

Generations Connected at Perley Health



Sharing news about the Intergenerational Early Learning Centre

Edition 9
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Welcome to the ninth edition of our **Generations Connected** newsletter, your home for project schedules, safety measures, programming information and opportunities to support.

Andrew Fleck Children's Services Intergenerational Early Learning Centre at Perley Health is a partnership between Perley Health, which provides a community of care and services for Seniors and Veterans; the Perley Health Foundation, which raises and manages funds to support programs, services, and capital needs; and Andrew Fleck Children's Services (AFCS), a non-profit organization that operates child care centres across the region.

Read recent updates and visit our webpage: PerleyHealth.ca/generations-connected

Imagining Connection: What Intergenerational Care Can Look Like at Perley Health

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As we look ahead to the opening of the Perley Health Intergenerational Child Care and Early Learning Centre, many families, staff, and community members have asked a simple question: what will it actually feel like?



While each day at the centre will bring its own unique moments, the following story is an imagined scenario designed to help illustrate the kinds of experiences and connections that intergenerational care can foster. These examples are inspired by real-life moments from intergenerational programs across Andrew Fleck Children's Services.

The First Days: Building Trust and Comfort

It's a child's first day at the centre.

The room is new, the faces unfamiliar, and emotions run high. A few children cling tightly to their parents. Others watch quietly from a distance, unsure of what comes next. There are tears, hesitation, and long goodbyes.

Educators greet each child gently, at their level. They offer reassurance, soft words, and familiar routines. A favourite toy is brought closer. A quiet space is offered. A song begins.

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Nearby, Perley Health staff and older adults (or “Grandfriends”) begin to arrive for a short visit. Their presence is calm and unhurried. One Grandfriend sits beside a child who has been watching from afar, offering a warm smile. Another joins an educator in a simple activity, helping to stack blocks or turn the pages of a book.

Over time, the room begins to shift. The tears lessen. Curiosity grows. A child who had been holding back takes a few steps forward to join an activity. Another begins to explore, returning occasionally for reassurance.

These early days are not about rushing connection, but about creating a space where children feel safe, supported, and ready to engage at their own pace. With the guidance of trained educators and the presence of caring adults across generations, the foundation for trust begins to take shape.

Moments That Grow: Connection Through Shared Experience

As the days turn into weeks, relationships begin to form in quiet and meaningful ways.

Grandfriend Estela visits regularly, supported by recreation staff. The children have come to recognize her, greeting her by name as she enters the room. Though her memory is changing, her presence has become a familiar and welcome part of their day.

One morning, Estela arrives with a sewing box on her lap. Inside are yarn, fabric scraps, buttons, and small treasures from a lifetime of making. Her daughter has shared these items with the program, hoping they might find new purpose.

The children gather around as the box is opened.

“What’s inside?” they ask eagerly.

Soon, the materials become part of their play. Buttons are sorted and counted. Fabric is layered into colourful collages. New ideas emerge each day.

When Estela returns for a visit, a child approaches her proudly, holding up their artwork. She looks closely, her eyes lighting up.

“Beautiful,” she says softly. “I used to sew with those buttons.”

The child beams and runs back to share her words with friends.

In that moment, something simple becomes something more. The materials are no longer just objects, but a connection to memory, identity, and shared experience. The sewing box finds a permanent place on the art shelf, a quiet bridge between generations.

A Year Later: A Community Takes Shape

It is the one-year anniversary of the centre.

Children, Grandfriends, families, and staff gather for a celebration. The space is filled with photos and artwork from the past year: moments of reading together, painting side by side, planting in the garden, and building friendships.

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As guests arrive, familiar faces recognize one another. Children run to greet their Grandfriends with smiles and open arms. Families connect with one another, sharing stories of the relationships they've watched grow.

Two-year-old Ari spots Grandfriend Tom across the room and runs towards him. Tom's face lights up as he reaches out towards Ari, his daughter beside him smiling as she watches the interaction unfold. Ari's parents join them, and conversation begins easily. They speak about small but meaningful changes: new words, familiar songs, shared routines that now extend beyond the centre.

Later, during the welcome remarks, Grandfriends and family members share reflections.

One Grandfriend speaks about the joy the children bring:

"Every time I see them, it feels like sunshine has come into my day."

