

## Isabel Brabazon Award for Evaluation Research

### Rationale

In the intergenerational field there is a shortage of empirical data, even though there are a wide variety of creative and successful programs. A literature review completed by Dr. V in 2005 revealed a shortage of such data, and what data did exist was very often related to measurements of attitude changes between children and elders. This limited focus does not do justice to the profound impacts that intergenerational programs reportedly have on participants and the learning and life changes that sometimes result. This award encourages the wide variety of programs to explore and document the nature of the intergenerational dynamics that occur in the programs, and/or report on their measurable impacts.

For a field to develop fully it needs to document what it has to offer to the wider society. In order to persuade policy makers that it is worth investing in intergenerational approaches to public issues, they need to be convinced that the benefits are greater than those offered by alternative approaches. Evaluation studies that are submitted for this award may be published on the Generations United web site, except for the winning paper(s), which are expected to be published in peer reviewed journals. Studies collected together in this way should provide an important resource for researchers and policy makers, and recognize the fact that evaluation studies are often an important underpinning for policy development.

Policies regarding elders and their potentially valuable social roles are becoming more important with the pending retirement of baby boomers and the growing impact of population aging. Anything that can be done to help provide a rational basis for development of social policy in this area should be explored. Evaluation research of intergenerational programs may be one of the areas of exploration that could yield important results in the years ahead.

This award for evaluation research seeks to encourage existing intergenerational programs to document what is happening in their programs and what impacts they have on participants and others. The wide range of existing programs offers a great but largely untapped resource. It is hoped that the award, combined with some encouragement to use supportive assistance from graduate programs at universities, and to build data collection into the structures of programs, will persuade program directors and staff that evaluations are both doable and affordable (and may help with their own fund raising efforts).

### Criteria

Small, medium and large programs will all be considered for the award, and it is suggested that evaluations be completed during the three years prior to the giving of each award to make sure that new and unpublished evaluations are recognized. It is also expected that the winning paper(s) will be submitted to a peer reviewed journal for publication. With that concept in mind, the guidelines for the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* have been used in establishing the **recommended length** for submissions, even though submission to any peer reviewed journal is acceptable. The following criteria have been established for the **format of submissions**, using standard research paper approaches, and these criteria will be used in the formal grading of

submissions by the Evaluation Research Committee. Each section of the submission has a maximum score based on what the committee considers to be its relative importance in the overall structure of the paper.

## **Submission Format**

### **Method and Deadline for Submission**

Mailed submissions should be postmarked by **March 31, 2009** and sent to Leah Bradley, Generations United, 2009 Award Nominations, 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC, 20005.

### **Length**

Using the standards of the *Journal for Intergenerational Relationships*, evaluation studies should be approximately 5,000 words, excluding the abstract and references.

### **Structure of Paper**

#### *1. Description of Program*

Provide a one or two paragraph description of the program – relevant goals, outcomes and practices.

#### *2. Abstract*

Provide a brief summary of the paper, research methods and key findings.

#### *3. Literature Review*

A brief review of the intergenerational field and key literature that relates to your research question(s)

#### *4. Research Question and Hypotheses*

Provide a general question relating to the overall goals of the program, e.g., do intergenerational services lead to positive behavior changes in at-risk young people? This question should then be broken down into one or more specific statements or hypotheses:

- e.g. Hypothesis 1: at-risk high school students who provide intergenerational services to older adults improve their attendance at school
- Hypothesis 2: intergenerational mentoring leads to reduced instances of conflict and substance abuse for middle school students

#### *5. Methods*

Describe the research methods used in the evaluation. For example:

- Quantitative: e.g., pre- and post-test with (or without) comparison group
- Qualitative: e.g., program theory, ethnography.

#### *6. Data Collection and Description*

Include information on measures used, sampling strategy (if applicable), and data collection methods (such as program record/document review, formal/informal interviews, participant observation, questionnaires, etc.)

#### *7. Analysis*

Methods used for analyzing data, such as two sample hypothesis testing, one way analysis of variance, regression analysis, etc.

### *8. Findings*

Identify any findings of the study that relate to the research question(s) and specific hypotheses. Discuss and interpret the findings.

### *9. Limitations of Study*

Discuss any strengths or weaknesses of the study, e.g., how might not having a comparison/control group affect the validity of your results?

### *10. Conclusions*

Discuss the implications of your study for:

- Theory or knowledge
- Policy or practice
- Further research