

APRIL 2022



Every Day

INTERGENERATIONAL LINKING - SPREADING JOY AND UNDERSTANDING BY CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH OLDER PEOPLE LIVING IN CARE HOMES

My home life.
England



“
“I've enjoyed getting to know the personalities of our care home friends. It's just nice talking to them.”
”



Olivia and Asmae from Leicester are two of many hundreds of children who, over the past 18 months, have been forming friendships with older people living in a nearby care home. They are taking part in Care Home Friends and Neighbours: Intergenerational Linking – a national social action project linking together young people aged 5-14 from schools and youth organisations with older people living in care homes.

Alongside NAPA, My Home Life England has for a long time recognised and championed the value of community engagement in supporting quality of life for older people living in care homes. We previously teamed up to develop our Care Home Friends and Neighbours (Care Home FaNs) programme, that connects care homes to their local communities.

Our intergenerational project - Care Home Friends and Neighbours: Intergenerational Linking - grew out of this programme, and is this time led by a partnership between us at My Home Life England and The Linking Network. It combines our expertise with older people and care homes with The Linking Network's expertise working with young people and schools. The result has been wonderful intergenerational friendships that strengthen community connections.

NAPA EVERY DAY

“
*“I enjoyed it when they
 were singing with us”*
 ”

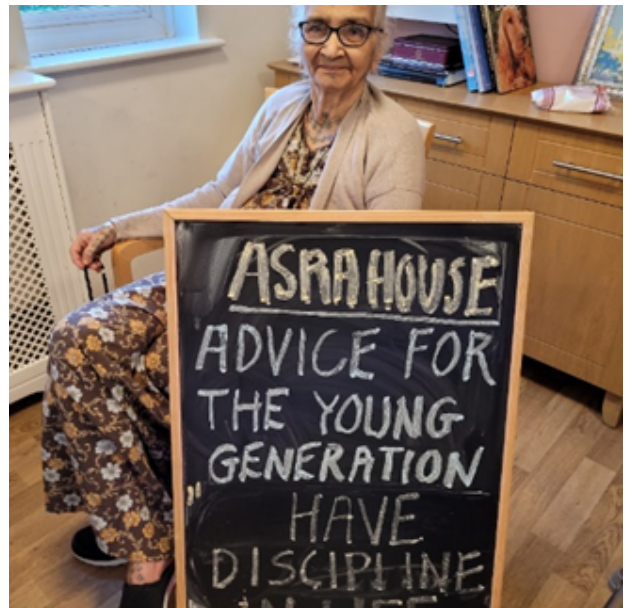
We currently have 11 projects across England from the North East down to the South West. We're supporting a network of brilliant local charities and organisations to lead the project in their local area and it's the first time that a group of organisations have been funded to start intergenerational linking at the same time, making Care Home Friends and Neighbours: Intergenerational Linking England's largest scale intergenerational project!

With the support of a local 'community broker', each school or youth group is linked with a nearby care home for a period of 18 months. Younger and older people have started by getting to know each other: children have created 'About Me' profiles sharing their hobbies and hopes for the future, with older people recounting stories from their childhood and passing on 'words of wisdom'.

It's clear that the younger generation have appreciated the advice:

“
“I felt encouraged because the older people encouraged us to follow our dreams and they've been giving us some hope for the future” said Hafsah, a year 5 pupil from Braford.
 ”

Individual links have the freedom to choose activities matching the interests of their participating younger and older people. We've seen groups 'rewild the classroom and care home' by creating beautiful flower and garden artwork and painting 'pots of love' ready to be filled with seeds. Others have recorded videos of themselves reciting each other's favourite poetry and created a 'Tree of Togetherness' featuring messages from both young and old.



Young people are empowered to develop their leadership skills, with the hope of helping inspire a long-term habit of engaging with social action and making a positive difference in their local communities. Perhaps it will one day influence a young person to start a career in care! Equally, older people's voices are an integral element, empowering them to participate in the lives of younger generations, including through knowledge sharing, as well as the project helping to boost wellbeing and reduce feelings of isolation.

My home life.
 England

Care
 Home
 FaNs
 Friends & Neighbours

NAPA EVERY DAY



This ethos has led to some really thoughtful, person-centred work. A school in Bradford created 'Kindness packs' when they found out their care home friends were isolating again due to a COVID-19 outbreak. Each older person received a pack full of messages and activities, including their own personalised Word Searches. Older people knew that the community were thinking about them and the activities also had cognitive benefits.

In a virtual session between a school and care home in the North East, participants noticed one older lady, Pam, kept mentioning how much she liked bubbles. Inspired by her joy, the class visited the care home garden a few weeks later and tied baubles to the trees with messages inside, giving the effect of floating bubbles. Pam's eyes lit up!

Although the majority of contact has taken place during a time of COVID-19 lockdowns and social distancing, this hasn't stopped meaningful connections from forming. For example in Bristol, a class recorded themselves singing Let it Be by the Beatles, after their care home friends who were isolating shared that it was one of their favourite songs. Care home staff recorded their reactions so children could see the impact. Betty who lives at the home, said – "it was a lovely performance, I saw it in my room. I have a granddaughter your age and it reminded me of her. Your singing made me smile". Pupil Ellie said: "I wanted to take part because I wanted the older generation in our community to know that we care about them." "It made my day knowing it would make someone else's day" added her friend Sam.



My home life[®]
England

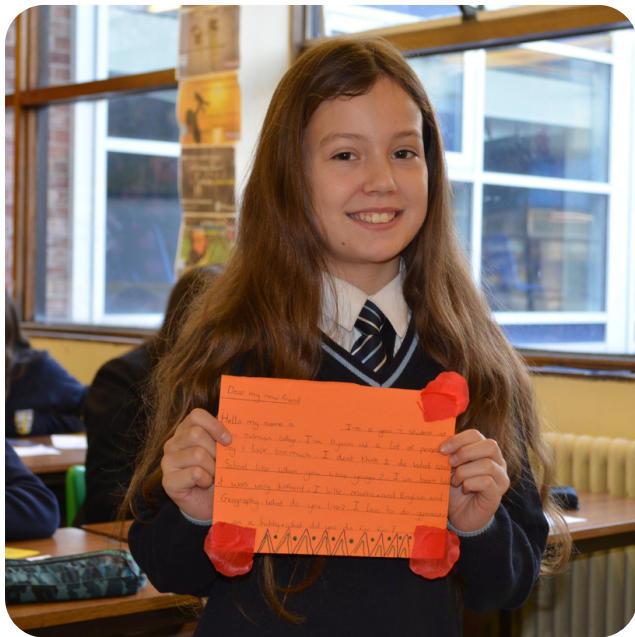


'BECOME A CARE HOME FRIEND' CHALLENGE

The joy, fun and energy in our all local projects has inspired us to take things one step further and give more children across England the chance to connect with a nearby care home.

This led to the creation of our 'Become a Care Home Friend' Challenge, open to all children aged 5-14! Each week of the challenge has a different theme, and children will complete fun activities that get them thinking about different generations, learning about care homes and then making something to share with a care home nearby.

The challenge starts on 25th April 2022 in Global Intergenerational Week and runs for 10 weeks through to Care Home Open Week. Weekly activities are split into Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. It's free and we'd love for schools and young people to sign up!



Please visit:
myhomelife.org.uk/challenge

Care Home Friends and Neighbours: Intergenerational Linking is made possible by funding from The Dunhill Medical Trust and the #iwill Fund from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.



NAPA EVERY DAY