

BEST INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITIES AWARDS APPLICATION

Generations United and MetLife Foundation will recognize up to 5 communities with the first-ever Best Intergenerational Communities Awards. Communities will be selected based on standard criteria that take into account a community's own demographics, services, programs and organizational structure. Communities will be recognized for their specific intergenerational successes, not as compared to other applicants.

The winning communities' awards will include: a public recognition event in Washington, DC including visits with members of Congress, national and local media exposure, a profile on Generations United's website, publicity through Generations United's social media outlets (e.g. Facebook and Twitter), and recognition at the 2013 Generations United International Conference. Winners will also receive an award logo for use on websites and other materials and a physical award recognizing this accomplishment. Technical assistance on intergenerational practice and advocacy with Generations United will be available to the award recipients.

Definitions:

- **"Communities"** refers to geographic areas with defined borders and resident populations for which reliable demographic data is available. This could include metropolitan areas, cities, towns, counties, zip codes, neighborhoods and school districts. Individual organizations or living/care facilities are not alone eligible for this recognition.
- **"Intergenerational communities"** refers to places that (1) provide adequately for safety, health, education and the basic necessities of life, (2) promote programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between people of different generations, and (3) enable all ages to share their talents and resources, and support each other in relationships that benefit both individuals and their community.

An intergenerational community is not just one where multiple generations reside. It is one where individuals of all ages are an integral and valued part of the setting. This perspective needs to be reflected in the families, structures, facilities and services that children and older adults encounter in the community as well as in day-to-day interactions and relationships. Partnerships between local government, senior citizen homes, schools, businesses, local cultural and community organizations and services, families, older adults and children are essential to be considered intergenerational. An intergenerational community builds on the positive resources that each generation has to offer to each other and those around them. It advances policies and practices that both acknowledge and promote intergenerational interdependence.

Who is Eligible to Apply: Communities meeting the above definition are eligible to apply. This application may be completed by any community member but must be completed in coordination with a local official (i.e. government official, Neighborhood Association President, County Executive, etc) and must be verified and signed by the official.

Application Deadline: The attached application and letters of support must be emailed to gu@gu.org by January 31, 2012. Late submissions will not be considered.

Timeframe: Applications will be reviewed in February 2012 by an expert panel who will be evaluating applications based on pre-determined criteria. Successful applicants will be notified later that same month. The public recognition event will take place in Washington DC in March 2012.

Thank you for your interest in the **MetLife Foundation/Generations United Best Intergenerational Community Awards**. If you have any questions, please contact Leah Bradley at lbradley@gu.org or 202-289-3979.

SECTION 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Community City of Oberlin

Community Website(s) www.cityofoberlin.com

 Metropolitan
 Area X City Town County

Define Your Community Neighborhood Zip Code School District Other

 If other, please specify:

Primary Contact Name Eric Norenberg

Title City Manager

Affiliation City of Oberlin

Address 85 S. Main Street, Oberlin, OH 44074

Phone 440-775-7206

Email enorenberg@cityofoberlin.com

Community Official Name Eric Norenberg

Title City Manager

Affiliation City of Oberlin

Address 85 S. Main Street, Oberlin, OH 44074

Phone 440-775-7206

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SECTION 2: COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Please provide demographic information for your community (as defined in the previous section) to present a quick snapshot.

1. Total Community Population: **8,286** (Source: 2010 U.S. Census)
2. Total Children and Youth (ages 0-23): **4,321** (Source: 2010 U.S. Census)
3. Total Older Adults (age 55 and over): **2,001** (Source: 2010 U.S. Census)
4. Ethnicity: Please express each as percentage of the total community population. Percentages do not have to equal 100:

White	73.0%
Black or African American	14.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%
Asian	4.0%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	5.1%
Other race/ethnicity	1.4%

(Source: 2010 U.S. Census)

5. Median Household Income: **\$46,318 (2009)** (Source: City-data.com)
6. Median Household Size: **2.3 (2009)** (Source: City-data.com)
7. Physical Boundaries of the Community: Our community covers the entire City of Oberlin and includes 4.78 square miles.

SECTION 3: OVERVIEW

In selecting Best Intergenerational Communities, we focus on communities committed to providing the basic needs along with additional community enhancements that create a desirable place to live for all ages.

1. **Why should your community be named a Best Intergenerational Community?** (Please limit to 250 words)

Oberlin embraces its history. Conceived as an integrated community in the mid-1800s, Oberlin was a major focus of the abolitionist movement. Today its progressive legacy continues in a community where individuals matter—not their race, color, creed, sexual orientation ... or age.

The City of Oberlin, Oberlin College, Kendal at Oberlin (a nonprofit retirement community), and numerous other dedicated organizations encourage and partake of ongoing open dialogue to determine needs and provide solutions for the challenges of this community and its residents. One of Oberlin's unique characteristics is its self-directed population that steps up, where needed, over and over to unite the generations. There is no formal structure directing community members to do so. This focus on inclusivity is grounded in Oberlin's roots.

The term "Town and Gown" is a historical reference to the nonacademic and the university/college populations of a town, often autonomous of each other or even adversarial. That definition does not apply here. In Oberlin there exists a constant presence of the most positive aspects of the term "Town and Gown." Marvin Krislov, president of Oberlin College, states, "I have seen no ranking that does justice to the dynamism, the diversity, and the unique fusion of academic, artistic and musical excellence, and social responsibility that are the driving factors in Oberlin life." Oberlin's small-town ambiance and cultural advantages make this community a sought after destination for people of all ages.

2. **What makes your community unique or innovative?**

The City of Oberlin has a long history of diversity in many realms, including the socioeconomic, racial, cultural, and generational. This is a responsive community in terms of citizen involvement. A core value of the greater Oberlin community is serving and giving back, and that value is put into action with people working with others to make Oberlin a better place to live for all generations.

A Kendal retirement community that opened its doors nearly 20 years ago provides a reverse of the "brain drain" that cities like Cleveland experience. While many Cleveland-raised and/or educated young adults move with their skills to other parts of the country, much of the enormous talent, knowledge, and life experience of older adult Oberlinians remains in Oberlin, at Kendal. In addition, many Kendal residents of the same ilk hail from 33 different states, making Oberlin a destination. The Oberlin community benefits tremendously from the 40,000-plus volunteer hours that these older adults provide annually, offering intergenerational opportunities, which in turn provide intellectual stimulation.

Oberlin College's involvement and partnership with the City of Oberlin and its many organizations is a critical piece of the successful mix of generations. Oberlin College students' intellect, curiosity, and energy add an exciting dimension to life in this community. Working with the College's Bonner Center for Service and Learning is just one way these young adults contribute to the greater community, and in so doing establish intergenerational relationships. The Bonner Center works with community partners—organizations in Oberlin and Lorain County—to address common concerns and pressing challenges. Among the organizations that work with the Bonner Center are Oberlin's two elementary schools, its middle and high schools, the Kendal retirement community and other groups serving senior citizens, and several early childhood education centers and nursing homes.

Many opportunities for intergenerational engagement stem from the fact that Oberlin is a walkable town. Many Oberlin residents live within walking distance of the center of town, which includes Tappan Square and the College. And bicycling isn't just for Oberlin's children. People of all ages, including seniors, bike to their destinations. Tappan Square provides a gathering place for students and residents, and, in the warm months, it serves as a venue for musical entertainment and fairs of all kinds that draw intergenerational crowds.

3. Who is responsible for ensuring this is an intergenerational community (i.e. is there an identifiable department, unit or coordinating mechanism within the local government responsible for promoting and ensuring collaboration)?

While there is no one person or office charged with promoting and ensuring intergenerational collaboration, the City of Oberlin has built strong alliances with community organizations that ensure this is an intergenerational community. Local government, Oberlin College, Oberlin City Schools, Kendal at Oberlin, Oberlin Community Services, Oberlin Heritage Center, Mercy Allen Hospital, and many other local organizations facilitate and support these efforts. They have worked collaboratively to develop programs that support and encourage interaction among different generations in this town. Programs that offer opportunities for volunteerism, mentoring, and education also provide opportunities for naturally occurring relationships among generations.

