

How St Louis Aged Care is minding the intergenerational gap



July 2020

With younger people adapting to new technologies at a rapid pace, the generation gap gets wider every year. Anything they want or need to know is online, available at a press of a button, or by speaking to Siri on their iPhone – who is always willing to be of assistance!



Wisdom and knowledge about daily living used to be passed down from grandparents and parents. This included practical skills such as teaching family recipes, basic woodwork and home handy skills, knitting and crochet, and basic mending skills.

Grandparents were a font of knowledge, with more patience and time for younger people compared to their busy working parents. Is this really going away? At St Louis, we don't believe so, it's just a matter of creating opportunities for connection between young and old.

Healthy communities exist when all generations are at ease with each other. You may have noticed this in your own family or community. When younger people know the elders are available to them, to share their knowledge or to simply lend an ear, worry, stress and anxiety all seem to diminish. The generation gap may be increasing at the moment, but it doesn't need to continue this way. We can all create opportunities for generations to connect

more, to enjoy simpler activities and to remember the heart-warming value of a chat over a cup of tea.

Technology is a wonderful evolution, but it doesn't nurture creativity or teach constructive problem solving. Humans do that for each other – healthy families and/or communities who take the time to share wisdom and knowledge.

At St Louis Aged Care, we are doing our part to mind the gap - the generation gap to be specific, by encouraging connections between young and old.

Some of our activities include: *(Note: COVID-19 restrictions have temporarily altered some of our programs)*

We're out and about in the community – we're a social group and alter our social programs weekly. We take our home care clients and residents out regularly to cafes, pubs, libraries and art galleries. We actively seek opportunities for intergenerational social connections because our home care clients want to mix and mingle with all ages. They want social activities which are a true representation of the community not just their generation.

Our carers span a wide range of ages – we ensure our team has carers of all ages, who bring their own generational perspective to our residents and clients. we have six decades of people at St Louis, carers in their 20's through to 70's who all contribute to the St Louis community through their eyes. Each generation brings a different approach and perspective of care.

Diverse music –

at the residence we listen to a wide range of music from old favourite tunes to current music, and we discuss how music has changed over the generations.

Pembroke School Pen Pals –

at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown, a group of girls at Pembroke School Boarding House who were not able to return home, reached out to our residents with letters. Some of the girls were from Malaysia and China and missing their families. Our residents were very touched and responded with letters of their own and cookies!

Ask Gran not Google –

an initiative of Feros Care, it aims to bridge the intergenerational gap and place young and old together for an afternoon to chat. We participated and invited students to an afternoon in the park with residents and clients, asking them all sorts of questions.

Student afternoon visits –

we regularly invite students from Adelaide schools to visit and spend time with our residents. We welcome Year 11 students from schools in the area to do their service learning placements which are a requirement for their studies. They spend two weeks with us and help with the activities. The residents and staff love having them here.

Student volunteers –

we encourage student volunteers to help our residents with activities including art, craft and reading. Our residents dearly value the students giving their time. A local primary school visit us in term 4 every year for a four week program. They walk here from school on a Thursday and do a different scheduled activity (put together by the students) finishing with a concert. They are now involved with our annual Christmas Carols night as a choir.



Generations spending time together benefits everyone

These activities keep our clients young at heart and the bounce in their step. It offers younger people an opportunity to open up and ask questions of the elderly and we encourage this interaction.

Through these interactions, we've noticed that younger people come to appreciate some aspects of their lives more. When they hear stories about having to walk for over an hour to get to school, how difficult it was to buy a home or even furniture, how people needed to travel to another town for medical attention, it gives them a whole new level of gratitude for what they have.

Would you like to be involved or volunteer? Call St Louis to discuss how you can help mind the inter-generational gap

We'd love to hear from you. Call us at our Adelaide or Victor Harbor office to find out how you or younger people in your life may like to get involved in our social or volunteer programs.

Call St Louis Home Care to discuss any of your home care needs.

Adelaide Metro & Hills 8332 0950
Victor Harbor & Fleurieu 8552 1481

