

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SHOWCASE

Building Bridges: Promoting Intergenerational Social Connections Through Community-Engaged Learning and Implementation Science
Theresa Abah, PhD, Linda Paumer, MA, Maria Pureza, Azalea Negrete, Jennifer Tirado
Carlton Senior Living & River's Edge Senior Living Sacramento

Gerontology
Department

College Of Social Sciences &
Interdisciplinary Studies



Program or Project Description

- Sacramento State students from Gerontology, Math, Health Science and Nursing programs (N = 47) in groups of 10, partnered with older adult residents at the Carlton Senior living (N = 55), for a 10-week intergenerational program
- Triple Aim Objectives: 1) Foster intergenerational relationship-building between students and older adults, 2) Bridge generational gaps in caregiving practices and communication, 3) Prevent social isolation and loneliness in senior living and community settings.

Experiential Learning Program or Project Highlight(s)

- Students = 47, faculty = 3, staff = 2, a total of 52 members worked on this project.
- Accomplishments:
 - *Building Bridges by fostering social inclusion and reducing isolation*
 - *Building Bridges by integrating sustainable interventions in senior living communities*



Promoting Student Success in College and Career

1. Applied Learning in Aging and Social Engagement: Students connected course concepts on aging, social determinants of health, and intergenerational relationships with real-world community engagement initiatives.
2. Intergenerational Collaboration and Social Impact: By participating in structured programs with older adults, students gained firsthand experience in fostering social connections, reducing ageism, and promoting community well-being.
3. Integration of Implementation Science Framework: Using the care management model, students learned to develop person-focused care interventions that provide appropriate care to support older adults, enhancing their well-being and also preventing social isolation and loneliness.
4. Bridging Academia and Community Needs: The community-engaged learning activity allowed students to address practical challenges in senior living communities, contributing to evidence-based policy recommendations for aging-friendly environments.
5. Professional and Personal Growth: Engagement with older adults and interdisciplinary teams helped students develop leadership, problem-solving, and communication skills essential for careers in gerontology, health science, and nursing.

Community Impact

- Enhanced quality of life, emotional well-being, and cognitive engagement for older adults
- Increased student awareness of aging issues and interest in gerontology-related careers
- Actionable policy and practice recommendations for sustainable senior living models
- Quotes from community partners:

A 95 year old said:
"Connecting with students gave me purpose and a renewed sense of belonging."

A 83 year old said:
"Sharing my experiences helped combat feelings of isolation"

Campus Community Impact

- Student Impact: Enhanced experiential learning, leadership, and real-world application of aging and public health concepts.
- Faculty & Staff Impact: Strengthened research, teaching, and community partnerships on aging and social engagement.
- Students, faculty, and community partners collaborated through research, mentorship, and intergenerational engagement activities.
- Quotes from students, faculty, and staff
 - *"I Applied classroom knowledge"*
 - *"This is a meaningful experience"*
 - *"I Developed empathy and leadership skill"*