



## Elders as Resources – Program Ideas

Elders as Resources programs are designed to be coordinated with existing school programs, such as social studies, language arts, health and home economics. The following are suggested program models for different disciplines. Teachers are not limited either to these particular ideas or to the subject areas they represent. Teachers and students may adopt or modify any of these models, or choose programs in other subject areas. Teachers should tailor programs to meet the needs of a specific site, classroom or group.

### Elders as Presenters

The most basic kind of interactive intergenerational program involves sharing memories, knowledge or expertise on a particular subject. Such programs either are integrated into a given classroom topic or presented as a special event or series.

One popular discussion format is a living history program on selected historical and societal issues. Older adults share personal experiences and knowledge on such topics as local history and the effects of national events on their work and family lives. Students listen to firsthand accounts of older persons and respond with questions and comments. Suggested activities include the following.

- Invite persons with vivid memories of a given period to share their recollections in the classroom.
- Assign a class reading on a topic such as the Depression. Give the reading assignment to the older participants as well, so that they might compare the written record and their personal encounter with historical events.
- Ask a guest presenter to discuss what it meant to live through such a historical period and experience such difficult times.
- Encourage questions and discussion among students.
- Invite students and presenters to describe their personal reactions and insights on the activities.

Example: The Rochambeau Middle School draws from its large older population in Southbury, Connecticut. The gifted and talented program developed a list of local older specialists who make classroom presentations or serve as mentors on various subjects. Teachers use the list to identify resource persons for students with special interests.