A parent shares how their child has learned patience and kindness through these relationships.

"It's something we couldn't have taught in the same way at home," they say, their voice filled with emotion.

As the formalities end, the room returns to conversation, laughter, and connection. What began as a new program has grown into something more: a community shaped by relationships across generations.

Looking Ahead

While these moments are imagined, they are grounded in real-life experiences from intergenerational programs across AFCS. They offer one possible glimpse into how relationships between children and Grandfriends may grow over time through everyday moments of care, curiosity, and connection.

Intergenerational care is not defined by a single activity or event, but by the everyday interactions that build over time. Small moments of connection, repeated and nurtured, have the power to create something lasting.

As we look ahead to the opening of the Perley Health Intergenerational Child Care and Early Learning Centre, we look forward to seeing these kinds of connections take root and grow, bringing children, older adults, families, and staff together in meaningful and lasting ways.

Andrew Fleck Children's Services Intergenerational Early Learning Centre at Perley Health Update

Project Completion: 95%

Updates: Frequently Asked Questions

We often hear questions from staff as we prepare to launch this innovative Intergenerational Early Learning Centre at Perley Health. So, we have compiled a document to answer your most common questions, explaining the impacts for staff and the engagement opportunities for Veterans and Seniors.

Answers to six of the most common questions.

1. Q: When will the Intergenerational Early Learning Centre officially open?

A: Construction is expected to end in May, with final inspections and licensing to follow. Watch the Perley Health webpage for up-to-date information (<https://www.perleyhealth.ca/generations-connected>).

2. Q: When will children be onsite, attending the program?

A: The first children are expected to arrive in June. The plan is to gradually introduce the children to the program during the Summer.

3. Q: Can any resident be involved in the intergenerational program?

A: Yes! The program is designed to be inclusive and connect the generations. Residents can express their interest by contacting Brooke Cornel, Veteran Liaison Coordinator, bcornel@perleyhealth.ca, Ext. 2877, or visit her office, near the Rideau 2 South (R2S) dining room. The Centre of Excellence is also studying participation to ensure interactions are tailored to meet resident needs.

4. Q: What if a resident isn't part of the "formal" program?

A: All residents can benefit from the presence of children on-site. New, large windows on the first floor support a sense of welcome and connection between the Intergenerational Early Learning Centre and the community.

5. Q: Where can I find more information about what to expect?

A: For updates on the program, visit our dedicated webpage and view our monthly newsletter and at PerleyHealth.ca/generations-connected.

Have a question that is not addressed? Please email us at info@perleyhealth.ca and we will update our file and share the information broadly.

Help Create Meaningful Connections

With opening day just around the corner, there's a real sense of excitement building as the Intergenerational Early Learning Centre prepares to welcome children, residents, and families through its doors. Every step closer to opening is a reflection of the generosity and care of the community that made it possible.



But we still need your help.

If you have been considering a gift, your support today will ensure every detail is ready as we prepare to welcome the first children and residents. You'll help open the doors to a space where generations will connect, learn, and share in everyday moments.

Ways to give:

- Online at PerleyHealthFoundation.ca/bridging-generations
- Call the Foundation office at 613-526-7173
- Visit the Foundation office 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Monday – Friday

Your generosity today will create meaningful moments for generations to come. Thank you for caring. We are deeply grateful for your support.

Tracy Holmes, CFRE

Annual Giving Program Manager

Your Safety is Our Top Priority

Your safety is paramount throughout this construction project. Please help us keep everyone safe by paying close attention to all signs and following all safety directions in and around construction areas.

Free hearing protection is available from the Support Services offices on the second floor of the Perley Centre for anyone affected by the noise disruptions construction may cause.

Stay Informed

We frequently produce two newsletters: one provides construction updates and the second is dedicated to all topics related to the Intergenerational Early Learning Centre.

Print: Copies are available throughout the Perley Health community.

Online:

1. Visit our Generations Connected webpage for updates, FAQs and more:
PerleyHealth.ca/generations-connected
2. Access the Construction Newsletter:
PerleyHealth.ca/public-announcement

For questions or concerns, please contact info@PerleyHealth.ca.

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Things are taking shape! Kitchen cabinets being installed in the kitchen.



The hoarding walls have been removed, come take a peak inside!