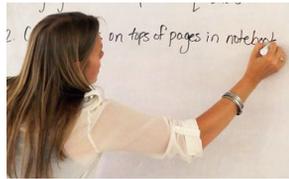


Grandpeals



Marc starts



Orangeville

Burlington

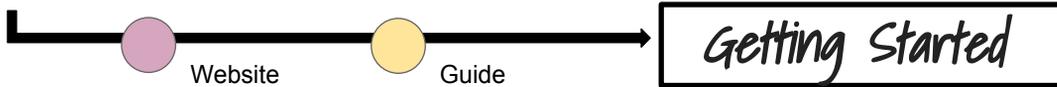
Georgetown



Teachers

Librarians

Seniors



Website

Guide

Getting Started

Marc:

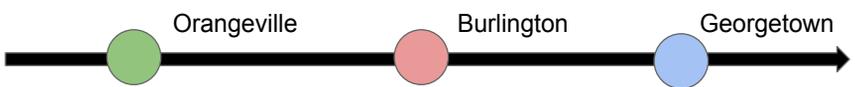
Welcome to our presentation on GrandPals. This first slide outlines our presentation in a nutshell. We will begin by describing what the GrandPals program has looked like in Orangeville, Burlington and Georgetown.

We will then consider the merits of the program through the lense of a teacher, a librarian and seniors.

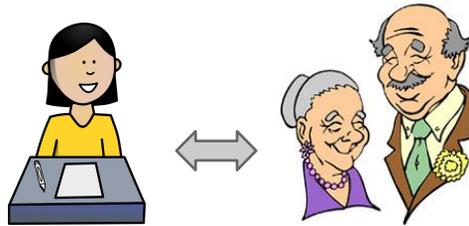
Finally, we will outline some ways to get started on a GrandPals program in your own community. We will introduce you to the resources found on the GrandPals.ca website and quickly take a look at the Project Guide.



GrandPals



So what is the GrandPals program all about? We want to start with a short video documents what the program has looked like in Orangeville.



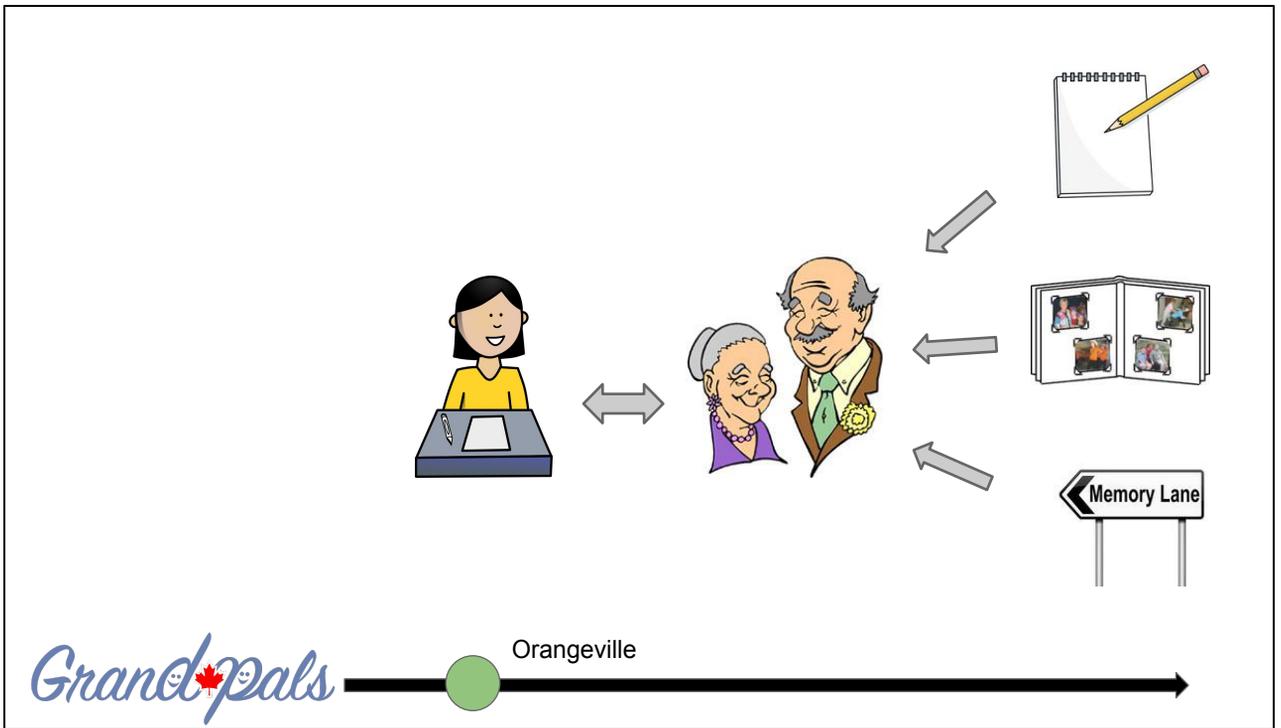
Grandpals

Orangeville



MARC: So what is the Grandpals program all about? Essentially, it is about a connection between a student and a local senior.

