



Literature Review – Intergenerational Living at Continuing Care Sites

June 2024



Intergenerational Living at Continuing Care Sites

As the Brenda Strafford Foundation has several under-utilized private pay suites, it was considered that intergenerational living may be an alternative way to utilize the space. In an effort to learn more about intergenerational living, specifically students living at continuing care sites, a literature review exploring existing models, relevant research on it's impact, and supporting organizations was conducted.

Existing Models

Please see below for a list of organizations that are currently operating intergenerational living programs, specifically where students live at seniors' residences at reduced rates or no-cost. More information regarding each organization's model can be found below.

Internationally:

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- Humanitas (Deventer, Netherlands)
 - o This program started in 2012, after they experienced a decline in aging adults seeking care in supportive living facilities due to increasing costs. By adding in younger students, Humanitas hoped to attract more interest through their unique programming.
 - o By being fully government funded, Humanitas can provide housing to students in exchange for approximately 30 volunteer hours per month, without any additional financial costs required for students.
 - Programming is less structured, and students are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities (companionship, serving meals, watching sports with residents, participating in celebrations such as birthdays, etc.)
 - o This program has since been replicated in two other facilities in the Netherlands due to its success. Further articles cite the program being since implemented in Lyon, France and has existed in Barcelona, Spain for several years, but it was difficult to find further information regarding these programs online.
 - o Source: [The living students of Humanitas \(humanitasdeventer.nl\)](http://humanitasdeventer.nl)
 - o Source: [A Nursing Home That's Also a College Dorm - Bloomberg](#)
 - o Source: [Dutch nursing home offers rent-free housing to students | PBS News Weekend](#)
 - o Source: Interview with Bonita Paquette, Founder of Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living
 - Judson Manor (Independent and assisted living – located in Cleveland, Ohio)
 - o Program has been operating since 2010
 - o Students who qualify for some level of financial need are selected, where they live rent free in exchange for musical performances (monthly solo recitals, weekend concerts, etc.). The program has evolved to include other programming options such as art therapy.
 - o Judson Manor does not receive funding to offset the costs of offering students 'free' accommodation – they incur the cost as a loss, but



find the program to be a valuable marketing tool with the positive publicity it has generated. They previously struggled with high vacancies, but since starting the program find they have a long waiting list from residents wanting to live in an environment with their music programming.

- o Source: [Smithsonian Magazine: College Students are Living Rent-Free in a Cleveland Retirement Home](#)
- o Source: Interview with Bonita Paquette, founder of Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living

Within Canada:

- Oakcrossing Retirement Living (Independent living in London, Ontario)
 - o Operating from a 'Artist in Residence' model, music students from Western University live rent free in exchange for daily musical performances (Approximately 40-48 hours per month).
 - o Labelled as the first model in Canada, this program was implemented in Fall 2017. Oakcrossing created their model based on the one operating at Judson Manor in Cleveland, Ohio, mentioned above.
 - o Source: [Meet the Ontario university students living with more than 100 seniors in a care home | CBC News](#)
- Trillium Communities, Highgate Lodge (Independent living & short-term respite in Victoria, British Columbia)
 - o Currently in early stages of their pilot project – with support from the Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living, they are actively recruiting students from the University of Victoria to live at their facilities starting in September 2024.
 - o Have not secured any government funding so they are anticipating to charge a higher amount than what other organizations using an intergenerational model have offered.
 - o Source: Interview with Bonita Paquette, Founder of Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living
 - o Source: [Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living \(intergenliving.ca\)](#)

Within Alberta:

- Silvera for Seniors, Westview Town Suites (Independent and assisted living in Calgary, Alberta)
 - o Launching in September 2024
 - o Students will spend 30 hours a month engaging residents through various programming (70% of those hours will be through structured programming, while 30% is expected to come through organic, day-to-day interactions)
 - o Funding for the Silvera pilot project is provided by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program, allowing Silvera to charge reduced rent to participants. (Studios that are normally rented for \$2900 a month are provided to students at \$500 plus volunteer work. This fee includes dining services).
 - o Source: [Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living \(intergenliving.ca\)](#)
 - o Source: [2 students will live in Calgary retirement community in new pilot program - Calgary | Globalnews.ca](#)



- o Source: Interview with Bonita Paquette, Founder of Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living
- Green Acres Foundation (Lethbridge, Alberta)
 - o Limited information surrounding their model can be found online.
 - o Current amenities offered to students include:
 - Shared kitchenette
 - Wireless internet access
 - Use of laundry facilities
 - Private ensuite
 - Basic bedroom furnishings
 - Breakfast and supper during designated mealtimes, with lunch available at an additional cost.
 - Light housekeeping services
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 - o Currently exploring ways to integrate intergenerational programming into memory care.
 - o Source: Interview with Bonita Paquette, Founder of Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living
 - o Source: [Housing Options - Student Housing — Green Acres Foundation](#)

Supporting Organizations

Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living (CAIL)

