



Providence Mount St. Vincent & its Intergenerational Programming

Thank you for your interest in [Providence Mount St. Vincent](#) and our intergenerational programming! The recent media attention is a result of a documentary about the intergenerational community at “The Mount,” called “[The Growing Season](#)” (formerly “Present Perfect”) by film maker Evan Briggs. Below are commonly-asked questions which hopefully will give you a better idea of who we are; how we got started; and what you might consider if you’re exploring an intergenerational program.

1. **What/who is Providence Mount St. Vincent?** Owned and operated by [Providence Health & Services](#) and following the heritage of the Sisters of Providence, Providence Mount St. Vincent opened its doors in 1924 as the “St. Vincent’s Home for the Aged” (a retirement home) and has been in the same location in West Seattle since that time. In the 1960s, the building was remodeled to include individual living apartments designed for healthy retirees whose average age was 69. Today, the profile of our residents is much different. The average age of residents is **92**, and instead of being totally independent, many are now dependent upon staff to help them with their daily living activities.

Services of “**The Mount**,” as it is often called, include:

- 109 assisted living apartments;
- 24-hour care in six skilled nursing care “neighborhoods” as they are called (small clusters of 23 resident rooms that surround common kitchen/living areas);
- A 58-bed transitional care unit (serving 1,200 patients annually) for patients recently discharged from the hospital who need additional nursing care and rehabilitation services;
- Wellness clinic offering dental, acupuncture, massage therapy, audiology and podiatry services;
- Satellite site for a Providence PACE site serving 100 clients from the community;
- The Intergenerational Learning Center (ILC), a licensed child care center, located within our building and open to the community and employees serving 125 children.

The Mount is recognized internationally as a leader in the industry because of our philosophy of “resident directed care” that gives residents the power to choose how they wish to live their lives. The Mount community becomes **home** in the truest sense of the word for each resident. Even pets are welcome—residents and employees may have them here. The Mount provides activities, programs and therapies to help residents and patients remain physically and mentally active as well as socially engaged.

- 2. A brief description of the Intergenerational Learning Center (ILC).** The ILC is a licensed child care center located within Providence Mount St. Vincent. It is owned and operated by The Mount. The ILC serves children ages six weeks to 5 years or pre-kindergarten. It is open five days a week from 6 am to 6 pm and is open to the community as well as employees. There are currently 38 teachers on staff, including full-time, part-time and on-call. They report to the ILC Director who reports to the Administrator of Providence Mount St. Vincent.

The ILC includes a full-time cook who prepares nutritious and delicious breakfasts, lunches and snacks in a kitchen that is located within the ILC. There are six (6) classrooms including one classroom that is physically housed on one of the skilled nursing floors.

The primary focus of the ILC is social/emotional development. We practice “Problem Solving Philosophy” which is based on the premise that children can learn to solve conflicts themselves when given the tools and language to do so. Teachers facilitate this learning daily.

- 3. Why/how did the Intergenerational Learning Center get started?** In the 1980s the Administration of Providence Mount St. Vincent realized that this vibrant community was missing an element—the joy of children. A staff member suggested The Mount establish a child care program. In the early 1990s, The Mount researched the need for child care in West Seattle and the level of interest among Mount residents, Mount employees and the community. The team knew they wanted to create something unique and different—a program that would integrate both residents and children on a daily basis—whether it be in planned activities or simple, impromptu moments. Seeing the benefits to both residents and children, the brightly-decorated doors of the new “**Intergenerational Learning Center**” (ILC) opened for business in September of 1991 with approximately 12 children enrolled. By the end of the first month the ILC was open, the number of enrollees jumped to 30. Because of the high need for child care, the number grew to 54 children in 1993.
- 4. How many are enrolled in the ILC?** Currently 125 children are enrolled, ages six weeks to age 5/6 (pre-kindergarten). There are six classes within the ILC based on age.
- 5. How do the resident and children interact?** Within an umbrella of intergenerational programming, activities range from art, music, fun exercise and recreational games to small group activities and engagement. Each class has six scheduled weekly visits planned with a group of residents.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A DAY—Visits With Residents:

10 am	Babies visit assisted living residents
10 am	Young Toddlers visit residents on 3 North skilled nursing neighborhood
10:30 am	Toddler II visit residents on 4 South skilled nursing neighborhood
11 am	Family Room visits residents on 3 South skilled nursing neighborhood
10:30 am	Bug Room visits residents on 2 North skilled nursing neighborhood

10:30 am	Space Lab visits residents in the cafeteria
3:30 pm	Family Room class has a sing-a-long with 3 North residents
4:30 pm	Toddler II class has a sing-a-long with assisted living residents

All visits are planned by the ILC teachers and are supervised by the ILC teachers. The teachers work with The Mount's recreational therapists/activities staff to coordinate activities for the children and residents. Examples include bowling, music, storytelling, puzzles, and chair volleyball.