Residents of Oberlin care deeply about this community and believe strongly in its future. They are incredibly engaged and enthusiastic activists, with a deep understanding of the value that all generations bring to the greater community. They are ordinary people accomplishing extraordinary things.

a. Explain how your community has an intergenerational commitment that crosses sectors of the community, from local schools and children and youth service providers to older adult service providers, businesses, charitable organizations and local government.

Inclusivity has been grounded in Oberlin's roots since its inception in the mid-1800s as an integrated community. The mixing of ages is a natural extension of that value, and open communication and respect for each individual helps preserve a sense of community for all who live in Oberlin.

Oberlin's intergenerational commitment is woven into the fabric of its community. The City of Oberlin logo includes the tagline "Live. Learn. Lead." The tagline is more than a marketing slogan. Residents in Oberlin thrive on living their lives to the fullest at any age, being lifelong learners (and helping others learn), and leading—locally, regionally and globally.

There are many examples of how Oberlin's intergenerational commitment crosses sectors of the community. Descriptions of some follow:

Oberlin College offers a full tuition scholarship to any Oberlin High School senior who meets the criteria for admission. In 2011 there were nine high school graduates who qualified. In addition, Oberlin College students volunteer in dozens of ways in the community, including tutoring in the city schools (America Counts and America Reads), mentoring students in the city schools, teaching Spanish to elementary school children, and more.

The **Ninde Scholars Program** shares the educational resources of Oberlin College with the town of Oberlin. It provides academic enrichment and college-preparation services to help more young people in Oberlin obtain a college degree. The Ninde Program especially targets underrepresented and low-income students and those who would be the first in their families to attend college.

Interfaith Hospitality Network congregations meet homeless families' immediate needs for shelter, meals, and support services. Oberlin churches serve as sites, and community volunteers, ranging in age from young adults to seniors, cook and serve meals, provide fellowship, help children with homework, and spend the night with guest families.

Oberlin Early Childhood Center benefits from senior volunteers in the classroom and kitchen; Oberlin College students assist in food prep, grant writing, and in the classroom; Lorain County Joint Vocational School students complete externships in the classroom; and local businesses join together for an annual Day of Caring

The Kendal at Oberlin Retirement Community offers several intergenerational programs, including:

The **Volunteer Clearing House**, a Kendal resident initiated program, matches the interests, skills and expertise of senior volunteers with the needs of local organizations, many of which are nonprofits and serve young children and youth. During 2011, there were more than 40,000 hours volunteered.

Ars Moriendi: **Death and the Art of Dying** is a first-year seminar at Oberlin College. This class asks the question, “Is there an art to dying well, and should our understanding of death shape the way we live?” Students in the course test and extend their classroom experience and rethink life and death through regular conversations with assigned partners from the Kendal at Oberlin retirement community.

Publicity Plugs for Oberlin Schools is a collaboration between the Oberlin City Schools and the Kendal at Oberlin retirement community. Kendal residents are assigned to each of the schools—one writer and one photographer at each location. They write positive stories about the school and student activities, submitting them, along with photographs, to the local newspapers. This positive press offers good public relations for our local schools and helps our greater community. More than 100 stories have been printed. The group of senior writers has been honored as “Oberlinians of the Year”.

The **Kendal Early Learning Center**, located on the retirement community’s campus, provides families of on-site employees and families from the larger community with an accredited educational curriculum for children from 18 months to five years in an intergenerational setting.

Oberlin Community Services’ volunteers and recipients range in age from teenagers to seniors. The organization offers food distribution for the income eligible; meals on wheels for seniors; and America Counts, a tutoring program focused on 5th and 6th grade students.

The **Listening Post Program** provides an opportunity for elementary school children to engage in conversation with an adult volunteer.

The nonprofit **Firelands Association for Visual Arts** offers art exhibits, related education and community activities, and work-study internships for college students.

A **Grandparent Reader** program is active in the Oberlin elementary schools. This program pairs older adults with young children to help students to improve their reading skills with one-on-one attention.

The **Oberlin Rotary STRIVE** program works with Oberlin High School seniors to motivate them to improve their school performance. Several STRIVE scholarships are available to deserving students.

The **Oberlin Heritage Center**, a professional museum, historical society, and historic preservation organization, encourages people of all ages—individuals, families, couples, and groups—to participate in

its programming and volunteer. Volunteers and interns gain professional experience and skills while connecting with community members.

A **senior couple has “adopted”** the Oberlin College women’s field hockey team. Over the course of several years, the couple has regularly invited team members to their home for home cooked meals and camaraderie. This is one example of many naturally occurring intergenerational happenings.

The above examples are just some of the programs and collaborations that demonstrate Oberlin’s intergenerational commitment, and they represent the involvement of many organizations and individuals who are working to ensure Oberlin remains a good community for all its residents.

Another reason Oberlin is such a strong intergenerational community is that its **community leaders are genuinely committed** to Oberlin and its unique diversity. Looking at the business district alone, you see an intergenerational commitment to the community in the number of second- and third-generation businesses that continue to thrive in this challenged economy. Examples are:

- Welcome Nursing Home, established in 1945 by Joy and Henry Wessell, was run by their son and daughter-in-law until 2001, when they retired and their four daughters continued the family’s commitment to quality care for the elderly.
- Cowling Funeral home is a family-owned and operated business that is being run by the third generation.
- Presti’s of Oberlin, a wonderful Italian restaurant, is a third-generation business. They still use their wonderful family recipes to inspire their menu.
- Turnbull Heating, Plumbing and Excavating is a third-generation business. It is not unusual to see Aaron, the fourth generation, working alongside his father.
- Smith’s Floor Covering and Furnishings is a second-generation business.
- The Dovin Dairy farm is a third-generation farm.
- WOBL radio station is a second-generation business that serves Oberlin and greater Lorain County.
- The Cochrane family started Ben Franklin in the 1930’s and managed it until 2001, when the family sold it to Krista Long, whose father was a long time Oberlin businessman, councilman, and civic leader.
- Locke’s Garden Center was a second-generation business whose name continues under new ownership.
- The Sperry-Gorske Agency is one of the oldest continuous operating independent insurance and real estate agencies in northern Ohio. Founded in 1898, it serves the insurance and real estate needs of all Lorain county and Northern Ohio.
- Family-owned and operated Gibson’s Bakery and Foodmart was established in 1885.

In addition to this amazing list of multigenerational businesses, there are many other business leaders in Oberlin committed to our community. Many live here with their families. The leadership demonstrated by

Oberlin's more than 900 businesses helps to promote a community that helps every generation to live, learn, and lead. Many of the adults in Oberlin got their start working summer or part-time jobs with these family-run businesses.

Finally, Oberlin's **churches and faith organizations** are all intergenerational communities in which intergenerational activities unfold every week. For a community of our size, we have an extraordinary number of churches/faith-religious communities (at least 24). Churches are often overlooked sources of nurture for intergenerational relationships, but they aren't overlooked in Oberlin. Most, if not all, worship services in Oberlin intentionally include and welcome people of all ages. Several churches regularly design educational programs, fellowship activities, and justice and peace advocacy so as to include children, teens, young adults, parents, grandparents—all Oberlinians. Churches also can provide informal mentoring for young people. For example, a young person who likes to sing is welcomed into the choir and gets one of their first opportunities to be treated as a full-fledged adult. Often congregations invite children and youth to help lead or assist in worship. Through the churches and faith organizations in Oberlin, important values are handed down from one generation to the next. Many of the churches in Oberlin also foster and model civic engagement and support lifelong learning, once again demonstrating the city's motto: Live. Learn. Lead.

b. How does your community recognize and utilize the strengths of each generation to plan and develop policies, systems, and environments that would support positive engagement and outcomes for all ages?