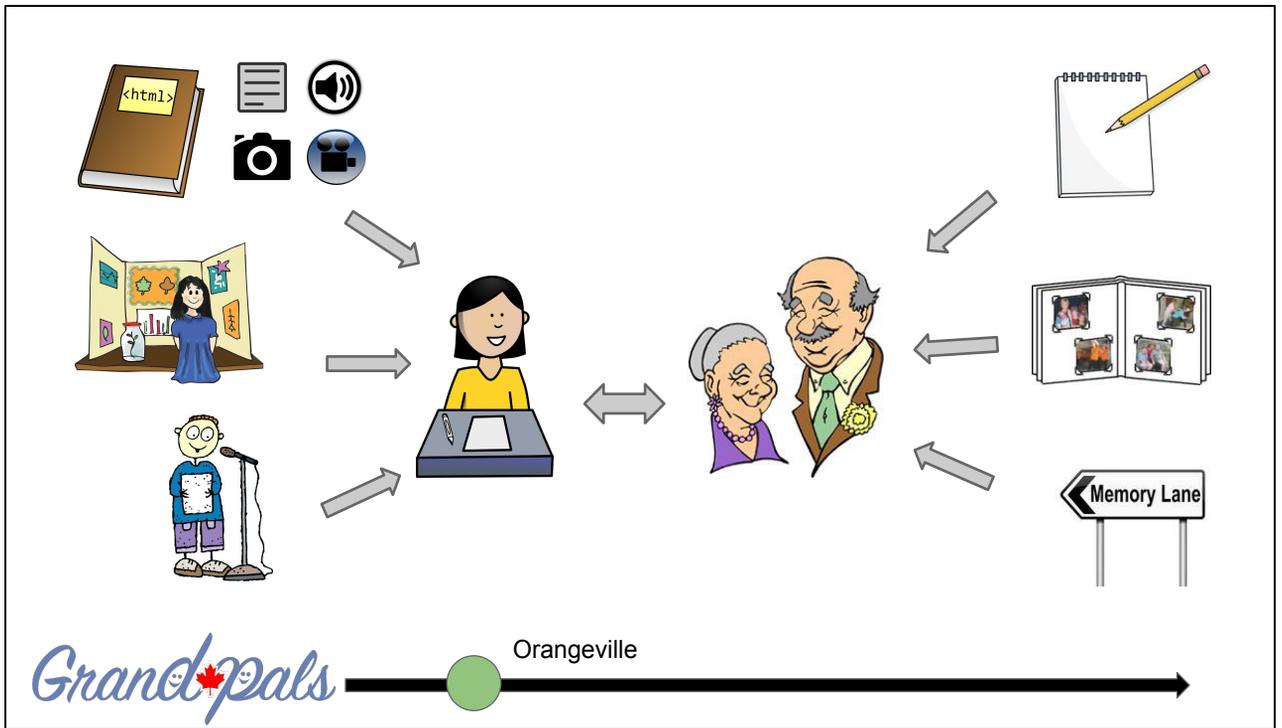
It is important for us to emphasize that the GrandPals project can be adapted to any community. It can be simple or complex, but at the core it is about building intergenerational relationships.



MARC: To this connection, the senior might bring notes to questions that have been provided by students ahead of time.

The seniors might also bring memorabilia to share with the students. This might be photo albums, memoirs or other types of souvenirs.

Essentially, the seniors brings a willingness to travel down memory lane with their student partner - answering questions about different life stages and sharing wisdom gathered along their journey.



MARC:

The student also brings a number of things to connection times together. The student's first assignment is the development of a secure, digital, online life book all about different stages from the seniors life.

This life book contains text, developed from interview times together.

The life book might also contain pictures, captured during one of the 8-10 interview times.

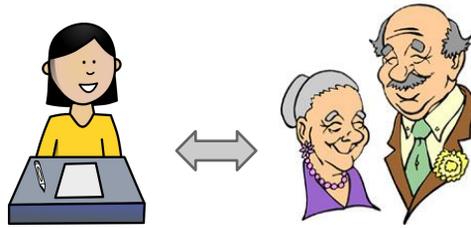
As students record the interviews, for better capture of all the details discussed during interviews, the life book might also contain audio clips.

Finally, the life book might also contain video clips, again, captured during visiting times.

The second assignment given to the student is the development of a display board, featuring the central lessons and memories they have acquired during their times with the senior. The students also have the opportunity to display a portrait that they will have drawn of the Grandpal.

Finally, the last task assigned to the student is the development of a short speech and slideshow about their Grandpal. This speech and slideshow is delivered at the end of project celebration, the Grandpals Gala, that takes place in June.

