

InterGenNS Community News



In Opening

We acknowledge with gratitude that we live, work and play on the traditional unceded homelands of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. Intergenerational connection and wisdom is deeply valued in indigenous cultures and we hope to learn from and honour these traditions in our work on the North Shore.

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“Participating in [intergenerational] programming creates a reciprocal learning environment where participants learn from one another through shared experiences and interactions. These interactions facilitate mutual learning/co-learning and bi-directional mentoring. Through various forms of engagement and interaction between generations a meaning making process is initiated resulting in the development of meaningful relationships and bonds over time.” (Patille, 2023).

What is InterGenNS?



InterGenNS is a grassroots initiative that works to build and grow intergenerational programs, connections and collaborations on the North Shore.

InterGenNS is a project by and for the community and is informed by an engaged group of community partners and steering committee. We provide a Program Directory and Resource Hub on the North Shore Community Resources [website](#) and host a quarterly Community of Practice for interested community organizations to brainstorm, connect and share about their programs. InterGenNS also plans and engages in events that bring together youth and seniors to connect and learn from each other.

Inclusive Intergenerational Definition:

encompasses various programs, events, or gathering places that, purposefully or organically, facilitates interaction between/among generations – thinking beyond age to include persons with varying abilities, newcomers, and diverse community members

(Canning, Gaetz, & Blakeborough, 2018; Jarrott, Smith, & Weintraub, 2008; Kemp, 2005; Anderson et al., 2017; Moody & Phinney, 2012)



Updates from the InterGenNS Facilitators

Yola Switkowski

"Hello Community! If we haven't met already, let me introduce myself, my name is Yola Switkowski. In addition to my role as InterGenNS Facilitator I work as a Seniors Community Connector with North Shore Community Resources, connecting older adults on the North Shore with resources and information through 1-on-1 support and advocacy. I love my work and am continuously inspired by and in awe of the clients I work with and their resilience in the face of adversity. This work I do translates very well into my work with InterGenNS, bringing together generations and facilitating connection. I can see the immense value of intergenerational connection and can't wait to see what the future brings for these connections on the North Shore. At InterGenNS we are currently working on updating the Program Directory and Resource Hub with valuable content and are celebrating a successful first Community of Practice gathering on March 1st!"

Caitlyn Swail

"Hello InterGenNS Community! As we approach a year since coming on as the InterGenNS facilitators, we've reflected on all we've learned about the intergenerational landscape and are privileged to have built relationships with so many amazing community partners. As we go forward into 2024, we are excited to bring back the Newsletter and the Community of Practice as ways to continue adding value to this community and to enhance awareness of the intergenerational opportunities that exist while seeing new one's blossom. At our first in-person Community of Practice on March 1st, we had a lively and interesting discussion and saw new connections form in real time. We look forward to seeing where this community can go!"



CELEBRATING THE FIRST NORTH SHORE INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



On March 1st North Shore Community Resources InterGenNS hosted the first North Shore Intergenerational Community of Practice – representatives from community organizations such as West Vancouver Youth Hub, West Vancouver Activity Centre, BC Council for Families, MONOVA and the Elders Council for Parks were in attendance to brainstorm and discuss plans and dreams for the future of intergenerational programming on the North Shore. We were so fortunate to have Isobel Mackenzie, BC Seniors Advocate,

address the group with an informative speech that expanded our minds on what intergenerational programming can look like and provided a valuable perspective on the incorporation and accessibility of intergenerational programs for seniors. We are so grateful to everyone that came out to the event and plan to host an ongoing community of practice quarterly with the next meeting planned for the end of June 2024. We hope to see you there! We want to also wish Isobel Mackenzie all the best in her retirement and thank her for her tireless service and advocacy for seniors in BC. You will be missed Isobel!

“There’s an aspect of intergenerational that’s about building empathy, it’s about checking on your elderly neighbours, it’s about making sure they get what they need, there’s another aspect of it, which is just get in there and play tennis, not necessarily pickleball, lots of seniors can still play tennis, play tennis with older people, you know, be on the bike trail. I think that is also part of it.”