There is no one organization or office that is in charge of engagement or intergenerational matters. Rather, embracing the differences and strengths of everyone in our community and helping nurture persons of all ages and backgrounds is integral to Oberlin's culture. You can find a demonstration of leadership and a willingness to collaborate, as the need arises, from all sectors of the Oberlin community. Regular and broad communication within the community brings the right people to the table for conversations addressing current needs and future plans to keep Oberlin the vital, intergenerational city it is and will remain.

Oberlin will continue to recognize and utilize the strengths of each generation in planning for the future. The following are examples of existing programs that are a result of the Oberlin intergenerational community working together for the good of all.

The **Oberlin College Bonner Center for Service and Learning** works with community partners to address common concerns that address pressing challenges. The goals are to empower Oberlin College students to become creative leaders, to support nonprofit organizations in addressing community-identified needs, and to inspire academic innovation and interdisciplinary problem solving.

Oberlin Community Services (OCS) connects community services with community needs for income eligible residents of all ages, providing assistance to hundreds of people throughout the year. OCS hosts a monthly Networking Meeting, during which nonprofit agency representatives are encouraged to learn

from a guest speaker and share information about upcoming events and programs. The meeting offers a venue to connect organizations that serve others (many supporting youth, families, and seniors), can share ideas and problem solve.

Publicity Plugs for Oberlin City Schools is a collaboration between the Oberlin City Schools and Kendal at Oberlin seniors. It has helped boost the image of the schools through press releases submitted to the local media.

Each month the **Oberlin Rotary Club** honors two Oberlin High School students as “Seniors of the Month.” These young people are being recognized for their good character and positive attitude. In addition, they have contributed their time and energy by helping the school and community and serve as excellent role models. In addition, Oberlin Rotarians lead the STRIVE program (mentioned above) in Oberlin and other area high schools.

Oberlin College offers a full tuition scholarship to any Oberlin High School senior who attends OHS for four years and who meets the criteria for admission. With more than 40% of the children attending Oberlin City Schools coming from families with incomes at poverty level, this offers the possibility for a brighter future.

4. Are there funding supports for intergenerational programs? If yes, provide details.

In a community such as Oberlin, its greatest strength is the synergy that springs from individuals, families, community organizations, local businesses, community and family foundations, the Oberlin City Schools, Oberlin College, and the City of Oberlin, all of whom assure intergenerational programs and events receive the necessary funding.

With its spirit of “live, learn, and lead,” the town’s character is reflected by the generosity of individuals who offer their personal time and talent to make our community the best it can be, even in the most difficult of times economically. The examples below are from a wide range of community activities and organizations that bring inspiration to the potential that comes from uniting generations. Many of the descriptions below come directly from organizations’ written history and websites.

The **Bridge**, Oberlin’s Community Technology Center, is the product of a community process undertaken by a group of townspeople to raise awareness about, and eventually eliminate, the digital divide in Oberlin; to expand access to computer skills and electronic information for all Oberlinians; and to build a sense of community that transcends social differences among Oberlinians. In November 1999, a group of volunteers hosted a discussion of strategies to address Oberlin’s digital divide—the gap in access to technology between rich and poor. More than 75 local residents attended this town meeting, including Oberlinians young and old, black and white, male and female, and town and gown. Inexperienced and expert computer users alike agreed on the need for improving local public access to computer technology. The Bridge opened in 2000 with 12 computers and soon began holding free basic computer classes for adults. Bridge employees work with people from all age groups. The Bridge currently serves more than 4,000 members and continues to grow. In 2002, the Bridge became a division of the public library, thereby formalizing funding.

Big Parade. About 10 years ago, a few Oberlin College students determined our town needed its own special way to celebrate the coming of spring. They organized what has become an annual and much-loved event: the Big Parade, which occurs on the first Saturday morning in May. In the true, quirky Oberlin manner, the parade is open to all. And people of all generations take part, working for weeks in advance to construct floats or costumes, or simply stepping into the parade and marching along the route. A perennial audience favorite is the Kendal at Oberlin retirement center's Lawn Chair Precision Drill Team. There's no formal budget for the Big Parade; it is produced entirely by participants and donors, including the post-parade lunch and festivities in Oberlin's Tappan Square.

Junior Achievement Partners. Oberlin College students, business executives, and Rotary volunteers, partner enthusiastically each year with Junior Achievement to teach a five-week curriculum in Oberlin's elementary, middle, and high schools. Funding for program materials comes from Junior Achievement, but the program's success depends on the generational mix of volunteers who share their experience in the classroom. The teaching curriculum of Junior Achievement ranges from learning about the community at younger grades to business ethics and the global market place in high school.

Listening Post. In the early 1990s, a retired professional psychologist created the Listening Post, a weekly program that sends trained adult Oberlin listeners into schools and the Oberlin Public Library, providing young people with opportunities to speak freely and openly. The program continues today under the sponsorship of Oberlin Seniors and requires a minimal budget that covers such minor expenses as matching T-shirts for the school volunteers so they can be recognized by the students during the lunch hour.

Oberlin Heritage Center operates programs for all ages and uses volunteers from youth to seniors in the community. One of their most recent projects is the development of a lively and entertaining comic book that provides an informative introduction to Oberlin and its rich and diverse history. Funding for the project was provided by generous donors to honor the memory of Nicholas Stevenson, a Kendal at Oberlin resident and volunteer for the Grandparent Readers program at Oberlin's Eastwood School. Each third grader from Prospect School will receive a copy when they make their annual trip to the Oberlin Heritage Center.

Partnerships are forged every year by **Oberlin College students** working with the Bonner Center for Service and Learning. One example is Annika Sullivan, a senior biochemistry major who created the Oberlin Storm Water Management Project (OSWAMP) in spring 2011 to address the problem of contaminated storm water run-off from local sources. The following fall, she worked with the Oberlin City Schools and the Boys and Girls Club on an educational project fueled by volunteerism and donated funds. She and a group of volunteers built rain gardens on the grounds of the high school and the Boys and Girls Club.

Snow Days Bring Generations Together. Kendal at Oberlin is one employer that does not have to worry about staff members having to stay home from work when extreme snow conditions close schools. If any of their 200-plus staff members find their school-aged children do not have school, they know they can bring them to work for a safe and secure day filled with activities—from dips in the pool to table games and story sharing—structured by experienced retirees from the retirement community.

Kinder Camp was created to help all Oberlin children start out on a path toward excellence. The six-week-long summer program brings together professionals and volunteers of all ages to help youngsters transition to kindergarten. The program is made possible by funding from the Weikart Family Foundation, the Nordson Corporation Foundation, the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, the Oberlin Student Philanthropy Club, and the Oberlin City Schools.

Oberlin Early Childhood Center, a high quality early learning center in operation since 1964, would not be able to provide all families with an affordable early childhood experience if it were not for the funding received from the community. Nord Foundation, Nordson Family Foundation, the City of Oberlin, Oberlin College, United Way, and several other funders make the intergenerational programming a reality.

Splash Zone Aquatic Center. Fifty years of efforts to build a community pool in Oberlin came to fruition in 2002 with the Splash Zone Aquatic Center. Planned by a collaborative team of Oberlin citizens and city and county officials, the center's creation was fueled when a generous philanthropist's gift ensured Oberlinians would receive reasonable discounted fees to participate. Splash Zone provides numerous recreational opportunities for all ages under one roof, year round. The center features indoor and outdoor pools; a dedicated fitness room; aerobics classes; a field house with an indoor walking track and basketball and volleyball courts; and a party room.

Kendal at Oberlin provides a continuing care retirement community for *all ages*. An intergenerational shared site, Kendal offers an accredited early learning center for tiny tots and preschoolers who benefit from an intergenerational curriculum that includes daily interactions and programs with residents who are in the best of health as well as those who are frailer. The early learning center provides excellent opportunities to its resident volunteers, who frequently accompany the children on trips throughout the 100-plus acre campus and into the larger community. The retirement community also is an ideal first employer for many area high school students, who work serving jobs in one of three dining venues. Residents are involved with college students year round, whether it be to "adopt" international students who are far from home or to provide busloads of cheering fans for area athletic teams and appreciative audiences for students' concerts, theater performances, dance recitals, and presentations. Students from throughout Oberlin College often identify semester projects that bring value to the retirement community, such as the team of environmental studies students that evaluated the feasibility of solar panels in a roof replacement project.

