

# Continuing the Conversation Workgroup Summary

**Workgroup Name:** Intergenerational

**Convener:** Mike Mahon

**Host:** Mike Mahon

**Group Participants:** Tracy Lux, Ron Weismehl, Mike Mahon, Lurline Aslanian

## **Summary:**

1. There should be more emphasis placed on young people, in particular:
  - a. increasing the quality of their education
  - b. providing more in the way of jobs and entertainment to keep them from leaving the area, and
  - c. finding ways of attracting large numbers of other young people to relocate to this area.

If we don't do this it will be very hard to maintain the young, qualified workforce that will be required to serve as caregivers and to staff the new businesses that SIA will engender.

2. To get a true picture and better understanding of how the various age demographics relate to each other it will be necessary to look into inter-generational relationships starting within the family and branching out to other venues (congregations, YMCA's etc.)
3. Our older population is not a homogenized group of people, but rather one that is differentiated by age, economic status, education, health, race, religion, culture, language etc. If local or visiting scholars would like to survey or study this population we will have to come up the learning curve and build communication pathways into the various sub-groups, since only a small percentage of their total number have had any contact with the various service providers, educational institutions, health care providers etc.
4. We should combine the scat system and school bus system for middle school and up. At the very least, people of different ages and backgrounds see each other. At the most, young people learn to use public transportation and there is decent access to schools for adults who may like to volunteer. The more you think about it, the more advantages you may be able to imagine.

Transportation is a major, major issue for seniors and must be addressed by planning. Even if buses came frequently and shaded stops were provided, many senior are not going to attempt to cross busy intersections and six lane roads. Many do not see well enough, hear well enough or move quickly enough. However, they are bright and alert enough to make a difference as volunteers and even paid workers if they had affordable door to door transportation.

5. Another idea is that restaurants could have a designated community area or table where people agree to sit together. This is done in France, and, I am told, in some other countries as well. Simon's Cafe here in the county has been providing a group table for a number of years. I have met some very interesting people at that table.
  - It would be wonderful if we had a program in which students of middle and high school ages would interview and write biographies of elders in retirement homes and assisted living facilities. Where possible the elders would also interview the kids and there would be a real exchange. Some of the results could be presented to the public and I could envision some television features. I have some thoughts about how to do this in a way that is inspiring to kids and elders and that increases awareness of elders' needs. Something like this could become part of the school curriculum. I am sure the Arts Group could add much to these ideas.