

# EEF Intergenerational Program for Elmbrook Schools

Updated 08/21/24

## 1. What is the Elmbrook Education Foundation's (EEF) Intergenerational Program?

It's a way to provide adults of all ages with more ways to meaningfully connect with our Elmbrook students. We started by piloting literacy and math volunteers with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders respectively at Swanson Elementary starting Fall 2023 and expanded to working on K5 and 1<sup>st</sup> grade literacy in January 2024.

After gathering feedback from volunteers, teachers, students, parents, and administrators during the pilot year, we decided to expand the program to an additional school in 2024-25 (Dixon and Swanson Elementary Schools) and will focus on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy. Here is a [summary of our pilot program results from 2023-24](#).

EEF is excited about working with Elmbrook Schools and other organizations across the community to promote this academically focused program.

This is just the beginning of what we hope will be an enduring effort benefiting every age group in our community!

## 2. Where did this idea come from?

There are several factors that sparked this program:

- In 2022, the EEF developed an updated elevator speech and tagline, which reinforced our focus on "Strong Communities. Strong Schools." We want to continue finding ways to live into this vision: this initiative could be an excellent opportunity to bring community and schools together even more!
- Our Elmbrook community has a large number of active adults, including empty nesters and senior citizens, who have a LOT to offer... skills, wisdom, experiences, time, etc. Based on 2020 census data, there are ~1.6 residents age 65+ for every school age child (ages 5-18). Imagine what would be possible if we connect them in more meaningful ways?!
- Some of our students are behind in certain academic areas (i.e., reading), and having caring adults help them learn and grow would be an outstanding way to accelerate student progress.
- Intergenerational programs have been measured to have a positive impact on all generations involved: <https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2021/03/2021-MakingTheCase-FactSheet-WEB.pdf>.
- Our high school seniors write in their scholarship essays about being positively influenced by their grandparents and other caring adults from an early age (i.e., parents, coaches, teachers, etc.). There is a lot of respect for their elders... it would be nice to let more of the community experience that.

## 3. How did EEF decide to move forward with an intergenerational pilot?

EEF enlisted a small steering committee of Elmbrook educators and former school board members, who worked together from April-July 2023 to benchmark school districts and organizations around the country with coordinated approaches to intergenerational activities and programs. These programs included everything from academic tutoring to classroom volunteers to school gardens. We heard only positive impacts on the community volunteers and students!

Based on what the Steering Committee learned from student data and external benchmarking, it decided to start with a small pilot in which volunteers work with students who are working towards proficiency in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade reading/literacy and 4<sup>th</sup> grade math/automaticity.

Additionally, the new ELA (English Language Arts) curriculum has an exciting element called My View Inquiry Projects, which allows students to explore topics such as Neighborhood Workers, Gardening, Inventions, and Farming. Having enthusiastic and knowledgeable members of our community talk about these and many other subjects with our young learners is another great opportunity to connect.

#### **4. What programs did you benchmark before piloting this EEF program in Elmbrook?**

Our Steering Committee spoke with the following, all of whom have long-running intergenerational programs:

- 2 national organizations: Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring and SAGE
- 2 local programs: Oasis Project, not affiliated with the national program, and Forever Friends
- 5 schools/districts: Creslane Elementary in OR, School District of Greenfield in WI, Hamilton Schools in WI, Parkway Schools in MO, and La Mesa Spring Valley School District in CA

There are also many articles about municipalities, schools, and other organizations who are already doing intergenerational engagement purposefully. Here are a few:

- [In Districts Where Seniors Outnumber Children, Schools Adjust \(edweek.org\)](https://www.edweek.org/technology/article/in-districts-where-seniors-outnumber-children-schools-adjust-2021-03-11)
- [Youth Teaching Tech To Seniors Fosters Generational Connections : NPR](https://www.npr.org/2021/03/11/9781111111111)
- [Generations United \(gu.org\)](https://www.generationsunited.org/)
- [Creslane School District](https://www.creslaneschools.org/)
- [Senior Volunteers Welcome - Hamilton School District](https://www.hamiltonschools.org/)
- And many more!

#### **5. What about all the volunteering that is already going on in Elmbrook Schools?**

EEF is beyond grateful for the work of SO MANY volunteers in our schools already, and that would not be expected to change! If anything, we envision a larger, very coordinated program starting with academic focus, which allows even more positive impact on our students, educators, and community volunteers!

#### **6. What is the classroom teacher's role in this?**

Classroom teachers, specialists, and social workers in the schools know students well and identify the participants for the program. This is consistent with the approach taken by other programs around the country.

#### **7. What is the parents'/guardians' role in this?**

Parents/guardians of students who are identified to work with volunteers will receive information from the school in advance.

## 8. Will volunteers need teaching experience?

No. Having patience and enthusiasm with a genuine interest in helping students grow in their skills and confidence will be far more important! Volunteers will be expected to be role models, mentors, and friends.

Per Elmbrook School District policy, all volunteers in Elmbrook Schools will be required to submit an application form (on-line Google Form, fillable PDF, and paper forms), successfully complete background checks, and may be interviewed to ensure proper placement. Volunteers will also go through brief training and orientation (~2 hours) prior to working with students.