For many years, the **Interfaith Community Peace Camp** brought more than 40 children from kindergarten through 6th grade together with more than 20 young to older adults and as many as 10 youth volunteers for a weeklong free camp. With Mahatma Ghandi's quote, "If we are to create peace in our world, we must begin with our children," as its guide, Peace Camp teaches peace principles from many faiths. Though this camp ended in 2010, it is an example of the creative intergenerational activity Oberlin does well. (A successor program may surface in the future.)

The **MAD* Factory** was founded in 1990 with the help of seed money from interested community people who were concerned about the number of children in Oberlin not engaged in meaningful summer activities. The first summer MAD* (*Music, Art, Dance) program offered a theater and related arts curriculum and attracted 90 children, ages 6 to 18. Enthusiasm for continued programming has led to the creation of classes offered throughout the year. Nearly 75% of the children who attend classes receive full

scholarships; 50% are African American. Now a countywide organization, MAD* has served more than 2,000 children, 76% of them from “at risk” situations. MAD* students come from 13 cities in Lorain County as well as from Huron, Medina, and Cuyahoga counties.

5. Through formal or informal means, how and where does your community enable all ages to share their talents and resources, and support each other? (This could include a community garden, a home safety inspection programming or individual volunteering).

In Oberlin, rather than it being hard to find a place to share your talents, it’s hard not to find multiple ways to engage with fellow community members. On any given day, several events occur: public classes, concerts and recitals; theatrical productions, open-mic performances, art exhibits, scholarly lectures, historical tours, city meetings, school events, and documentary film viewings. Oberlin has multiple ways of communicating information about these events, including how people can get involved. Besides word-of-mouth we have bulletins in the newspaper, school announcements, public cable TV postings, and online event listings on such websites as those of the College, Oberlin Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Oberlin, the City of Oberlin, the Oberlin Heritage Center, and Kendal at Oberlin. Oberlinians also use social media fairly extensively, and people advertise initiatives on Facebook pages and on Twitter. Event flyers always color downtown, campus, and the public library. News and project updates are also shared at community networking gatherings, guest speaker presentations at monthly club meetings, and public presentations. Some volunteer groups, such as the Publicity Plugs sponsored by Kendal at Oberlin, make it their business to make sure people know about what is going on in the community.

Opportunities to get involved abound. Someone artistic can create a float for the Big Parade, install a mural at the public library, assist at the MAD* Factory theater camp, or help with Firelands Association for the Visual Arts’ annual art auction. People interested in human needs can pack food bags for Oberlin Community Services, help the Interfaith Hospitality Network shelter a homeless family, serve at the Community Meals program, or greet visitors to the hospital. Oberlinians interested in the long-term future of the community and planet can help frame the vision of numerous boards, form an ad-hoc group to revive local public transportation services, host peace potlucks, lead residents and visitors on a tour of the town, organize Women’s Equality Day, help at one of several community gardens, or volunteer at a local school or daycare. Families and helpers of all ages are particularly interested in helping local animals through programs like the Oasis Animal Shelter; Doggie Doo, Oberlin’s annual festival and parade celebrating all things canine; and CATSS (Community Action to Save Strays).

There are some formal coordination systems in place for helping people find out how they can get involved:

As part of the **Oberlin City School’s International Baccalaureate program**, schoolchildren fulfill required service hours. They may find service projects through their program supervisors, through personal interest and prior experience, by an organization actively requesting student help, or through class projects. In

2010, the Oberlin kindergarteners partnered with Habitat for Humanity to raise money for Haiti, even singing before a Ladysmith Black Mambazo concert at Oberlin College to raise awareness for their project. After Hurricane Katrina, Oberlin's elementary school students collected 1,500 books for the people of Oberlin, Louisiana. They also sent a care package to soldiers in Afghanistan and made seasonal center pieces for the Oberlin Weekday Meals program. Many students go above and beyond the required hours by continuing as volunteers or participating in extracurricular clubs, such as the Rotary Interact service club.

Oberlin College hosts annual volunteer and internship fairs where community groups can recruit student volunteers, talk about their missions, and catch up on news from other organizations. The Oberlin College Bonner Center for Service and Learning helps students find local organizations to connect with. For example, at the Oberlin Heritage Center College students may find themselves leading visiting fourth graders on a historic tour alongside volunteer retired teachers and teen docents.

Kendal at Oberlin has a volunteer coordinator who matches willing and able individuals with community projects.

Many **Oberlin churches** have well-established volunteer networks and on-going projects that require volunteers of diverse ages.

Many more people are **informally recruited** by friends and family, by being asked to help out with a special project, or by seeing an event posting or booth at a festival and deciding the cause is something they want to support. Many Oberlinians find that after volunteering once they are quickly connected to a far-reaching network of caring and energetic people of all ages who inspire by example. Soon they find they are valued supporters of half a dozen organizations, some of which they may have even founded themselves.

- 6. Elements of a Community: There are many critical components to a community that is designed for and accessible to individuals of all ages. Please explain what your community is doing to plan, program, provide or serve individuals of all ages, addressing all intentional connections and support across generations. Suggestions of topics, include, but are not limited to: Community Services, Education/Employment, Health and Wellness, Physical Structures, Planning/Policies, Transportation.**

Listed below are just a few examples of how our community plans and provides intentional connections and support across generations:

Throughout its 178 year history, the Oberlin community has demonstrated its caring and concern for others through concrete actions. The City of Oberlin, Oberlin College, and the Oberlin City Schools joined forces to run an annual giving campaign to sustain families in difficult circumstances. Much like other communities organize a United Way campaign that supports that one agency, the **Oberlin Community Giving Campaign** raises funds to support agencies that provide assistance across generations—funds raised are given to Oberlin Early Childhood Center, Oberlin Community Services (a community organization providing support and emergency assistance to people of all ages in need), or the United Way.

The largest plan the community has to connect generations is the **Oberlin Project**. The Oberlin Project is a joint effort of the City of Oberlin and Oberlin College, with many other local and regional partners, to create a resilient, sustainable community in a post fossil-fuel era. The goal of this project is to revitalize the local economy; eliminate carbon emissions; restore local agriculture, food supply, and forestry; and create a new, sustainable base for economic and community development. This plan would not be possible without the intergenerational support and collaborations that are being brought together as a result of this project.

A truly grassroots organization, **Providing Oberlin with Efficiency Responsibly (POWER)**, was founded in 2008 by individual citizens, city officials, and community organizations, including the Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System. POWER insulates the houses of low-income families in Oberlin, helping to lower the owner's utility bills and reduce the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

The **Oberlin Public Library** serves as the hub for many community members. Whether you stop by the library to do research, read the paper, discover your family tree, borrow a book, or participate in the Eclectic Reader book discussions, join the Oberlin Writer's Group, attend a Story Time for children, or to celebrate Dr. Seuss Day, the chances are high that you will run into a neighbor taking advantage of all the library has to offer.

The **Firelands Association for the Visual Arts**, or FAVA, as community members know it, is an independent, nonprofit art organization dedicated to enhancing public appreciation of and participation in the visual arts through exhibitions and related educational and community activities. The FAVA programs connect the community through their exhibits of high quality artwork in a variety of styles and media. Several exhibits also come from community members and Oberlin school students. They also bring together the community through providing a wide variety of learning opportunities for children, adults, and seniors.