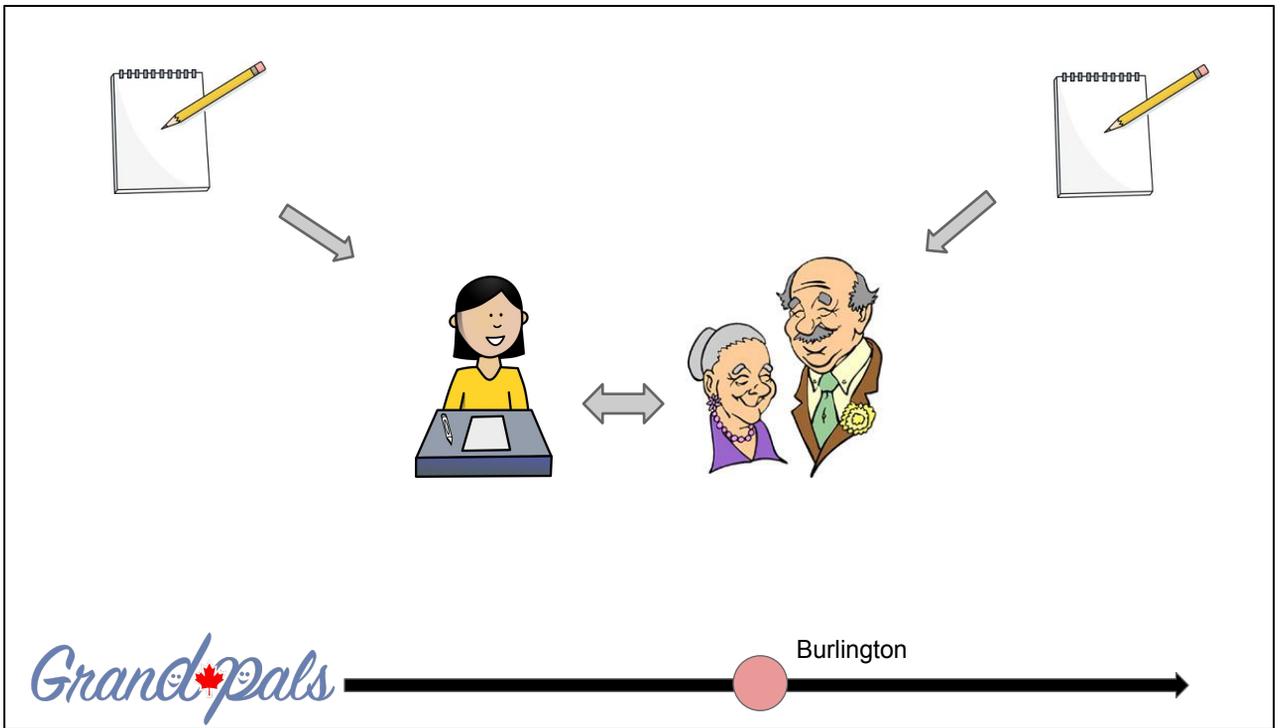
So let me pass you on to Cecilia who will describe what the program has looked like in Burlington.



