



Linking Generations  
Northern Ireland

## LGNI's **ART'UR'AGE** Project 2019-2020

Funded by Arts Council NI, the **original** main aims of the project were to:

- Engage older people in intergenerational arts projects with school children as a method of addressing social isolation and to have a positive impact on mental health and well-being;
- Use the medium of arts to create linkages between generations in communities improving older people's community connections, participation in the arts;
- Create sustainable opportunities for continued intergenerational arts by creating partnerships between schools and older people's day centre;
- Showcase and recognise arts produced by older people as part of each intergenerational arts project at an event that connects all groups involved;
- Provide community arts opportunities for local artists.

Due to impact of Covid, only one of the 3 projects involving day centre clients and local school pupils was able to deliver 3 sessions before having to cease.

**Inniscoole Day Centre and Rathcoole Primary School, Newtownabbey** - As part of the original art project enjoyed 3 intergenerational sessions in early 2020 and had to cease in March 2020 due to covid. There were no opportunities to re-engage. Some P7 pupils moved on and the Art tutor Dr Geraldine Gallagher collated the art work already completed into a mural in April 2021 which was presented to the school. A selection of photos taken during the original sessions & including the completed mural presentation was used to create a slide show that was shared with the school and Day centre.

The original participants were 24 x P6 & P7 pupils and 12 Day centre older clients. The pupils had received a Dementia Awareness training session before meeting and engaging with the older participants. The settings have been encouraged to develop the links that have been created.

Check out the photos of the project and final art piece created:

[Art UR Age \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Over a year of various restrictions and no face to face engagement LGNI had to re-think what art activity was possible and safe to deliver and one that would help both the younger and older generations connect to feel less isolated and be fun and creative.



Another Intergenerational Arts & Older people letter writing/card exchange took place between **Older People Northwest/Age Concern Derry and Chapel Hill Primary School**. Just as groups were preparing to meet their artist for the 6-week programme, lockdown happened. The idea was created for 'Bridging the gap between generations' using Cards with messages of hope, designed by local artist Rosie McClelland. A series of art packs were created that included 3 card designs and colouring pencils that could be completed and a message of hope written on the back. The aim was for these then to be shared between the Older and Younger Participants.

Then the second lockdown happened in January everything stopped again!!!! The Derry group were able to deliver the art pack to older participants through their meals on wheels' service with great success to feel a sense of connection in the very isolating, anxious times. It is hoped communications will continue between the settings.

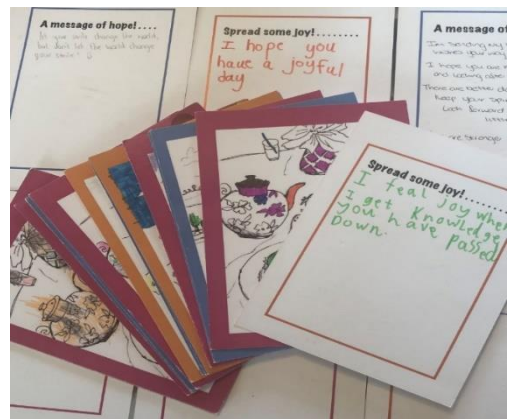
For more details check out the short video:

[Art UR Age Chapel Hill PS and Older People North West - YouTube](#)



### South West College in Dungannon and the Meadows Day Centre in Portadown

Participants took part in the Intergenerational Arts & Older people letter writing/card exchange 8 – 13 day centre clients were involved in colouring the art cards. The students (10 x 2<sup>nd</sup> year Early Years students) were not in College due to covid regulations and only back after Easter. College Course Coordinator Fey Cole sent introductory letters from students to the day centre clients to begin the process of exchanging the completed art cards with messages and letters. She said 'SWC Early Years students were delighted to still continue with intergenerational connections this year thanks to Linking Generations. The postcards and training that went with it allowed us to develop new friendships and stay connected with our wider community through this challenging year. We have seen the benefits it brings to



children having opportunity for intergenerational learning and

friendship and it also allowed our students to consider their own wellbeing, engaging with something that brought us together during a challenging time. Students now study intergenerational practice as part of their qualification and having the collaboration with linking generations is a key part of our learning, with the team always sharing their knowledge and expertise with us. We are so grateful to everyone for giving us the opportunity for this joyful activity and the people who are working so hard to make society a more inclusive and happy place for all!