Senior Enrichment Services of Oberlin (**Oberlin Senior Center**) provides a wide array of vital supportive services and engaging socialization programs and activities that foster an enriching experience to older adults, age 55 years and older living in the City of Oberlin and surrounding areas. The center help seniors and boomers, who are joining these ranks, maintain their dignity and independence. By building a solid resource base and creating programming that addresses the challenges aging presents, participants are offered avenues to socialization and supportive services they can rely on for years to come. In 2010, the Oberlin Senior Center was honored to receive the President's Volunteer Service Award, an initiative of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation in conjunction with the Corporation for National & Community Service. Among the programs coordinated by the Senior Center are:

- The Listening Post, an intergenerational program that places trained older adults as active listeners in three Oberlin schools, where they offer approximately 160 volunteers.
- Through an agreement with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), 65 Oberlin Senior Center participants have provided over 7,114 hours on a variety of projects and initiatives.
- Volunteer leaders provided 655 hours of instruction in craft, educational, and technical programs to members of all ages.
- The Senior Center's Handi-Helpers provided the hands-on talent that accomplishes many projects for the center, community organizations, and other nonprofits. The Handi-Helpers make more than 200 stockings at the holidays, and they fill more than 40,000 Easter eggs for Main Street Oberlin's annual Easter Egg Hunt.

The **Lorain County Joint Vocational School (JVS)** brings together high school students and the community while offering its students real-world work experience through a number of valuable customer services they provide at their site. The JVS is on the edge of Oberlin and draws students from the entire county, but its students work in Oberlin businesses and provide volunteer service in Oberlin. Community members of all ages may eat a delicious meal prepared by the culinary students, purchase fresh pastry made by baking students at the Baking and Pastry Café, enjoy a massage or a hair cut in the Reflections Salon, purchase plants from the JVS greenhouse, or watch their child develop and learn in the Early Childhood Program that is staffed by the early childhood education students. In addition, the JVS hosts the annual Harvest for Health Senior Fair in partnership with Kendal each fall. Lastly, students' connect to several Oberlin businesses through their externship program and work at various Oberlin businesses.

The **Oberlin City School District** has worked for decades to make intentional connections across all generations. Five years ago, the district began implementing the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The IB program's goal is to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. Part of the program requires teachers' to intentionally plan community experiences directly related to the curriculum. To name a few, students have decorated cakes and sold them at a banquet, prepared hot meals for a senior meals program, volunteered at a hot meals center to serve community members, and designed tiles with toddlers and preschoolers at Oberlin Early Childhood Center and then worked with Oberlin College students to create a fountain out of the tiles.

As a component of the IB program, students are encouraged to participate in Creativity Action and Service (CAS), which enables IB students to intentionally connect with community members of all ages. One vehicle for this connection is the Interact Club, in which students work with adults in the Oberlin Rotary Club to organize a community pancake breakfast, pick up litter along local streets, and other initiatives. Another example is the Oberlin School Community Garden, where community members and students work to create a sustainable food system. (Please read more about the community service provided by OHS students and Interact Club in Rachel Mentzer's letter of support.)

The **Oberlin Early Childhood Center** and a nearby mental health organization, the Berea Children's Home and Family Services, have partnered to address the needs of parenting in the community by providing

parents and/or grandparents of children, from birth through eight years of age, with an intensive 14-week parenting program. This program will bring together parents and grandparents of all ages with one goal: learn skills that will help them parent their child(ren).

Oberlin Main Street and Oberlin Chamber of Commerce have joined forces to ensure that downtown Oberlin remains the center of life for the community, as it has been for 179 years. They do this by planning year round, free, family friendly community events, including winter's Freezin' Arts Fest, spring's Egg Hunt, summer's Oberlin Chalk Walk, Summer Concert Series, and Family Fun Fair; and autumn's Doggie Doo & Pooch Parade and Halloween Trick or Treat. Whatever the season, you can guarantee Oberlin Main Street-Chamber has an event for all generations to attend.

The **City of Oberlin** offers recreational opportunities for all ages. From an early age, youngsters can learn wrestling and basketball skills in a fun, energetic series of sessions that keep kids active during the winter months. The Recreation Division also offers after-school programming and a summer playground program that provide safe affordable recreation and educational opportunities for Oberlin children. These programs are led by teens and young adults to provide good role models for the younger children. An Earth Day Fun Run, Midnight Bike Rides, and a Summer Basketball Tournament provide other recreation options for all ages. The City manages a network of bike trails that is the most used by residents of all ages of any recreation amenity in Oberlin and a baseball/softball and soccer complex that enable youth and adult sports organizations to program leagues and tournaments for all ages.

The **town of Oberlin and its College** were founded together in 1833. It is impossible to separate the two when examining either one. Throughout this shared history, Oberlin has been different from any other school or community in the nation. Oberlin was the first coeducational college in the United States, where women and men were taught in the same classrooms. In 1834, the college faculty voted to admit students "irrespective of color." Oberlin became a major focus in the abolition movement in the middle of the 19th century. Oberlin residents opposed the Fugitive Slave Act and with every chance given, they did everything possible to make sure enslaved blacks were not returned to the south. Before the Civil War the Oberlin community was an active stop on the Underground Railroad. Now, the **Oberlin Underground Railroad Center (OURC)** is under development in a restored Gasholder Building. The Oberlin Underground Railroad Center will be a diverse, intergenerational facility where young and old can learn about slavery, abolition, and Oberlin's role in sheltering "freedom seekers." It is hoped that the OURC can inspire new generations to be bold leaders, protecting the rights and freedoms of others and ensuring that we live out our lives as respecting the diversity of our community, our country, and our world.

The **Oberlin Heritage Center (OHC)** is the local historical society of Oberlin, and through its programs and tours community members and visitors of all ages explore local and national history together. The OHC hosts people of all ages, interacting both behind-the-scenes and during public programs. Volunteers can be retired teachers leading visiting children in lesson in Oberlin's original one-room schoolhouse, teens assisting at youth summer camps, children putting on a play at the local retirement community, or college interns talking to prospective students and their parents during a tour of the center's historic site. The staff are delighted when during a tour a grandparent or parent breaks into a smile and says, "I remember this!" and then excitedly explains to their grandchildren or children how they used to have an old iron like this, what school was like in their time, how you play the game of marbles, and how an operator used to

connect phone calls. The center’s work is only possible through the interaction of several generations, to preserve history, share it, learn from it, celebrate it, and make it.

Mercy Allen Hospital in Oberlin is part of the Mercy health system based in Lorain County. Mercy utilizes a vast array of community outreach programs to improve the health of the communities it serves by providing a variety of networked programs. These programs provide individuals of all ages access to health initiatives that connect the multiple generations found within the Oberlin community.

Mercy’s **Health Ministry/Parish Nursing Program** helps community members lead healthier lifestyles through initiatives utilizing their positive relationships with area congregations. Other programs implemented in local churches include Women’s Health Matters, which focuses on women’s health at every stage of life, and Snack Wise, which focuses on teaching youth to make healthy and nutritious snack choices.

Mercy’s **Resource for Mothers program** focuses on the needs of Oberlin’s expectant mothers. It helps them obtain prenatal care and navigate the health care and social service system, keeping them connected within their community network and family support.

SECTION 4: FUTURE PLANS

1. What is or could be a slogan for the intergenerational focus of your community? (Limit 25 words)

Oberlin has an established slogan “Live, Learn, Lead” that provides an appropriate reflection of intergenerational opportunities throughout the Oberlin Community.

2. What are your plans to improve or expand your intergenerational activities and connections within your community?

For Oberlin, the question is not what we plan to do to improve or expand, but rather how do we sustain the many intergenerational activities and connections in our community and how do we continually evolve as the needs of our residents change. In Oberlin, we have been fortunate that in spite of the economic conditions impacting the rest of the county and the State of Ohio, nonprofit organizations in our community have stepped up their efforts to serve their clients—young and old. In addition, supporters of agencies have come forward to volunteer more hours or give more financial support to replace those who could no longer do so.

In addition, new initiatives have formed to close gaps and enhance the connections. The Oberlin Project began two years ago. Its focus on sustainability and moving Oberlin to carbon neutrality has provided residents of all ages with ways to become engaged in the effort. Under the auspices of the Oberlin Project, residents will learn more about a sustainable way of life in the schools and residents will be able to get help with making their home more efficient. Teams of community members from all walks of life will join together to make sure no one is left out in the quest to eliminate carbon emissions by 2050.

