An Intergenerational Programming Toolkit creates friends across the ages.
Not long ago, libraries were stand-alone buildings. When Edmonton Public Library’s new Mill Woods branch was set to open, sharing its space with a seniors and multicultural centre seemed a particularly Edmonton thing to do.

Jennifer Waters, a youth services librarian at the Mill Woods Branch and her colleague Kate Charuk, a community services librarian, wondered about making the shared space between youth and seniors into a strength. “The fact is, these are two groups that are both discriminated against,” says Jennifer. “We knew there had to be a way to bring them together.”

Nudged by a $5,000 City Council Seniors Initiative grant that encouraged intergenerational projects, the idea of “Then and Now,” imagined bringing youth and seniors together to create memory kits.

Participants decided to look at school, then and now, at food and cooking, at toys, at music and at clothing. “It was fascinating but also a little jarring,” says Jeanine Alexander who, at 64, isn’t quite a senior but enjoyed gathering with the group on Fridays.
“We were talking about footwear, about shoes for style, all these kids and all these shoes. I thought back to cold Manitoba days when we had one pair of boots — one! — and they were passed down. I was lucky, as the oldest, because I got new ones every few years. But the younger kids? Never. It is so different today than it was in my rural town.”

Sidharth Sharma, 14, relates his own most memorable moment — also about fashion. “The elders talked about the itsy bitsy teeny weeny yellow polka dot bikini. They actually sang the song. That is how they sold clothes back then, made trends, with songs and commercials and ads. Today we never sell clothes with songs. It’s all social media.”

Members of each group learned new things, and changed the way they saw one another.

Kits will be presented at seniors groups and schools and there are plans to spread the program to other branches.

Want to launch intergenerational programming in your community or organization? Intergenerational programming connects individuals, provides learning opportunities, decreases isolation, tackles ageism, and can lead to more inclusive communities. The Intergenerational Programming Toolkit will assist you in designing, implementing and evaluating programming. It includes useful worksheets and checklists to guide you through the process.

Email agefriendly@edmonton.ca to request your copy.
AFE Transportation Information Hubs

Twelve kiosks located around the city provide seniors with transit maps, printed information about driving services, driver safety and cessation.

Inclusiveness Toolkit

Created by the Pride Seniors Group, this toolkit will help ensure seniors activity centres and housing communities are inclusive and welcoming to LGBTQ2S seniors.

Navigator Courses

Caregivers Alberta offers Navigator Workshops to train professionals to identify, assess and support individuals who are providing unpaid care for someone living with illness, disability or age related challenges.

Tips for Developing Programs for Immigrant and Refugee Seniors

Valuable information to help guide organizations, community groups, and funders in creating effective programs to help immigrant and refugee seniors face their unique challenges.

Healthy Aging Information Sessions and Phone Chats

AFE speakers present free interactive educational sessions on over 40 healthy aging topics. Or Healthy Aging Phone Chats allow seniors to enjoy a small group conversation from the comfort of their own home.

Seniors Information Phone Line - Dial 211

Get information about programs, services and resources for seniors in Edmonton. For more in-depth information or assistance, 211 will connect you with a senior outreach worker.

www.AgeFriendlyEdmonton.ca