Grandpals

Burlington

Cecilia: Connection between students- and isolated seniors

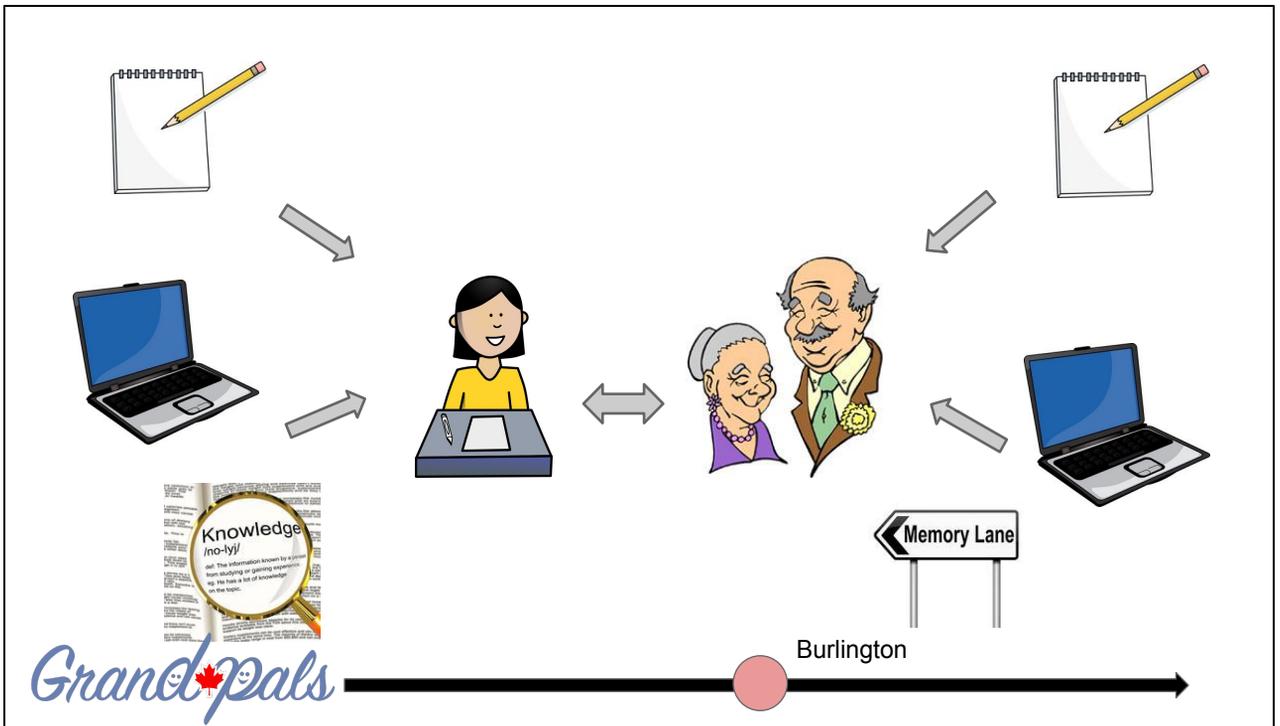


Cecilia:

We choose to make the project as simple as possible since this was our first year.

Children in gr 6 from Brant Hills PS in Donna Calanchie's class and isolated seniors at Brant LTC wrote letters back and forth. Seniors were identified by the LTC facility to greatly benefit from involvement in the program.

Cecilia-Strictly Pen Pal Relationship to begin with and a celebration planned in June where they would get to meet in person. Donna focused her teaching in the language arts curriculum for the project and added strands of the art curriculum into the celebration. Enrichment activities included understanding dementia and brain health workshop by Alzheimer's Society and learning about WHO Age Friendly framework.



Cecilia:

Some used the computer to write, others wrote by hand.

Both researched subjects that they were unfamiliar with.

Example: One student mentioned they were in the cadets-the senior then wrote about his experience serving in the Navy-student researched the ship mentioned in the letter by the senior and sent a picture back in his next letter.

There were many instances like that and I have brought some examples to show those interested after the presentation.

Grandpals
French
Connection



Grandpals

Georgetown



Cecilia:

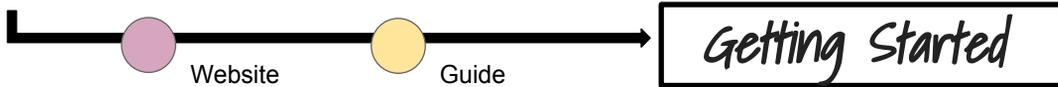
Here is Heather Thompson, the coordinator of the French Connection Program speaking about this iteration of the Grandpal program for her communities.



Orangeville

Burlington

Georgetown



Marc: Next we want to look at the merit of this program from a teacher's perspective. The person who might take the lead on a GrandPals project does not necessarily have to be a teacher. But as they start making needed connections to start the project, they will likely need to pitch the idea to some teachers. Hopefully, this segment will help with that.



Engaged Students

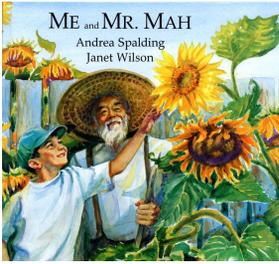
Make it Real

Combine Silos

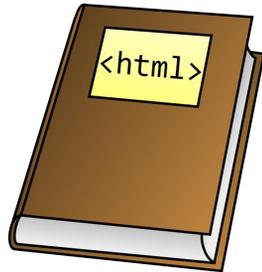
Embrace a Cause

While the benefits of this kind of program are multifaceted, one of the biggest benefits to teachers is the level of student engagement that they get from their students.

How does the GrandPals program create an engaging experience for students? I would like to suggest that it does so in three ways: 1) First, it makes learning real 2) Second, it combines educational silos 3) and third, it embraces a cause.



Reading



Writing



Media



Oral

Make it Real

Combine Silos

Embrace a Cause

MARC: Let's begin with making learning real. In the Grandpals program, all strands of the language curriculum are covered.

For example, in their related **readings** students learn to generate questions and see things from different points of view.

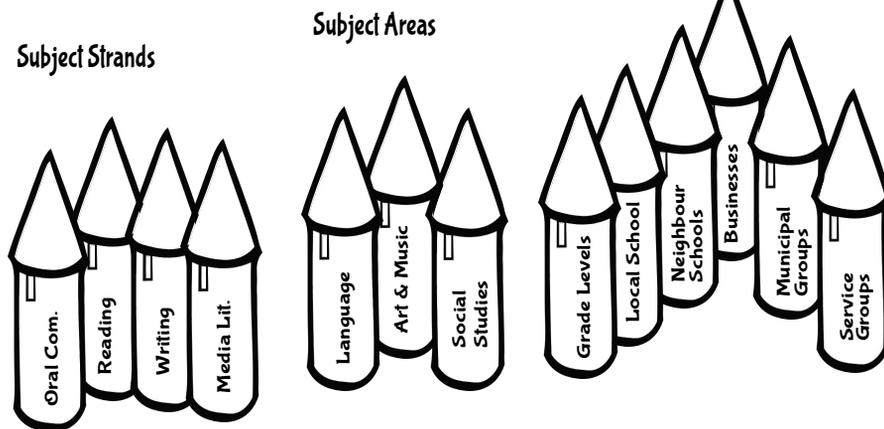
In their interviews and **writing**, they learn to identify main ideas and supporting details.

