LinkAGES
An Intergenerational Program
TIKKUN OLAM/REPAIR OF THE WORLD
 ремонт עולם
 Repairing the world is done with a spirit of generosity and in partnership with adults and children to continuously offer positive experiences in our community. The true meaning of Tikkun Olam is a responsibility to perform social “acts of kindness” every day.
Research shows that there are major health benefits of socialization across diverse demographics. The mental, emotional and psychological benefits of this cross-socialization and experiential learning can have a positive impact on physical well-being.
In the first session we got to know each other by making a string web that we passed back and forth as we talked about some of our favorite foods. This was followed by a musical component that incorporated singing, musical instruments and creative movement activities.
At the end of each session we drew pictures or wrote words about that day’s activities.
Diversity activities offer children ways to show respect and celebrate the differences in all people. The preschoolers made connections with the older adults by collaborating with them through music, movement and art.
Ageism - Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age.
At our second meeting the children collaborated with the Seniors by trying to hang a heavy watermelon in the sukkah. After reading the PJ Library Book *Watermelon in the Sukkah* we offered the children and seniors similar materials from the story.
A child’s understanding of their past explorations can strengthen their comprehension of the present and prepare them for future learning.
Revisiting past experiences helps us build on new ones.
Every week we look at photos from the previous weeks in order to remind us of the activities we did together.
We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.

John Dewey, Educator and Philosopher
At our third meeting Senior community member and friend, Bob created an art workshop game to help children recognize and draw different types of animals.
Bob brought his passions and skills to the program, which made the experience genuinely meaningful.
Studies now suggest that bringing older and younger generations together can nurture understanding and mutual respect that benefit the individual as well as the community. Both age groups can be a resource for the other, sharing talents and insights.
The children show the Seniors how they draw smiling faces.
“There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of the people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age.” - Sophia Loren
After some singing and creative movement we closed by drawing pictures of our favorite animals.
Programs like LinkAGES are building bridges and closing gaps, improving the social bonds and solidarity between generations. The more active both age groups are in the community, the more they will understand each other’s importance to the world and to each other.
At our fourth meeting the Seniors shared photos of themselves when they were young and also told the group about the toys they used to play with and the books they used to read when they were young children.
“Our Intergenerational LinkAGES program at the JCC has provided a special opportunity for all participants to interact authentically and creatively together! We’ve had a lot of fun getting to know one another on a personal level, and learning from one another through music, storytelling, and individual passions has been a true treat.” – Rachel Seiger, Program Manager
At the end of the meeting our Seniors drew pictures on our mural of toys they used to play so we could talk more about them the following week and how they made us feel.
At our fifth meeting we revisited our experiences from the previous week.
One of the children points to a drawing Senior participant, Andy drew of a Slinky last week.
We surprised Andy with a brand new Slinky!
“To this day, I have the most fond memories of some of my old toys.”  – Michael Keaton, Actor
On a crisp, cool, autumn morning, the children the seniors play with the Slinky.
At the end of our final session the children and seniors drew a picture of how the experience made them feel that day. An array of smiling faces dotted our collective canvas.
“At the JCC our hope is that positive intergenerational interaction between young children and older members of the community will lead to generativity* development and better well-being in old-age for all participants in the LinkAGES program.”  - Stephanie Leen, Early Childhood Educator/Judaic Specialist

* The term generativity was coined by the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson in 1950 to denote "a concern for establishing and guiding the next generation."
For more stories from the LinkAGES program at our JCC please contact us:

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