- Isobel Mackenzie, BC Seniors Advocate

THE NOTEWORTHY SINGERS

Joyful Singing Creates Community Between Generations

It is Monday afternoon, and the school bell rings at Ecole Windsor Secondary and 35 singers stream into the choir room with smiles, hugs and high fives to sing under the enthusiastic and talented direction of Adam Kozak. This joyful group are preparing for a school concert. This is not your ordinary high school choir! The NoteWorthy Singers is a group of high school students, people living with dementia and their family care partners. The choir is a partnership between Ecole Windsor Secondary, Parkgate Community Society Services and Vancouver Coastal Health - North Shore Older Adult Mental Health Team started in 2019 for the purpose of creating a community of friendship and joy through singing and to break down stereotypes between the generations.

Pam Havens, Supervisor of Dementia Services Parkgate Community Services and



one of the choir coordinators says, "Youth who participate in the choir are learning a greater appreciation and understanding of seniors and how they continue to embrace living." As one student said, "My life is quite different than it was before being in this choir. I feel like my perspective of the people around me has changed. I feel like some of the conversations will stay with me forever."

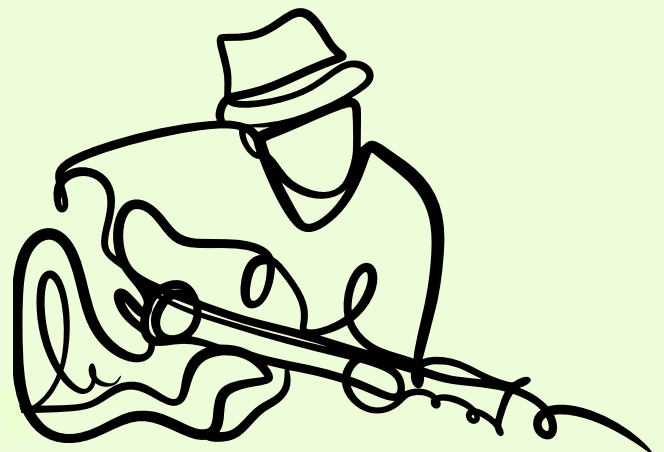
Similarly, the choir helps to debunk negative stereotypes of youth. As Teresa, a care partner said, "Dad and I talk about the wonderful students who help out. They are a joy! The interaction with them changes the stereotypes a person might have about other generations." Another care partner said, "Listening to the seniors and the kids introduce themselves was very informative and a great way to get to understand and appreciate others."

THE NOTEWORTHY SINGERS

Continued

With singing and working towards the common goal of a concert, people experience joy and real friendships have formed. As Catherine, who lives with dementia said "Singing in The Noteworthy Choir is the highlight of my week! I especially enjoy chatting with my new BFF Quinlan." When I am with her, I feel like I am back in high school again!" When asked about his experience of being in the choir one student said, "Pretty decent if you ask me!"

This intergenerational choir is truly making a difference in the lives of the participants and the community. Fingers crossed as the North Vancouver School District considers making this a credit course for the students and will hopefully be able to be duplicated in other schools around the district.



Global TV: The NoteWorthy Singers <https://globalnews.ca/video/9507582/music-therapy-for-people-living-with-dementia/> (Please note the choir is not Music Therapy)

For more information on The NoteWorthy Singers contact Pam Havens phavens@parkgatesociety.ca

INTERGENERATIONAL MOTHER GOOSE

COMMUNITY
PROGRAM
FEATURES

The Intergenerational Mother Goose program is enjoyed by residents of long-term care facilities and young children. There are participants from across many cultures, ability levels, and ages. Residents engage with caregivers, babies, and toddlers who visit each week to enjoy a story and song circle together, facilitated by NSCR staff. Over the weeks, the participants grow comfortable with each other, and bonds begin to form. IG Mother Goose has quickly become one of the most popular social programs amongst the residents at participating facilities, and the positive outcomes for all involved is remarkable! Participants of all ages gain confidence, and the older participants feel comforted and joyful long after the Mother Goose children leave.

"After our first session I remember driving home and my heart feeling so full. It took me a while to pinpoint what had caused this and then I realised that I felt like I had contributed to my community and made a difference in the lives of others. I love being at home with my little one but attending Elder Goose widens my world which can become quite small when you're a new mom and your world is your little one. The joy on the residents' faces when they interact with my little one and knowing that she helped to put a smile on so many faces really makes my day."