Students also develop significant skills in the area of media literacy as they work with technology to complete the project.

Students also develop their oral communication skills when presenting at the project celebration.

Most importantly however, all of this learning is grounded in a real task, that is of **significant service** to another person. As a result, students never asked the question, "Why are we learning this?".

Educational Silos



Make it Real Combine Silos Embrace a Cause

MARC: A second way that the Grandpals Program engages students, is that it combines educational silos.

In education, silos might include the various strands of a particular subject. The silos might also be the various subjects themselves, taught in complete isolation from one another. Other silos might include local community groups - - like grade levels, neighbouring schools, local businesses or service groups.

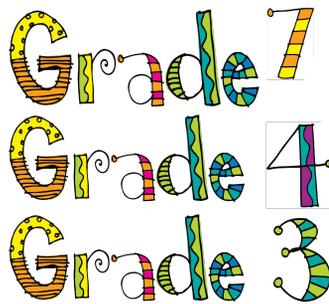
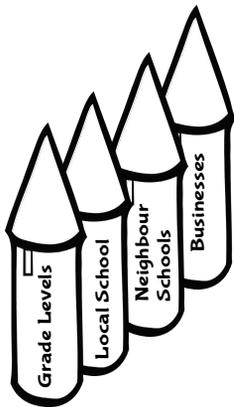
The question really is, "How can the Grandpals program integrated many different silos, in order to create a more engaging experience for

students?”

Well, as mentioned, the Grandpals program can integrate all areas/strands of the language curriculum. GrandPals can also subjects like art, music and social studies.

What is more unusual, is that it also has the potential to integrate additional, less commonly integrated silos.

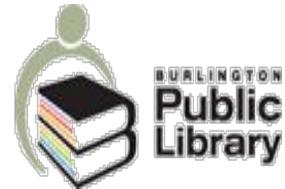
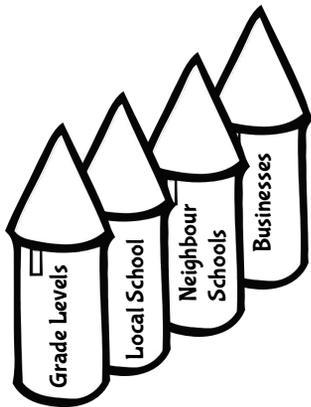
Local Communities: Grade Levels



Make it Real Combine Silos Embrace a Cause

MARC: For example, two years ago at my school we merged grade silos when we paired grade 3 and 4 student with grade 7 students to interview an senior. The result was a richer social learning experience for all involved.

Local Communities: Schools & Libraries



Make it Real

Combine Silos

Embrace a Cause

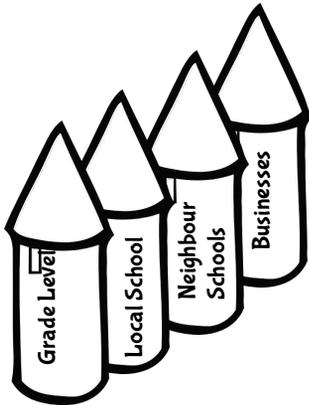
MARC: As many teachers know, neighbouring schools are often siloed from one another. This past year we partnered neighbouring schools, as Montgomery Village public school teamed up with Parkinson Public school in Orangeville, to complete the GrandPals project.

In Orangeville we also kept in touch with the Orangeville Christian School, Brant Hills Public School and the Burlington Public Library as they used the project guide to undertake their own versions of the GrandPals Project. In total, in all of these different places, 55 seniors and 125 students were involved in intergenerational programming. More importantly, Montgomery Village experienced

the benefit that can come from breaking out of your own school silo, and networking and working with other schools.

The long term goal of the GrandPals.ca site is to provide a hub for this kind of networking and collaboration.

Local Communities: Business, Municipality, Service Group



Make it Real

Combine Silos

Embrace a Cause

MARC: As many teachers know, a school can often remain siloed from business, municipal or service groups. In Orangeville, the GrandPals project has allowed us not only partner with the Montgomery Village Seniors Center, but also partner with Youth Service America, our local Rotary Chapter, and the Town of Orangeville, all for the purpose of developing intergenerational programming in our town and a richer program in our school.

Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover



Every Person is a Story

Age is Only a Number

Make it Real

Combine Silos

Embrace a Cause

MARC: Now on to a third way that the Grandpals program can engage students. It can embrace a cause.