6. What are the benefits?

FOR THE CHILDREN

- Variety of role models
- Positive and realistic portrayal of aging
- Reduces fear of various abilities or disabilities
- Reduces fear of older adults
- Sees the aging process as normal
- Broader perspective of family lives
- Opportunity to give and feel needed
- Have an adult "playmate" who is not responsible for the child's behavior
- Broader perspective on change and growth
- More knowledge about the elderly
- Helps eliminate stereotyping
- Young families are introduced to our community of older adults

FOR OLDER ADULTS

- Opportunity to be a role model
- Reintegration into family life
- Opportunity to give and feel needed
- Sense of wonder and humor rekindled
- Value renewed for past life experiences
- Sense of purpose
- Enhanced integration
- Reminded of their children and grandchildren when they were little

FOR THE COMMUNITY

- Closer ties and friendships within community
- Promotes partnerships among different groups/organizations
- Breaks down stereotypes and barriers that exist between generations
- Enhances traditions and culture of communities
- Broadens professional network and enhances career opportunities
- Broadens staff understanding of other age groups

- 7. What makes our model so special?** Our ILC is located within the building as opposed to an off-site child care center or a stand-alone child care center located on the same campus. The children and their teachers can go anywhere in our building for activities and visits with residents. The children and residents are in the same community. Residents are always welcome to come to the ILC for a visit or just some fun observing of the children. Residents and their family members do that often.

Residents with dementia or Alzheimer's disease find it is easy to visit with the children because the conversation is light and short. Both generations tend to live "in the moment." That's why they enjoy each other so much. We've also observed that both generations continue to learn from each other. Children ages 4 and 5 make sack lunches with a group of residents which are then donated to a local non-profit organization that serves the homeless. The residents often mention to the children that it's a great effort they are doing because they are helping others who are not as fortunate as they are. But what's also special is that the children often must remind/teach the residents how to make the sandwiches and the sack lunches as a result of the residents' decline or dementia.

- 8. Can our program be a model for other communities? Of course!** In 1991 we started out with just one class and 12 children. We now have six classes and 125 children and wish we had room for more.
- 9. How does one start the process of establishing a child care program within a long term care community?** Begin with building a community that welcomes all generations.
- Research regulations and licensing in your area/state/country.
 - Conduct a market feasibility study and develop business plan to insure the program will cover its costs, growth and sustainability.
 - Develop policies, procedures and curriculum.
 - Develop job descriptions and hire staff.
 - Train the entire program staff on intergenerational culture and interactions that will maximize enjoyment for all and provide unique opportunities for the children to learn from their older friends.
 - Place a children's toy area in the main lobby and at various locations in the building for visiting children.
 - Invite a local elementary school to make regular, scheduled visits with planned activities.
 - Invite a middle or high school to do the same or become part of your volunteer program.
 - To begin an on-site classroom, consider the physical location in the building.
 - Pursue the appropriate permitting and build out of the space.
 - Think about parking for parents.
 - Think about outdoor play.
 - Another great resource is **Generations United** www.gu.org

Conclusion

Needless to say, creating an intergenerational program does not happen overnight. It takes time, energy, patience and funding. But the positive certainly outweighs the challenges. The vibrancy of our young families here has enriched the lives of our residents many times over. Whether it's a planned activity such as music or just spending time together talking, the joy that the children bring to our residents is priceless, and we are so glad we kept our commitment to providing this unique program and service.

Still have questions?

More information is on The Mount's website www.providence.org/themount . Media features are found at www.providence.org/ilcmedia . For specific questions, please contact Susan P. Clark, Public Relations Manager and Foundation Annual Giving Manager, Providence Mount St. Vincent, susan.p.clark@providence.org . Private consultation and tours in exchange for an honorarium may also be arranged.

Supporting Our Intergenerational Programs

Funding for our intergenerational programs is provided by the Providence Mount St. Vincent Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation that serves as the fund raising affiliate for The Mount. Tax-deductible gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. If you would like to support our intergenerational programs, you may make a donation online at: www.providence.org/themountdonatenow .

"The Growing Season"

We are deeply grateful to film maker **Evan Briggs** for her work on her forthcoming documentary, "The Growing Season" (formerly "Present Perfect"). It was an honor to have her in our ministry filming the magic that happens here every day. The trailer may be viewed at www.thegrowingseasonfilm.com.



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