Meanwhile, in the Oberlin City Schools, the International Baccalaureate program is in its second full year. As students move through the full K-12 curriculum, more students will engage in service in the community than ever before. And, at Oberlin College, the Bonner Center for Service and Learning is setting records with the number of students volunteering in the city schools, with the Oberlin Senior Center, and in many other nonprofits in the community.

As noted earlier, the key to success in Oberlin is our culture of communication and collaboration and dedication to service. This has been a hallmark of Oberlin from the days the College and City were founded. At an official level, we do not intend to allow the communication to decline or the passion for service to fade. However, it won't be a question of what leaders say or do: The most important key to continuing the intergenerational activities and relationships in our community is the young people in our community who are leading the way. They will continue to seek or create the opportunities to make Oberlin even better through service and caring for their neighbors in Oberlin.

SECTION 5: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Please submit three letters of support for this nomination for Best Intergenerational Communities: from (1) a youth (under age 23), (2) an older adult (over age 55) and (3) a person of your choice. Each letter should include support for how the intergenerational nature of the community has made a positive impacted their life.

Letters are attached from:

Oberlin High School Student **Rachel Mentzer** (under 23)
Retired pastor, community leader and Kendal at Oberlin Resident **John Elder** (over 55), and
Recent Oberlin College graduate **David Sokoll** (person of our choice)

SECTION 6: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide any additional information that would explain why your community should be named a Best Intergenerational Community.

1. The story of one of our City Councilmembers and an Oberlin native, Scott Broadwell, is an example of how our community builds and sustains an intergenerational culture:

“After getting married and living on the east coast for two years in the early 1980’s, my wife and I decided to return to Oberlin, my hometown, with our infant daughter. Growing up in Oberlin and being from a family that first moved to town during the mid- 1880’s made this decision a relatively easy one. With ties like these and a decades’ long family presence in Oberlin, my knowledge and relationships with past generations of Oberlinians came to be almost second nature to me as I was growing up.

The house we currently live in is the home that not only I lived in, but also my father before me and our children after me: four generations of my family in the same home since 1948. This house is on a street that has had a neighborliness going back and across generations to when my grandparents first lived here. Our daughter, in her high school valedictorian address to her graduating class of 2001, spoke of her extended family on King Street and referred to it as a microcosm of the City of Oberlin. “With the help of our tight community that doesn’t just encompass King Street, but the entire City of Oberlin, we found lessons that were easy to believe in and follow.” These lessons were imparted by “Parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, neighbors and others.” This history of inter-generational involvement is shown in the commitment to volunteering on the part of people from high school age through senior citizens. The support of our extended family and our close-knit neighborhood and community spanning generations has had a deep and positive impact on our and our children’s lives.”

2. See *International Photo Album for the City of Oberlin* (attached pdf)

The following links connect you with the websites of the various organizations that help make Oberlin a great intergenerational community and were referenced in the application:

City of Oberlin: www.cityofoberlin.com

Kendal at Oberlin: <http://kao.kendal.org/>

[Kendal Early Learning Center: www.kendalearlylearning.org](http://www.kendalearlylearning.org)

Mercy Allen Medical Center: http://www.mercyonline.org/mercy_allen_hospital.aspx

Oberlin City Schools: <http://www.oberlin.k12.oh.us/>

Oberlin College: www.oberlin.edu

Oberlin Main Street Chamber: <http://www.oberlinchamber.org/>

Oberlin Connector (para-transit service):

<http://www.cityofoberlin.com/files/city%20manager/oberlin%20connector%20flyer.pdf>

Oberlin Community Services: <http://www.oberlincommunityservices.org/>

Oberlin Heritage Center: <http://www.oberlinheritage.org/>

Oberlin Public Library: <http://www.oberlinpl.lib.oh.us/>

Oberlin Senior Center: <http://www.nhalorain.org/oberlinseniorcenter.htm>

Oberlin College Bonner Center for Service and Learning: <http://new.oberlin.edu/office/bonner-center/index.dot>

Visit Lorain County Photo “Album” of Oberlin Photos:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/loraincounty/sets/72157600309240417>

Following are photos that support this application:

SECTION 7: SIGNATURES



Signature of Primary Contact

January 30, 2012

Date



Signature of Community Official

January 30, 2012

Date

Rachel Mentzer
72 Pyle Rd.
Oberlin, OH 44074
440-986-0154
rachelmentzer@aol.com

January 23, 2012

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Oberlin

It is with great enthusiasm that I am writing a letter of support for the City of Oberlin's application for the MetLife Foundation Best Intergenerational Community Award. In June, I will be graduating from Oberlin High School. I have attended the Oberlin City Schools since kindergarten. My life has been enriched in many ways because our community is committed to multigenerational projects and many of these revolve around community service. Although service has always been an essential part of the Oberlin City Schools, since implementing the International Baccalaureate program in 2008, Oberlin students from elementary school through high school are learning how important it is to do something for others in even greater ways. We also have many community collaborations where we can apply what we are learning to real life situations.

While attending Eastwood School (Grades K-2), I remember a group of older adults called "The Listening Post" would come to visit with us, talk with us, and read books to us. Then at Prospect School (Grades 3-5), our teachers would bring us to Eastwood School (K-2) to read to younger children. Another group of adults in The Listening Post also visited Langston Middle School to visit with us at lunch. These activities are still happening today and now we have the added help of another generation with Oberlin College students who are involved in "America Reads."

Although I did not need tutoring, many of my classmates have benefited from Oberlin College. This extra help is still available through a number of volunteer programs with the college. Tutors (Oberlin College students) visit all four school buildings and help in many ways, from teaching little ones to read, to helping advanced students master calculus. The Oberlin Rotary Club also sponsors the SOS tutoring program where high school students tutor younger students. One of our teachers organizes the program to match an older student who can meet the specific needs of the younger one. Rotary pays the high school student to do this, providing the means for many students to have their very first job and a little extra spending money. The younger students benefit by forming a relationship with the high school student and getting the extra help they need

My middle years were a lot of fun and a great preparation for the advanced work at the high school. Many years ago, a group of women started having a UN Dinner every fall to celebrate the anniversary of the UN. They charged a fee and the profits went to a local charity. These women approached the schools and offered to give the money to the schools if a teacher would work with students to be part of the Model UN. Because of this group's interest in my generation, I was able to participate in Model UN in middle

school and have continued throughout high school. A natural continuation of multi-generation cooperation began as the middle school and high school students served as waiters and waitresses at the event for the past four years. In addition, for dessert, high school students in the Foods and Nutrition classes bake and decorate cakes as flags from many nations. This event engages the entire community and helps cover the cost of our participation in the Ohio Model UN. This year fellow student, Avalon McKee and I were honored for "Outstanding Resolution" at the Ohio Model UN.

At the high school, there are many intergenerational programs that have helped in Oberlin, and beyond. Being concerned about service and world issues, I have been involved in many of the high schools clubs. Interact, sponsored by the Oberlin's Rotary, is the school's community service club. Santa's Attic is a program where we work with older adults to make crafts that younger children buy during the holidays, and then all of the money raised benefits Oberlin Weekday Community Meals, which serves people of all ages who do not have access to a daily hot meal. A non-profit board organizes the Weekday Community Meals Program. The board recognized the importance of multi-generational input and I was invited to work with the adults as a youth board member and have served in this capacity for two years. This opportunity has given me an understanding of non-profits as well as the huge needs of a large segment of our community.