At the beginning of the project, students can be introduced to a number of big ideas. A sampling of them can be seen on the screen.

We introduce these big ideas at the beginning and then ask the students to reflect on them at the end of the project.

Here is one example of a student reflection.



Age is Only a Number

When we first met Beth we wondered if she would tell us good stories. Also, would we get along with her? When we finally met her, we found there was an instant connection. We discovered that friendship can happen across any age.

Make it Real

Combine Silos

Embrace a Cause

MARC: When responding to the big idea, “Age is only a number”, students wrote the following at the end of the project: [read quote]

The power of these big ideas is that they provide a kind of moral guide throughout the project. These moral guides then serve to further enhance the significance and meaning of the tasks that the students are engaged in. And with this deeper meaning and purpose comes deeper student engagement.



Engage Community

Identify

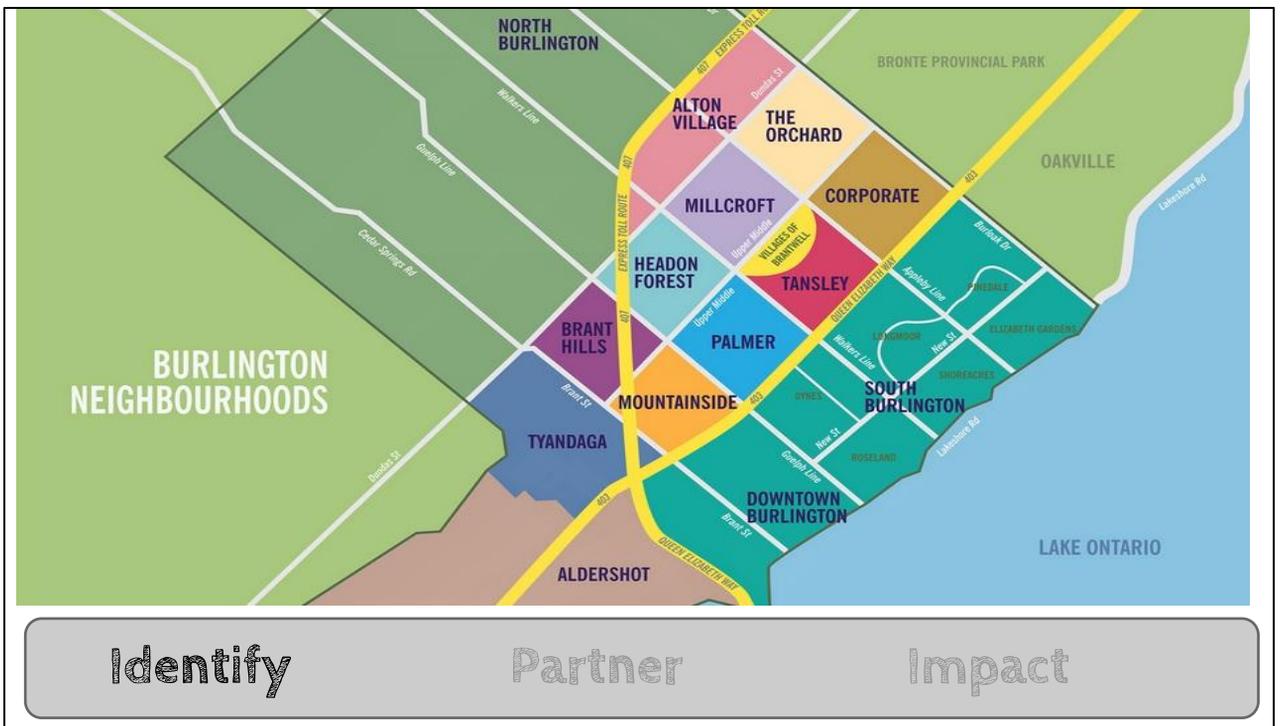
Partner

Impact

Why did the public library get involved in a project like this?

Most public libraries have a community engagement staff member or department.

It is our role to identify what's important to our citizens, what the needs and barriers are in the community, to work with community and community partners to overcome the barriers and fill the needs and to evaluate the services with them so they have meaningful impact to those communities.



Identify the known through a big and small picture lens :

Schools-Ministry of Education has identified in numerous documents the importance of community partnerships. From the public library's perspective, it is understood that we needed to create deeper partnerships with our schools especially our teacher librarian colleagues. Public libraries recognize this relationship building is critical and one of the most valuable connections we can develop for children and youth services and only through this strong partnership can we have collective impact on developing competent, curious and capable 21st century learners.