These practices are consistent with those used by other benchmarked intergenerational programs.

## 9. What is the budget for this, and how is it being funded?

Expenses for the program are currently funded by the Elmbrook Education Foundation (EEF). Should Elmbrook Schools decide to expand the program in the future, budget will be one of the criteria considered.

## 10. What are next steps?

Our timeline for 2024-25:

- ✓ August – Mid-September
  - Announce the scope of the 2024-25 Intergenerational Program and encourage community members to submit volunteer applications
  - Reach out to 2023-24 volunteers and applicants to gather information about interest, availability, etc. (for placing volunteers into open slots)
  - Review new applications and host brief interviews (for placing people into available slots)
- ✓ Late September
  - Educators at Dixon and Swanson will identify 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders for the program
  - Provide training and orientation for volunteers & substitutes at both schools
  - Provide a schedule to people selected for the Weekly/twice weekly/substitute volunteer slots at Dixon and Swanson
- ✓ October
  - Start volunteering sessions at Swanson and Dixon Elementary Schools
- ✓ Dec/Jan
  - Mid-year check - Measure impact of program on students, volunteers, and teachers
  - Determine if/how/when to expand the pilot to more students, grades, and schools

## 11. If I apply, when can I expect to find out if and how you would like me to volunteer?

Anyone who applies by Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, be contacted to interview for any open volunteer roles (weekly and substitute positions).

Anyone who applies after Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, will be added to the applicant list and be considered for future interviews if/when the program expands.

If you are interested, we strongly encourage you to apply!

## 12. If I am selected as one of the volunteers, what will my schedule be?

The number of volunteers needed at each school will be determined once we know how many students are selected for the program by their teachers in late September.

We are allowing volunteers from last year to identify the locations, days, and times they would prefer no later than August 30<sup>th</sup>.

When you apply, you will be able to let us know which location(s), day(s) and times each week would work for you.

There is also availability for substitutes, so if a weekly volunteer (1-2x/week) is not available, they can contact substitutes to fill in.

Volunteers will work with students in open spaces (like the library) or in rooms within the schools.

All worksheets, books, flashcards, and other educational materials will be provided to volunteers and will be based on the literacy area each student needs to focus on (most will be focused on reading fluency and some may work on reading comprehension).

<b>EXAMPLE ONLY</b> - Volunteer Schedule @ Dixon Elem.		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Prep time & 3rd grade literacy	12:20-1:00pm	2-3 volunteers	2-3 volunteers	2-3 volunteers	2-3 volunteers
Break (30 min)	1:00-1:30pm				
2nd grade literacy & wrap-up	1:30-2:10pm				

<b>EXAMPLE ONLY</b> - Volunteer Schedule @ Swanson Elem.		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Prep time & 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade literacy	10:00-10:40am	2-3 volunteers	2-3 volunteers	2-3 volunteers	2-3 volunteers
Break (55 min)	10:40-11:35am				
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade literacy & wrap-up	11:35-12:15pm				

## 13. What if you have more volunteers than you have spots for?

With so many active adults in our community, we are thankful that many people are interested in volunteering!

We will review and retain all applications received so that if/when we expand the program to other schools, grades, etc., we can engage more volunteers quickly!

We also anticipate having some volunteers with skills and experience that we have not listed in the pilot but who would be outstanding to work with students in other areas (i.e. woodworking, business, etc.): we foresee finding ways to connect them! Your applications will fuel our creativity!

Every intergenerational program we benchmarked said they could do more if they had more volunteers, so at Elmbrook, we hope to have plenty of volunteers and will try to find purposeful ways to engage them!

#### **14. I am excited about volunteering: where can I apply!**

Visit the EEF website or scan the QR code below. [elmbrookschoools.org/intergen](http://elmbrookschoools.org/intergen)



All volunteers in Elmbrook Schools are required to have an approved criminal background check prior to volunteering.

#### **15. I don't have time to volunteer but would still like to contribute to building an intergenerational program in our community. How can I help?**

There are many ways to support the Elmbrook Education Foundation (EEF) including donations, sponsoring and attending events, volunteering, and funding scholarships.

**To donate to the Intergenerational Program, visit [intergen.givesmart.com](http://intergen.givesmart.com)**

**To learn more about EEF, visit us at ...**

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/EMBK\\_Ed\\_Fndtion](https://twitter.com/EMBK_Ed_Fndtion)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EEFWI/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/beth-dobrzynski-01791088>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/Elmbrook\\_Education\\_Foundation](https://www.instagram.com/Elmbrook_Education_Foundation)

Website: <https://www.elmbrookschoools.org/elmbrook-education-foundation>

#### **16. If I have more questions, who should I contact?**

Please contact Deborah Nustad, EEF Intergenerational Committee Chair at [deborah.nustad@gmail.com](mailto:deborah.nustad@gmail.com)

**We appreciate your support, patience, and excitement as we expand this impactful program for our students and community at large. Thank you!**