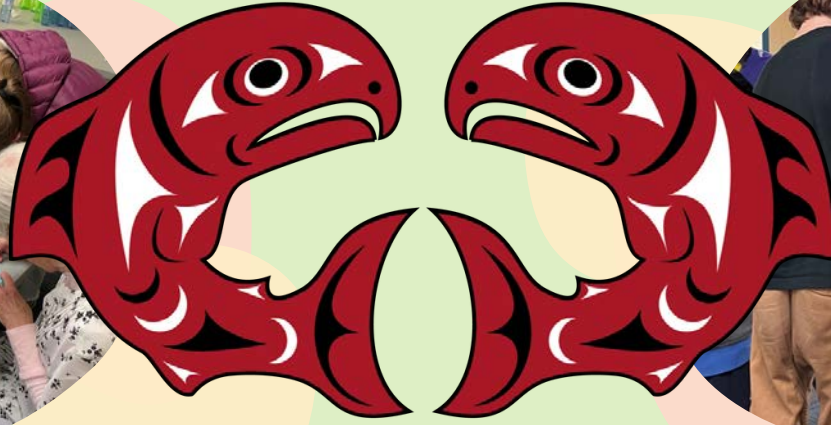
- Mother Goose Participant, Caregiver

"We absolutely loved attending last week & plan to continue. The community feel really warmed my heart, thank you for organizing it. We will definitely be continuing, I think it's so beneficial for my daughter and I. I've also told all my mom friends about it!"

- Mother Goose Participant, Caregiver



Community Events with Norgate Xwemélch'stn Community School



DIY Cooling Kits Activity

Grade 7s and community-minded seniors came together to build cooling kits for vulnerable seniors on the North Shore. The students and seniors worked together to put together, decorate, and write notes for the kits. Afterward, the group enjoyed refreshments together and the students had prepared conversation starters to get to know the seniors better. The conversations were lively and interesting, with many students bonding with their senior buddies over soccer teams, favorite foods, and the experience of going to high school for the first time. All the participants found this to be an uplifting event and felt they understood more about each other's perspectives.

Quotes

"Wow - That was a great community event! The Grade 7 students are creative, thoughtful and just super people. I so appreciated being in attendance 'It made my day'" - Senior participant

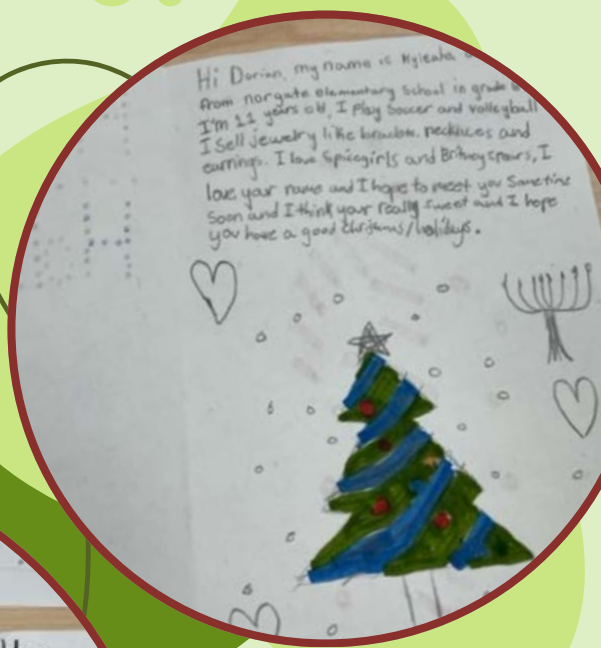
"It was a wonderful way to have children interact with elders, especially for those who may not have older relatives living nearby, and for elders to interact with them to give them a boost too. It felt a little special for me too because my first home on the north shore was in Norgate and my daughter spend her first year there." - Senior participant

"Talking and working with Mrs. Jerry is as good as having a close friend. I can't talk but it is relaxing to work with her and it comforted me because I haven't had a friend in 2 years. Overall, it was a good experience and I can recommend it to my friends (I don't have any friends)" - Grade 7 student who had recently immigrated to Canada

Community Events Continued

Holiday Cards for the Better at Home Friendly Visiting Clients

The Better at Home Friendly Visiting Program teamed up with the Grade 6s and 7s from Norgate Elementary to deliver handwritten holiday cards to seniors at risk of social isolation over the holiday season. The students were very creative and wrote some sweet messages to spread some warmth to those who need it.



