celebrating Our Smarts.

With all the lessons, participant's interview loved ones at home and to share in the sessions (people smarts).



For Youth in High School and College

BRIDGES: *Life Long Journeys* is a toolkit for living life as an age-aware member of society. It is geared toward high school students and young adults who are preparing to live in the real world. Each session explores a different aspect of aging as a lifelong journey.

Participants will:

- Learn how they are smart and how their intelligences can shape their hobbies, careers, and volunteerism.
- Learn about how to take care of their bodies and minds.
- How to stand up for themselves and others.

Topics include

- Recognizing our multiple intelligences;
- Cultural continuity;
- Transitions and resilience
- Nurturing our bodies;
- Rest, Renewal, Relaxation;
- Financing life's journey;
- Companions on life's journey;
- Engaging with people of different abilities;
- Breaking the silence: Standing up for ourselves and others;
- Using technology on the journey;
- Civic responsibility;
- Careers: The long and winding path;
- Spotlight: Careers in aging services;
- Dying and death and living;
- Spirituality.