- Established in 2023 by Bonita Paquette, CAIL is an intermediary that helps develop intergenerational living models in seniors' residences and connects students with available opportunities.
- Their current projects include Silvera for Seniors in Calgary, with their pilot launching Fall 2024, and Trillium Boutique Senior Living, at their Highgate Lodge in Victoria, British Columbia.
- For both parties involved in intergenerational living projects, CAIL can provide the following supports:
 - o Information gathering
 - Connecting with the seniors' residence site to determine what are the needs for residents and staff; what kind of supports they'd like from potential students.
 - o Engagement with post-secondary institutions
 - Work with local schools (ideally institutions that are in a close enough radius to have an adequate commute) to promote the opportunity and begin recruitment.
 - o Student application process
 - Students are required to submit a small essay outlining their interest for the project and why they believe they would be a good fit.
 - o Candidate selection process
 - Candidates are selected based on how well they align with the organization's values and the skills they offer. Profiles who have a smaller social support system in the city or have a



stronger economic need for subsidized housing are typically scored higher.

- o Contract administration
 - Provide support in developing a contract/tenant agreement for the successful candidates and the participating seniors' organization
- o Training/Orientation
 - Help support the seniors' organization in creating training and orientation materials for students, in an effort to help them adjust to their new living environment
- o Oversight and monitoring of student volunteer hours
- o Periodic evaluation of program success
- CAIL currently operates from a fee-for-service model and is available for full-service support, or one-off consulting as needed.
- In Bonita's experience, intergenerational living model's have only been operating in supportive or independent living environments. There are models where organizations have both levels of care (continuing care and supportive living), but typically programming has only operated from the supportive living lens, with continuing care residents able to join in programming as appropriate.
- While there are other models of students living with older adults directly in community (facilitated through organizations such as Symbiosis: Students and Seniors Co-Housing Program in Hamilton, Ontario, or Toronto Homeshare Pilot Project in Toronto, Ontario), CAIL is only focusing on facilitating intergenerational housing opportunities within seniors' organizations, because of the potential risk involved within private homes.
- It should be noted that CAIL has received interest from both young and mature students, such as single parents with older children looking for housing as a family through CAIL's existing, developed programs.
- Source: [Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living \(intergenliving.ca\)](http://intergenliving.ca)
- Source: Interview with Bonita Paquette, Founder of Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living
- Source: [Why these university students love living with seniors | CBC News](#)
- Source: ['My home was their home': Why seniors, students living together saves more than rent money | CBC News](#)

Reported Benefits of Intergenerational Programming

Impacts on Social Isolation and Loneliness

While there is limited information directly on the research and reported benefits of students living at continuing care facilities, there is some evidence that speaks to the benefits of intergenerational programming in general:

- In a 2017 survey conducted in the United States with independent living communities already working with some kind of intergenerational programming, it was determined the following were reported benefits for aging adults: decreased isolation, increased sense of community, and increased sense of purpose. Additional



benefits for young people included: increased social communication, increased sense of community, and greater understanding of issues facing older adults

- o Source: [Can Housing-Based Programming Bridge the Generational Divide? - GlobalAgeing](#)
- Further 2021 research also supports the claims there are significant impacts from intergenerational programming on seniors' cognitive, social, and health-related outcomes, but identifies more research is needed in the field to conclusively speak to those specific outcomes.
 - o Source: [A systematic review of the impacts of intergenerational engagement on older adults' cognitive, social, and health outcomes - ScienceDirect](#)

Several of the organizations listed above running intergenerational living programs have cited similar benefits when being interviewed on their program models:

- While Judson Manor initially did not establish a way to quantitatively measure the social and physical benefits of the program, staff claimed to notice a positive effect on the residents, with the article itself linking to further research on the health benefits of older adults engaging with young people.
 - o Source: [Smithsonian Magazine: College Students are Living Rent-Free in a Cleveland Retirement Home](#)
- Oakcrossing Retirement Living also finds having intergenerational programming adds value and meaning to the residents' lives, as well as Symbiosis references the added companionship is valuable at reducing isolation, anxiety, and depression, all that have health implications in older adults, according to the Director of Gerontology at Mount Sinai Hospital interviewed at the time
 - o Source: [Why these university students love living with seniors | CBC News](#)
 - o Source: [Meet the Ontario university students living with more than 100 seniors in a care home | CBC News](#)
- This is echoed by the National Institute on Aging as they report loneliness and social isolation are both associated with higher risks for several physical and mental health conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline. This is used as further supportive evidence for Judson Manor as to the positive impact their program is having on reducing both isolation and loneliness.
 - o Source: [Social isolation, loneliness in older people pose health risks | National Institute on Aging \(nih.gov\)](#)
 - o Source: [Smithsonian Magazine: College Students are Living Rent-Free in a Cleveland Retirement Home](#)

An additional benefit perceived by CAIL includes the reduced stress on staff with having additional programming support easily available. Given staffing shortages in many continuing care facilities, staff are limited in the programming they can provide, impacting their ability to meaningfully engage with residents. By housing younger students, seniors' residences can mitigate this issue through in-house, student volunteerism (source: [Canadian Alliance for Intergenerational Living \(intergenliving.ca\)](#)).