Many of the projects Interact does are completed with our adult mentors. We help the Oberlin Rotary Club with their "Adopt a Highway" roadside clean up of route 511. Each month we are paired with a Rotarian and as we pick up trash to beautify our community, we get to build relationships that will last throughout our lives. Interact also assists Rotary with two fundraisers each year: one in the fall, the annual Rotary Auction, and one in the spring, the annual Pancake Breakfast. High School students work with the Rotarians to raise money for local and international service projects. Rotarians also sponsor another club at school called STRIVE (Students Taking Renewed Interest In Education). Each month a few Rotarians with a guest speaker meet with seniors who are in the lowest third of their class. Students who improve their attendance, grades and attitude can apply for a Rotary Strive Scholarship, which helps with college expenses. These activities are enjoyable for participating students because we can spend time with the Rotary members with whom they build a relationship with throughout the year.

At Oberlin High School we believe that everyone can make a difference, and this is why Student Council involves the entire student body by running both canned food and clothing drives to benefit Oberlin Community Services. By providing the opportunity to do a small act of kindness for those in need, the entire student body will react and do something for others. Students also help pass out food with the adults at Oberlin Community Service Center once per month, during the holidays and during the summer farmer's market.

This year student council and National Honor Society visited the local nursing home to just sit and listen and give back to those adults who have given so much. Students in the Tri-M Music Honor society have the unique ability to excel in at least one musical

instrument. As a requirement for membership they give free music lessons to one student for two years. This is a growing and nurturing experience for both the teacher and student. The value of learning how to communicate what you know to help someone else excel is an added benefit.

It is my hope that the City of Oberlin will be recognized for giving students an intergenerational experience. What's more, our community has been an intergenerational community before there was an award category. These experiences that I have enjoyed have been made possible because of the core values that are intrinsic in Oberlin. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel Mentzer".

Rachel Mentzer
Student/Oberlin High School

David Sokoll
44270 Oberlin-Elyria Road, Oberlin OH 44074
617-816-3786 Dusokoll@gmail.com

To whom it may concern:

I graduated Oberlin College in 2009 and have spent the past two years living and working in Oberlin. During this time I have developed strong relationships with a diverse group of people over 60, under 16, and everywhere in between. Thanks to these connections, I don't plan on leaving this fine city anytime soon. I often wonder what about this town creates the conditions for these relationships to flourish. I believe there are a few crucial variables:

1. The occasionally overwhelming amount of programs, concerts, performances, lectures and more that are hosted by the college.
2. The strong school district, which actively seeks community support, including inter-school activities, college volunteers, active PTO and Wellness committees, and programs like the Listening post which allow older folks to connect to youth and share some wisdom.
3. The strong culture around food; there is the weekly farmer's market in the summers, a host of community gardening efforts, potlucks and dinners associated with churches, schools, college groups, and community members.

It is difficult to pinpoint the moment that I realized I would be here awhile. It may have been while leading the first session of my EXCO (experimental college courses taught by students, faculty and community members). A few friends walked in. Then some unfamiliar student faces. Then two community members: a woman and a man in their thirties and fifties respectively. The EXCO, a discussion group on issues in education, took a radically different spin as we had firsthand accounts of our educational system dating back to the sixties. We debated issues with an awareness of perspective as people far outside our experience were sitting across the table.

Or maybe it was the first of many times that I attended a meeting of the Oberlin Community Book Group. I was the youngest member by thirty years and the only male. The slightly confused stares of fifteen women over 55 could have made me rethink my decision but I was immediately welcomed and we proceeded to have some of the best discussions I've had in a book group. It was also a learning experience as I saw what it took to run a successful book discussion. When it came time to facilitate a book group amongst my college peers I was well armed with thoughtful questions.

I may have been hooked the first day I walked into Oberlin's Langston Middle School. I spent two years there helping to organize and lead a 21st Century After-School Program. The 21st Century program is part of a 5-year grant that the city received for after-school education and enrichment activities. Through the grant the schools have been able to provide extensive tutoring and homework help, dance, theater and art

classes, science clubs and hours of opportunities for me to lose at monopoly. Parents often come and hang out for a few minutes when they pick up their kids. On one occasion a mom arrived to pick up her daughter with her 8 year old in tow. The 8 year old always wants to stay and hang with the older kids and this time she got her way. The five of us; the mom, her daughters and another student spent a half an hour learning and playing card games that the family plays at home. These opportunities to connect with families strengthened the impact of the program and are what made the experience meaningful for me.

In my current role at the Oberlin Early Childhood Center (OECC) I see another side of this intergenerational community. I was brought on in July by the director, Jennifer Harris, to coordinate their food program. This includes everything from planning and preparing seasonal menus focused on serving locally sourced foods and whole grains, to washing dishes. Working in the kitchen I meet all types: parents and grandparents, people who are connected to the college or not, people who have lived here for six months or since they were six months old. The center is a hub for community activity with events for parents and staff as well as community members. Our Chili Chowdown brought in 200 people of all ages to eat and socialize together. Our work with Joint Vocational Schools and Oberlin College allows for high schoolers and college students to train with and learn from experienced classroom teachers. And as we expand our gardening program we are getting opportunities to work with parents, spouses of staff and community members on green house and outdoor gardening projects. Through my role at OECC it is easy to see how broad a demographic the Oberlin community encompasses, and the significance of this breadth.

But my favorite place in Oberlin could be the Oberlin Public Library. As you enter the library it often feels alive. The list of reasons I attend the library shows clearly the extent of its intergenerational nature. My book group of women over 55. The monthly raw food potluck which draws babies, teens and adults. The occasional meeting of the African American Genealogical group where they lock the doors (you can get out) and spend till midnight researching your family lineage. The library staff is diverse in regard to age and this makes it easier to find someone with similar interests and easier to learn about works you otherwise may have missed. They have given me recommendations on everything from graphic novels to Gandhi documentaries. This range of knowledge is no small thing. Libraries are the gateway to information and in Oberlin it is a very wide gateway with a lot of people smiling under it.

I have been blessed with many opportunities in Oberlin - leading an EXCO, participating in a book group, working in the schools, and learning at the library. These opportunities are significant on their own, but are made more meaningful and more lasting by existing within a strong intergenerational community. The support networks in Oberlin are not limited to age or background but are based on peoples' passion and practice. I graduated Oberlin College in 2009 and have spent the past two years living and working in Oberlin. In these two years I have found more than just a job and a house; I've found a home, a career, and a community.

JOHN DIXON ELDER
121 Kendal Drive, Oberlin OH 44074-1905
440-774-2947 JohnDElder@aol.com

Eric Norenberg
City Manager
City of Oberlin

Dear Mr. Norenberg:

Please feel free to include this letter in the City of Oberlin application for the “Best Intergenerational Community Award.” I am an 80-year-old resident of Kendal at Oberlin, a continuing care retirement community that opened in 1993. The following article was written in my capacity as President of the Kendal at Oberlin Residents Association for our monthly newsletter, *The Kendalight*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Dixon Elder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

“I don’t want to live with a lot of old people.” We residents of Kendal at Oberlin hear comments like this from some of our friends when we encourage them to consider moving into our community. To tell the truth, some of us may have spoken those exact words – until we actually saw how intergenerational life is here at Kendal. We have an Early Childhood Center under our own roof, so even those of us who don’t volunteer in the Center are cheered by seeing youngsters as they take excursions along our corridors and walkways or play next to our cafeteria. The high school students who are our dining room servers provide another level of interaction, highlighted every spring when they bring their prom dates to show off their “dress-up” attire. And our other staff – housekeeping, facilities, wellness, nursing, etc. – in the process of performing their tasks help us feel we belong to a multi-age community. And when storms close the public schools, our KORA “Snow Day Teachers” provide activities for the children of these staff members.

Kendal is not a “gated” community in any sense. Non-residents, including members of Kendal –at-Home, are attracted to many of the programs presented by KORA committees. Increasingly, community organizations, most notably the Oberlin Heritage Center, make use of our facilities for public programs that bring overflow crowds to our auditorium. Because Kendal residents are so active in community and church groups, many meetings of these groups take place here – as becomes apparent when trying to schedule the Crossroads or Green Room. And our mile-long circular Kendal Drive attracts college students and others for jogging or just a leisurely walk to watch the birds and other wild life in our ponds, woods and natural meadow areas.

