

G-Merge

(Generation Merge)

SELECT A LOCATION

Sometimes you won't have a menu to select from and you work with whoever is available. Typical places to consider:

Nursing home

Convalescent center

Retirement community

Community based program such as a senior center

Home based program where volunteers go out to visit in group homes

Veteran's hospital

Adult day care facility

STAFF INTERACTION

Discuss the possibility of your students working with their residents. Talk about your various roles up front. Do you want the staff to play an active or background role? In the active mode they would greet you each time and work with you and the students. If you feel you need extra adult supervision, you might request this level of interaction for the first five visits.

In a background position the staff merely sets up the room, connects you to residents, and is rarely seen once you plan the project with them. I prefer that the staff play an active role for at least the first three visits, which includes the initial tour, on-site training, and first visit with residents.

You can build a healthy relationship by first visiting on their grounds. Ask to meet all the key players including administrators, dietitians, rehabilitation therapists, nursing staff, the recreation or activity coordinator, and the volunteer coordinator. While you might begin with the volunteer coordinator, you typically find that you end up seeing the activities or nursing staff most often.

It helps if you have students introduced to people during the tour. Try to get people to learn names whenever possible. Learn the background of the staff by asking how they got started and if they think young people should consider their line of work. In fact, you can invite key players for a panel discussion in your classroom.

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SUGGESTED CHECKLIST

Pre-Planning At School and Nursing Home

Discuss program with administrators and get support for visits and other related needs like transportation.

Car and parking place

Secure meeting place for discussion during periods _____ & _____

Nursing Home Orientation

Meet with Volunteer or Activities Coordinator and discuss G-Merge

Discuss and settle on possible times for visits

Discuss where you'll meet. What are the options for large group interaction such as Bingo and places where student and 'grandfriends' can meet to visit?

Discuss start-up process and options

Students come for orientation and meet residents, perhaps do a group game like bingo.

Review any consent forms and/or brochures (if needed)

Determine who you will be meeting with each time you come. Often this is someone who provides direct services to the residents. This person will serve as liaison to resident.

Fine Tuning

Develop policy for regarding getting out of others classes (if this is needed). Establish and communicate attendance minimums. If you are pulling students from regular classes to participate, explain how students re-enter regular classes if they leave the project.

Generate or collect needed forms and letters. Have forms and your policy approved by administrators at school.

Draw up a schedule or calendar for the first few visits. Go over with the nursing home staff. Give copies to anyone who needs to know where you and your students will be such as administrators, attendance secretaries, and school office.

Recruit Seniors and Students

Meet with senior citizens, residents, and recruit them.

Communicate program to other teachers and staff who may be involved in recruiting students.

You or the students should write an article for the school newspaper or newsletters.

Plan a culminating event in advance of the date.