Seniors-It was also clearly evident Burlington, like most municipalities, have a growing senior population. Burlington's senior population sits at 17% of total population. Since we have a very high percentage of seniors, being an Active Age Friendly city is important to our City. We have some very isolated seniors living in their homes, retirement homes and long term care facilities and this statistic is estimated to rise substantially in the coming years. In fact, the number of seniors aged 65 and over in Ontario is projected to more than double from about 2.1 million, or 15.2 per cent of population in 2013, to over 4.5 million, or 25.5 per cent, by 2041. Last year, for the first time, seniors accounted for a larger share of population than children aged 0-14 (Ontario, Ministry of Finance publishes population and age projections for 2013-2041 at

the Census Division level). In addition, our Burlington Age-Friendly **Seniors** Council identified the need to connect youth with seniors through the WHO Age-Friendly Framework. This active aging framework identifies the need for seniors to engage in social participation and the need for respect and social inclusion. In particular, to identify inclusion opportunities for seniors and where they can contribute in all areas of community life.

Children- Through the school boards and Halton Regions OKN surveys it was also identified that children are lacking in crucial areas of Search Institute's Developmental Asset Framework. The Framework is a set of 40 skills, experiences, relationships and behaviors which enable young people to develop into successful and contributing adults. These assets are both internal and external. In general, children are not going outside that much, not knowing their neighbours or neighbourhoods which does not give them opportunities to be with other people including older adults that can be role models and supports for them and are not empowered enough in the community. It is also important in the larger Halton region community that we collectively work towards the Halton 7. **Halton 7 are** seven collective actions for children, youth and their families and include; schools are connected to the community, children are positively connected, and children are learning.

So putting all this information together we started hunting for a project.

Goals were to break down barriers looking through both the seniors and children's lens, connect with schools and their community, connect with seniors and their community and bring these groups together in a meaningful way so that they develop relationships and can have positive impact on each other.

The Grandpal program was perfect for this.



Identify

Partner

Impact

With these needs identified we then “turned outward” to identify partners that could help us bring the Grandpal project to life in Burlington.

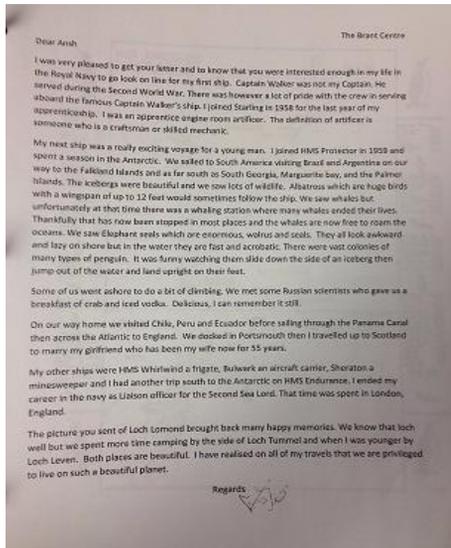
Projects are an excellent way to build relationships with new partners or strengthen bonds with existing partners

Donna Calanchie (far right)-existing relationship-new partner

Heather Thompson (middle)-existing relationship-new partner

Anna Hardie(far left)-new relationship and partner

Through working on this project I was able to leverage some existing relationships and develop one new relationship. Since the expansion of the program this year this has grown to 12 people involved with the project across a good portion of the City of Burlington.



Identify

Partner

Impact

Outcomes:(Leave this out of talk)

1. Learning about life cycle and the aging process
2. Curriculum enhancement; letter writing, critical thinking, researching
3. Provide opportunity for building relationships and sharing experiences
4. Breaking down ageism barriers
5. Developmental asset building; families mentioned this
6. Prevent isolation and memory sharing for those most vulnerable seniors

We had a lot of outcomes but I am glad to say that we achieved them all and more from the program.

Impacts Reported: (see Chartwell article; <http://blog.chartwell.com/retirement-living-options/grandpal-program-connects-seniors-and-students/>)

- 1) Better understanding of youth by seniors and seniors by youth- mentioned in their letters that they learned they had a lot in common
- 2) Created community building and relationship building-surveyed students and seniors at the end of the program for mutual outcomes-students reported they felt more connected to seniors and seniors felt more connected to youth and their community

This also extended to the families of students and seniors because at the celebration both groups mentioned they looked forward to the letter exchange and shared this information with their immediate family so that other family members felt they got to know the grandpa as well. In fact, one exchange is still going on after the program finished in June of last year.

- 1) Provided opportunities to discuss sensitive issues like death and disability for students and their teacher. We actually did have 2 seniors pass away during the duration of the program so Donna used these events as teachable moments for her students. Donna also identified students had more empathy after the program than before for seniors.
- 2) It had such a huge impact that we were asked to expand the program this year to include gr 4, 5, 6 & 7 students. Both teachers and seniors facilities reported seeing benefits of participating in the program.

Guiding Question:

What are the benefits for seniors?