Community Events Continued

Intergenerational BBQ at Capilano House

On March 15, 2024 InterGenNS hosted an intergenerational BBQ at Capilano House that brought together Grade 7s from Norgate Elementary and senior residents in the building. An amazing resident offered to do all the cooking and put together an amazing meal for the attendants. Students prepared questions on different topics to ask the senior residents which facilitated meaningful conversation and wisdom sharing. Students also brought beautiful hand-woven bags as gifts for the seniors of the building. Some very talented students also played piano for the group – which left us all in amazement of their skills. It was a very successful event and we hope to host another one soon!

"My experience with my Grade 7 class and the InterGen program was very valuable. The students enjoyed their time with the seniors as much as the seniors enjoyed the students. It was a positive experience for all! Being able to see a different side of the kids outside of the school environment was not only exciting for me as an educator but also the students as individuals and community members."

- Janine Malahoff, Grade 6/7 Teacher at Norgate Elementary

"I wanted to send you a few of the comments I've received from the residents after the BBQ: One senior felt like they were interacting with their grandchildren, and they felt so happy to have someone to talk to. Multiple residents appreciated the questions the kids had and the opportunity to discuss their lives and answer the questions. The food was a big hit, and many people enjoyed the BBQ – they are all inquiring about when the next BBQ will be and if the kids can come back. Having the kids play piano and having a musical element to the day brought so much joy and light to the room. The residents haven't heard that piano played in years. They loved it. Thank you so much for making this possible for the building. We'd love to do this again"

- Katerina, Housing Services Manager, Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society



Hello seniors!

The Intergenerational Youth Committee would like to invite you to a very exciting new initiative.

Intergenerational Connections

Youth and seniors will work on conversational events, meaningful crafts, gardening projects, and more!



**JOIN US in
the Fabric
Arts Studio**

**TWICE EACH MONTH:
1st & 3rd Saturday**

1-2:30 p.m.

west vancouver

Intergenerational Youth Committee

The West Van Youth Hub runs an Intergenerational Youth Committee, a group of dedicated youth who meet regularly to discuss how they can enhance intergenerational connections in their community. The

IYC does fundraisers, organizes fun events, and creates opportunities to build relationships, diminish stereotypes, and make a difference to their community. Check out the poster for their Intergenerational Connections series. We look forward to seeing what this inspiring group gets up to this year!

A Perspective on Promoting Social Connectedness Through Innovative Intergenerational and Age-in-Place Housing Models

By Lilian Kang'ethe

Introduction

Age-friendly community designs are recognized as an enabler of social connectedness within society. Social isolation and loneliness are key issues affecting citizens' wellbeing, especially older persons. Intergenerational initiatives, including housing matters, are widely recognized as a factor that combats ageism among multiple generations living together and provides an essential sense of belonging and connectedness.

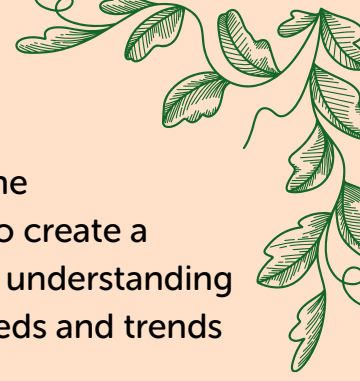


The Problem

Prioritizing innovative housing models within policy actions and programs for attaining systemic change remains challenging. The lack of mainstreaming of innovative housing models goes against the principles for the United Nations principles for older persons on the International Plan of Action on Aging, within which the WHO's Global Age-Friendly Cities is anchored. This community model recognizes housing as a core concern among the eight core areas. Although Canada subscribes to these principles, the approach to age-friendly cities has yet to be mainstreamed in housing programs.

For instance, according to the What We Heard Report Canada, following consultations with the Stakeholders Forum of Federal, Provincial, and Territorial (FPT) Ministers Responsible for Seniors working to address the social and economic impacts of ageism on older adults in Canada, related issues were mentioned. Respondents advocated innovative senior care and housing models as alternatives to traditional long-term care facilities. Among some of the countries mentioned that are offering this innovative housing model is Denmark.

