

Preventive Aging Centers, Inc.
Preschool/Senior Companion Program

Preventive Aging Centers, Inc., a private foundation affiliated with Senior Consulting, LLC, and is a nonprofit organization co-founded in 1992 by Timothy B. Cassidy and Grace Powers Monaco. Its mission is to provide free wellness and intergenerational programs to senior citizens in the community. The interaction of older seniors and children is mutually beneficial with the following results:

- Personal growth and clarifies values
- Improve personal and family relationships
- Understand and appreciate diversity
- Become better supporters and leaders
- Learn specific skills
- Have fun
- Augment or replace lost or distant grandparents or grandchildren

The Preschool Senior Companion program links children from local childcare centers, day camps, area schools, YMCA's, Boy/Girl Scout Troops and other local youth centers with senior citizens, predominately in senior centers nursing and assisted living facilities. Many seniors are not ambulatory and are "trapped" by medical complexities. For them, the joy and companionship the children provide are immeasurable. PAC focuses its efforts on collaborative programs within local community Head Start Programs. In this program, the children are willing participants with the parents being encouraged to get involved in assisting at various events. Head Start staff and parents are ideal volunteers for the program, and often otherwise at long term care facilities, limiting the need for additional staff at the facility.

During these visits, the two groups participate in a variety of activities including craft projects, coloring contests, sing-a-longs, sharing and telling stories, and many games. The participants share in several special events throughout the year, such as holiday luncheons. Residents who look forward to visits and correspondence from their "foster grandchildren" show more positive attitudes and memory improvement than non-participating residents.

Our mission is to help senior center and facilities establish their own PAC Preschool/Senior Companion Program at no cost whatsoever. See "Instructions to Start a Program," a list of activities for the program and background on the program from Tim Cassidy, Preventive Aging Center's co-founder and initial founder of www.ChristianYouthServices.org.

Establishing the Preschool Senior Companion Program

- The Activities Director should take the lead in starting a Preschool/Senior Companion Program, consulting with the Administrator (and/or the Director of Nursing if at a nursing home) for approval and instruction from a facility standpoint.
- The Activities Director should select the largest room within the facility for the program, typically the main dining room. The size of the room will dictate the maximum number of participants, but generally 50 residents is the maximum and 20-30 residents the most manageable number. Ideally, there will be a similar number of children.
- The Activities Director should consult with the Director of Nursing and seek other staff members' recommendations for medium to high functioning Alzheimer's/dementia patients that could benefit from the program. Also, patients without those diagnoses may enjoy the program.
- The Head Start program or the childcare center is responsible for transporting the children and supervising them while they are at the facility.
- Limited supplies are required to conduct the program. Please see the Activities Agenda for supplies for games and activities. Also, refreshments like juice, cookies and cupcakes are enjoyed by both the patients and the children.
- The Activities Director should contact all Head Start Programs and childcare centers in the local area to introduce the program. A basic internet search is a great resource for creating a list of possible participants. Possible searches include "Head Start," "Preschool" and "Child Care" along with your town or city. A summary of the program and Activity Agenda can be provided to the directors of the local childcare centers to confirm interest. PAC can supply a list of Head
- Start Program Centers and contacts in your area along with a letter of introduction about the program upon request.
- The program should be conducted every other week during the school year, typically in the mid-morning for 60-90 minutes.
- The overall Activities Program at a Skilled Nursing Facility must comply with the interpretative guidelines of the State Operations Manual or from the Guidance to Surveyors for Long Term Care Facilities issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for Medicare-certified skilled nursing facilities.

Activities Agenda

Crafts

Coloring
Holiday Projects

Painting
Murals

Active Games

Kickball
Relay Races
Freeze Frame
Dancing
Target Games
Exercises

Twister
Duck, Duck, Goose
Fishing Game
Bingo
Piñata
Hula Hoop Contest

Hot Potato
Parachute
Ball Toss
Simon Says

Musical

Holiday Skits
Rhythm Band

Sing-Along
Musical Chairs

Caroling

Word Games

Alphabet Game
Storytelling

Rhyming Game
Videos

Trips

Graduations

Thanksgiving Dinner

Easter Luncheon

Pet Therapy

Children bring their pets for visits