

Sages & Seekers

Honoring Elders. Empowering Teens. Building Community.

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Dear Friends,

As the 2011-2012 school year closes, I am honored to have witnessed the growth of Sages & Seekers thanks to the help and support of volunteers, friends, family and Sages. This support has enabled 689 participants to share their lives through the almost extinct form of communication - face-to-face conversations. It is no secret that communication for teens is mostly comprised of texting and brief facebook entries. So when I asked the teen participants what surprised them about meeting with an older adult for 8 weeks, I was floored by their answer - "the opportunity to talk with someone, uninterrupted, for an hour." Engaging in a conversation with anyone, much less a stranger from another generation, is not a common occurrence in this age of technology; but apparently this lost art is missed.

This year some of the students wrote "reflections" on their time spent with their Sage, and I'd like to share a quote from one of those papers: "A cliché, 'always follow your passion,' is one I have heard time and time again; but what changed me more than a cliché ever could, is how Lorraine reacted to failure and how she lived her life with perseverance." So many students cited Sage experiences that they have noted

Summer 2012 News

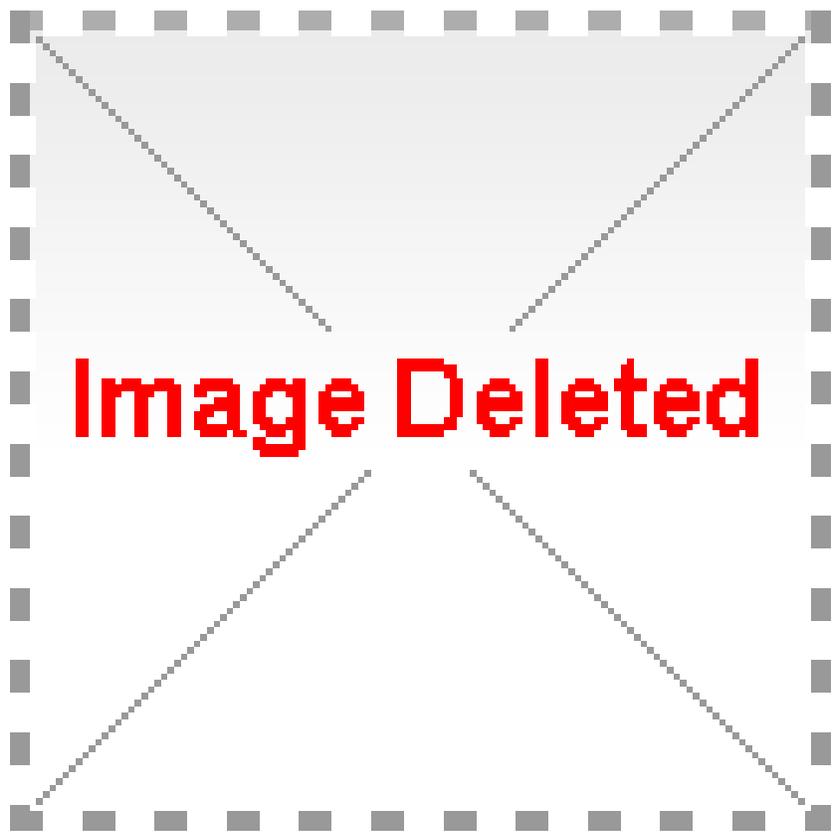
Some New Faces

This spring, three Brandeis University students studying the sociology of aging took interest in the Sages & Seekers program in the hope of answering a daunting question - what exactly do participants get out of the experience? - These students conducted interviews with sages and sat in on a number of the activities, including the final presentations. They found that they, like many of the Sages, had not even the slightest premonition of the personal and community-spanning implications. Not only did these sages find incredible meaning and fulfillment within the program, but also many of them were inspired to continue to reach out to their communities in other ways. Some began volunteering at their local senior centers organizing games, screening movies, and just continuing to make and nurture the human connections they identify as so crucial to aging happily. As spring gives way to summer, two Brandeis students remain, excited by the prospect of nurturing such an invaluable program.

"will impact my life." Thanks to the Sages for sharing so intimately.

I am very grateful for the volunteer help this school year from Tim King, Catherine Hunter, Emily Soukas, Mindy Fried, Frank Cardillo, Gabriela Meller, Lucas Gelwarg, Emily Salloway, Diana Wang, Mary Lee Halpin, Tess Suchoff and Goodwin Procter. And thank you to all the generous donors who believe in the mission of Sages & Seekers!

Gratefully,
Elly
Executive Director



Helping Teens to Grow

The emotional development of today's youth is being stunted. They have little to no opportunity to connect with other people in a meaningful fashion, and so naturally they cannot learn to introspect either. Through the widespread adoption of pervasive and depersonalized communications technologies, these adolescents find themselves in a sort of social limbo, one where they are never really alone and never really together. Sages & Seekers offers an opportunity for these digital hermits to develop full, rich relationships with other people. As they develop mature relationships with Seniors, another marginalized segment of society, these teens will take important steps towards self-actualization, and they'll finally be able to start weaning themselves off of the electronic bosom.

Concord Academy Expansion

Last year Sages and Seekers reached out to Concord Academy, implementing its curriculum in two US History II classes. Due to the outstanding success of the program, Concord Academy invited Sages & Seekers to return this past year, with the participation of all six of the school's U.S. History II classes. This is the first instance in which our program has been fully incorporated into a school's curriculum. What we've accomplished here offers but the slightest hint of the untapped potential that exists within Sages & Seekers. Anybody who has even the most casual of interactions with the program readily

Faces of Spring Participants.

recognizes its worth. So, with this in mind we must intuit an effective means of planting the seeds of interest in more schools. If they're anything like Concord Academy, then these seeds will readily mature into a veritable forest across the country.

New Fan at the Rivers School

This past spring session marks our fourth year implementing the program at the Rivers School in Weston. The program was implemented in two Sophomore English classes. These classes were headed by Mrs. Mary Mertsch, a newcomer to the program. As the program got underway, she very quickly found herself just as enamored of the program as everyone else who has participated in it, and went so far as to compose a letter for our use in the quest for funding. In it she spoke of how, "the program fit with the essential question for our sophomores: how do my choices affect my relationships with others and myself?"

If you'd like to read the full letter for yourself, we've created a link to it for you: [Mrs. Mertsch's letter](#)

MISSION

Sages & Seekers Mission is to dissolve age-related segregation by bringing two marginalized generations together to foster respectful relationships, paying tribute to our Elderly and empowering our Teens.

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