At the provincial and municipal levels, improvements still need to be made to innovative housing designs. These gaps have been highlighted and documented, such as during the drafting of the Community wellbeing strategy for the City of



North Vancouver (August 2023). On June 25, 2015, the Council . approved the appropriation of \$50,000 from the City's Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to create a Housing Action Plan. The plan's creation involved a housing profile aimed at understanding gaps in the city, taking housing stock, and discovering emerging housing needs and trends in the future.

Seniors' housing issues were linked to social connectedness and independence. It was also noted that single senior women living independently have unique needs linked with independence, safety, and social connections. The prediction for a burgeoning senior population will have the most significant proportional growth in the city, evident from non-market units for seniors living independently amidst the expanding waitlist for seniors-oriented housing. In addition, the housing profile exposed the challenges faced by the youth and young adults, often needing to look for competitive affordable/low-end market rental housing amidst the dynamics associated with the redevelopment of older rental buildings, such as effects on rental payments.

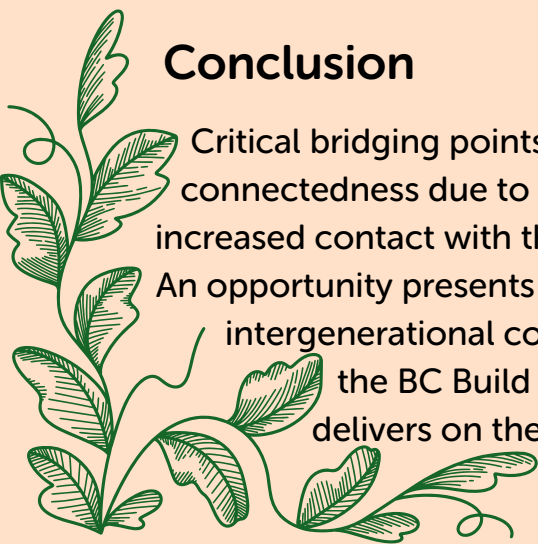
Current Housing Program

The City of North Vancouver is hailed for its commitment to its early adoption approach to policy innovation and initiatives. This is primarily demonstrated by its engagement as part of its collaborative efforts as a partner of the BC Builds initiative supported by BC Housing.

The BC Builds initiative capitalizes on reducing construction costs by lowering government borrowing rates to offer lower-cost financing and grants. This initiative is part of British Columbia's Homes for People action plan, launched in Spring 2023. The plan commits to faster delivery of homes to people while ensuring vibrant BC communities exist. Although the initiative is hailed as promising for providing a model that works, gaps within the action plans still need to be addressed. The actions in the Home for People plan do not mention mainstreaming innovative housing models.

Conclusion

Critical bridging points such as housing have a high magnitude in fostering social connectedness due to proximity, according to the contact theory, as they provide increased contact with the various age groups in the comfort of their dwelling places. An opportunity presents itself for the provincial government and cities to capitalize on intergenerational connectedness to mainstream innovative housing designs through the BC Build program as a long-term enabler for vibrant communities as it delivers on the intended impactful goal under this program and other related housing programs.





Hello InterGenNS Community!

My name is Lilian Kang'ethe. I am an International student from Kenya pursuing a Master's in Public Policy and Administration program at Adler University, Vancouver Campus. My background prior to my studies has been within the development world, where I coordinated programs for socio-economic empowerment, leadership and governance, climate change, networking, alliance building, and capacity building with a focus on underserved communities.

I have spent the last few months at the North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) for my Social Justice Practicum as part of Adler University. At NSCR, I have supported the InterGenNS project and have learnt a lot about Intergenerational connections. For the last four years, I have ran an Intergenerational initiative, 'Elders's cheer Initiative,' targeting seniors and implemented by young people. This passion project was a big motivator for my interest in undertaking my practicum at NSCR where I have learnt so much about working with seniors/ Intergenerational groups in the community.

Congrats Rachelle!



A big congratulations to Rachelle Patille for completing her Master's in Gerontology at SFU. During the completion of her Master's Degree Rachelle was the InterGenNS Project Research Assistant. Her research focused on the impact of intergenerational opportunities on older adults and younger participants. Rachelle has been integral to the success of InterGenNS and we wish her all the best with her future endeavors!