Oberlin College and Conservatory students volunteer to assist in the Stephens Care Center, present recitals in our auditorium, and provide programs for our committees. Many Lorain Community College and Joint Vocational School students receive part of their training here. Students in the Oberlin Public Schools, including the Model U.N. participants, Ninde Scholars and International Baccalaureate

candidates, give talks about their studies and display their projects. In return, Kendal residents write “publicity plugs,” provide “grandparent” readers for kindergarten students, staff the “listening post” for middle school students, tutor and occasionally teach courses in the high school.

Among the small town advantages of Oberlin is that within easy walking and biking distance are a magnificent art museum, a world-class Conservatory of Music, and the full range of Oberlin College academic, athletics, drama and other facilities – all of them open to Kendal residents. Many of us audit classes and/or participate in winter term and Exco courses – free of charge. With the College’s 1200 events a year, including concerts, operas, plays, dance performances and lectures, at little or no ticket price, we Kendal-ites have far more opportunities to mingle with audiences of all ages than time and energy permit. We offer our own talents to the community by participating in the Musical Union and church choirs, and by showing off our Lawn Chair Precision Drill Team in such events as the annual city-wide Big Parade. Some of us also serve on City commissions and many of us on church and community boards and committees.

So, it’s true, we Kendal residents live with a lot of old people – very fascinatingly talented, experienced and wise old people – but we keep our curiosity, creativity and intellectual capacity alive thanks to the extraordinary inter-generational opportunities that Oberlin provides.

- *John Elder, KORA President*



Intergenerational Photo Album Oberlin, Ohio





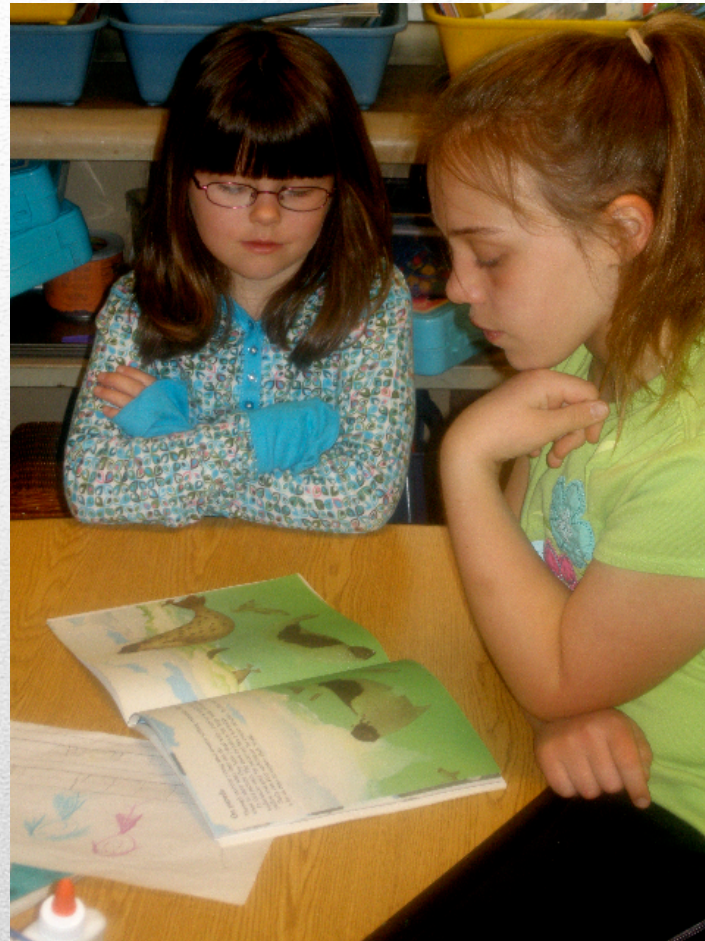
Big Parade- for all Ages



All Wheels & All Ages Welcome



Grandparent Readers



Oberlin Schools

International Baccalaureate K-12



Don Pease Memorial Bike Path
3.1 miles- walking, biking, roller-blading



Oberlin College- Bonner Center
for Service and Learning



Ninde Scholars

Tutoring and Coaching Live-Learn-Lead



Group Art - Peace Pin-Wheels



Intergenerational Music at Kendal



F A V A' S Folding Art Festival for All Ages



Senior Volunteers

bring Kendal Early Center carpentry skills



Heritage Center Programs



United Way Week of Caring
House Repairs for Seniors



Outdoor Fitness for all Ages at Kendal



Ninde Scholars
Live-Learn-Lead

The Oberlin Connector service is made possible by the generous support of these sponsors:



Ben Franklin



Oberlin Connector Transit Service

By contract with Lorain County Transit, the City of Oberlin will continue providing demand-response transit service in Oberlin on Mondays and Thursdays.

Collaboration

A New Transportation Solution



FAVA –Live-Learn- Lead
Art of Dyeing Yarns



F A V A- Local Artists

Special Demonstrations for All



High School and Seniors Bridge Age Gap



Oberlin Community Services

Events that Span the Needs & Ages



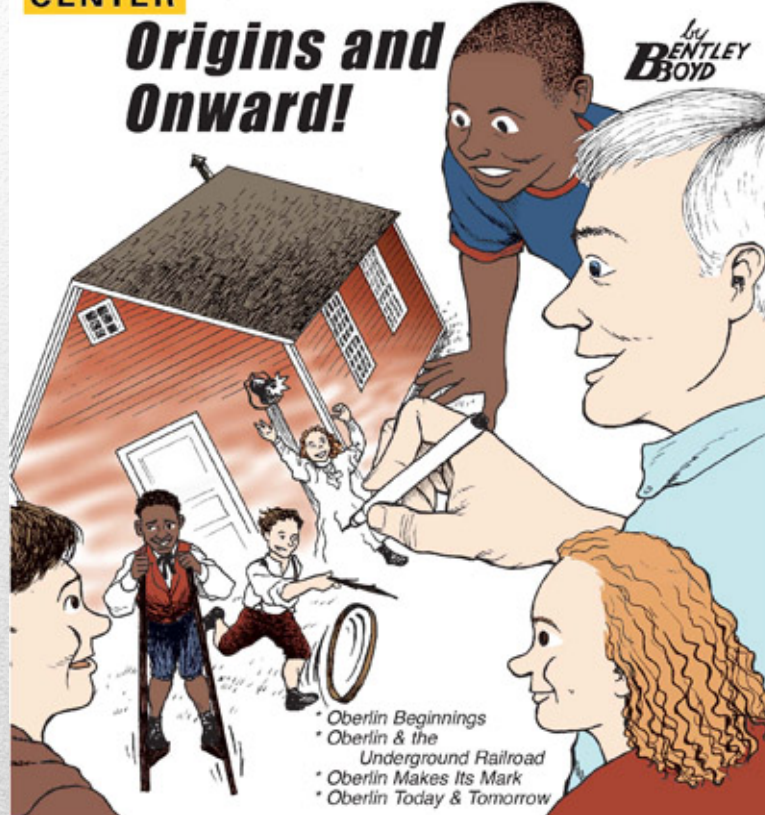
Chalk Walk- Artists of all Ages and Partnerships



OBERLIN

*Origins and
Onward!*

by
**BENTLEY
BOYD**



Oberlin Heritage Center- Serves all Ages
2012 Published Comic Book



Tutoring

Oberlin Community Services and Adult Volunteers



After School Tutoring

Oberlin Community Services with Oberlin College



The Bridge
Computer Technology Center



Panda Club

Quilting for All Ages



High Schoolers and Seniors
Share Interests in the Panda Club



Summer Friday Night Concerts

Bridging the Generations



The Bridge Community Tech. Center
More than Computers for Teens



Splash Zone-
Year Round Family Fun



Baking Fun

Unites Kendal's Generations



Service- Thanksgiving
Hot Meals for the Needy



The Bridge-

Oberlin's Community Technology Center



The Oberlin Project

Planning for a Green Arts District for all Ages



The Oberlin Project

Future Generations

Look to a Climate Positive Community