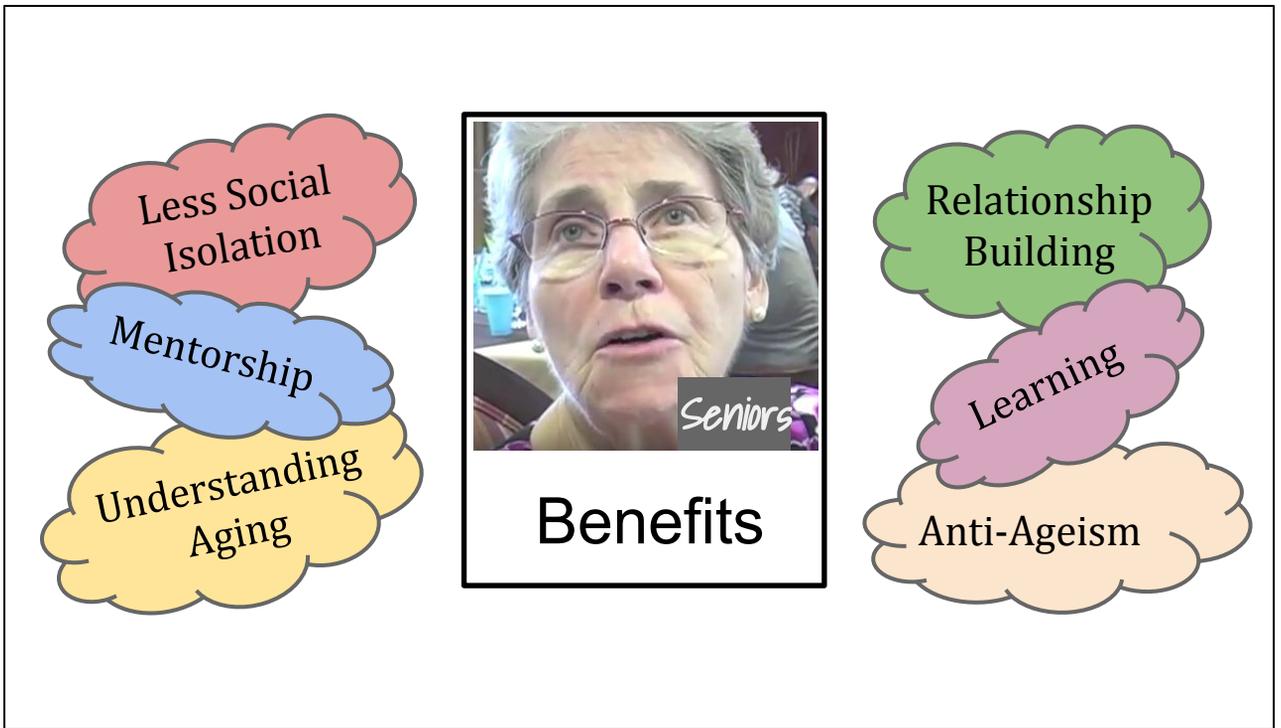


Cecilia: Finally, we want to look at the GrandPals program through the eyes of seniors. We don't have a senior up here with us today, so we thought we might show you a short video of feedback from seniors. As you are watching this, please consider the guiding question: What are the benefits for seniors?



Video: How GrandPals Impacts Seniors - long

Let's hear from a couple of people with regards to the benefits of the GrandPals program for seniors. What do you see as the benefits?



Marc: Lead the discussion with group.

- Less social isolation
- Relationship building
- Understanding of aging
- Breaking down ageism
- Mentorship
- Learning

GrandPals.ca



Connect

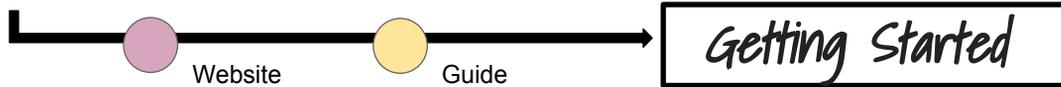
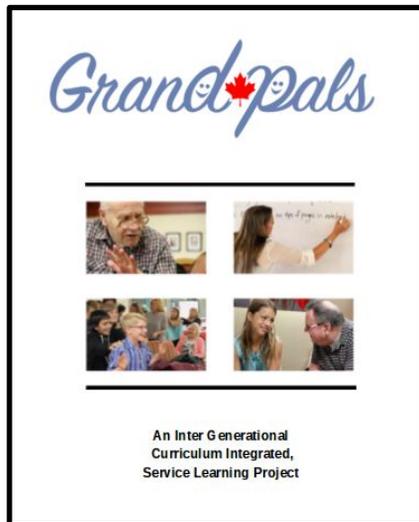
Plan

Engage

Celebrate



Now we are moving on the last section of our presentation: Getting Started. One way to get started on developing a GrandPals project in your own community is to visit the GrandPals.ca website. On the website we have developed 4 short videos that outline the different stages involved in putting together the project. In each of the videos you will hear advice and input from people who have already run the program in their community.



Another good way to get started is to download the GrandPals project guide which can be found on the site. Once you have had a chance to read through it, please feel free to contact us for any further guidance, networking or support.

Thanks for listening.

Grandpals



Q & A

Marc Mailhot, UGDSB, Montgomery Village PS,
mmailhot@ugcloud.ca

Cecilia Vespa, Burlington Public Library,
vespac@bpl.on.ca