Read Rachelle's Thesis here: ["You Don't Have to be Related to be Family': An Intergenerational Program in Metro Vancouver"](#)

BEDTIME STORY PROGRAM AT NORTH VANCOUVER CITY LIBRARY

COMMUNITY
PROGRAM
FEATURES

“Bedtime Storytime” is a virtual, intergenerational story time by the City of North Vancouver library. It invites pre-school and primary aged children and their caregivers to bring their pjs, stuffies, and blankets, and get cozy for a relaxing and calming story time with bedtime songs and a child-friendly meditation. This a great program for children to participate in with Grandparents and other older relatives.

Check out this program and others on the [North Van City Library website](#)



INTERGENERATIONAL PUPPET THEATER AT THE MT. SEYMOUR PROVINCIAL PARK HERITAGE CENTRE

At the Heritage Centre, a small cottage in the woods, nestled into the lush Mt. Seymour Provincial Park is a unique and beautiful intergenerational community program. Hosted by a passionate and creative group of seniors with the Elders Council for Parks, this nature program brings together youth from local schools for an interactive, musical puppet show. This group of talented and outgoing seniors spend countless hours sewing beautiful set fabrics and costumes for the puppets, creating paper mâché props from recycled material, writing and editing scripts, and learning the shows. Local schools then attend the Heritage Centre to see the artwork come alive in a beautiful puppet show.

For more information, please visit the [Elders Council for Parks website](#)



NEW ITEMS ON THE RESOURCE HUB



[Connecting generations: planning and implementing interventions for intergenerational contact](#)
(decadeofhealthyageing.org)

GENERATION squeeze

[An interesting article written by Jayla Rousseau-Thomas on the Seven Generations Principle – an indigenous teaching tradition “Thinking Differently: Using the Seven Generations Principle”](#)

Share your program on the InterGenNS Program Directory!

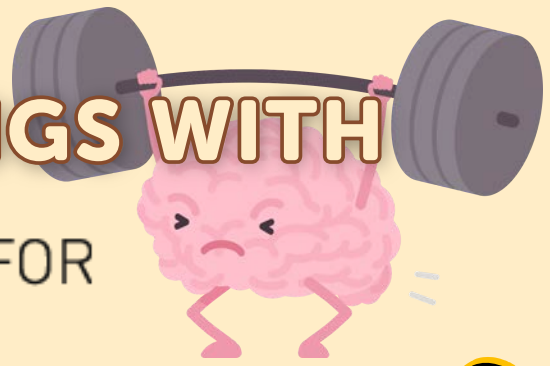
We are in the process of updating and adding new and exciting programs to the InterGenNS [Program Directory](#). If you would like to have your program included please fill out the intake form [here](#).



UPCOMING TRAININGS WITH



BC COUNCIL FOR
FAMILIES



Weaving Intergenerational into Community FREE April 17 10 to 11am

https://shop.bccf.ca/catalogue/weaving-intergenerational-connections-into-community-life_1222/

Learn how InterGenNS, an innovative program with North Shore Community Resources in North Vancouver, is creating an intergenerational (IG) Hub for their community. InterGenNS is a collaborative network model that promotes intergenerational connection, supports IG programming and initiatives and brings together key community players to work toward a more inclusive and connected community. Co-facilitators of InterGenNS, Yola and Caitlyn, will share their experience in coordinating this unique model and weaving IG connection into daily life on the North Shore.

About the Facilitators

Caitlyn Swail is a co-facilitator of InterGenNS developing community connections, the Hub and newsletter. Caitlyn also coordinates programs around community resilience, neighbourly support, and emergency preparedness. As a Clinical Counsellor, she loves meeting people, forming connections, and building community.

Yola Switkowski co-facilitates InterGenNS and is passionate about building community connection, resiliency and promoting intergenerational connection. She is also the Seniors Community Connector meeting seniors in the community and providing them with information, support and resources. She has her Bachelor Degree in Biology.

Introduction to Intergenerational Programming April 10 9 to 2:30 \$150

https://shop.bccf.ca/catalogue/introduction-to-intergenerational-programming-april-2024_1225/

Intergenerational Program Implementation and Assessment May 23 9 to 2:30. \$150

https://shop.bccf.ca/catalogue/implementing-and-evaluating-intergenerational-program-development-may-2024_1226/



THANK YOU!

The InterGen Project would not be possible without:

The guidance of the InterGenNS Steering Committee



The support of the InterGenNS Larger Community Group



Thanks for reading! Please feel welcome to circulate this newsletter with anyone in your circle who may be interested!