

Wisdom In Our Community

**An Arts Project That Highlights the
Wisdom of Elders In Our Communities**

You can Access A Deep Vein of Wisdom in Your Community through the Arts



The Arts & Wisdom

There is a very deep vein of wisdom in your community at the Senior Center and Residential Retirement facilities in your town. The goal of the “Wisdom In Our Community Program,” is to transform negative ideas about aging in our culture into positive beliefs about the strength, wisdom and contributions of senior citizens to their communities by documenting their personal histories through visual art kits and storytelling.

Wisdom In A Public Venue

Once the art and storytelling projects are finished, the results will be exhibited at a public venue such as an art gallery, library, museum or other venue in their community. This way, the public can acknowledge the stories of the elders who live in their town and appreciate the wisdom and history contained in their stories.

The Benefits of Life Review

Reminiscing can have many positive effects on an aging adult. According to the American Psychology Association, reminiscence with seniors is “the use of life histories – written, oral or both – to improve psychological well-being.” This relies on helping individuals remember past experiences through visual arts & storytelling with sight, sound, taste, touch, or smell as support for memories.

Additional Benefits of Reminiscing

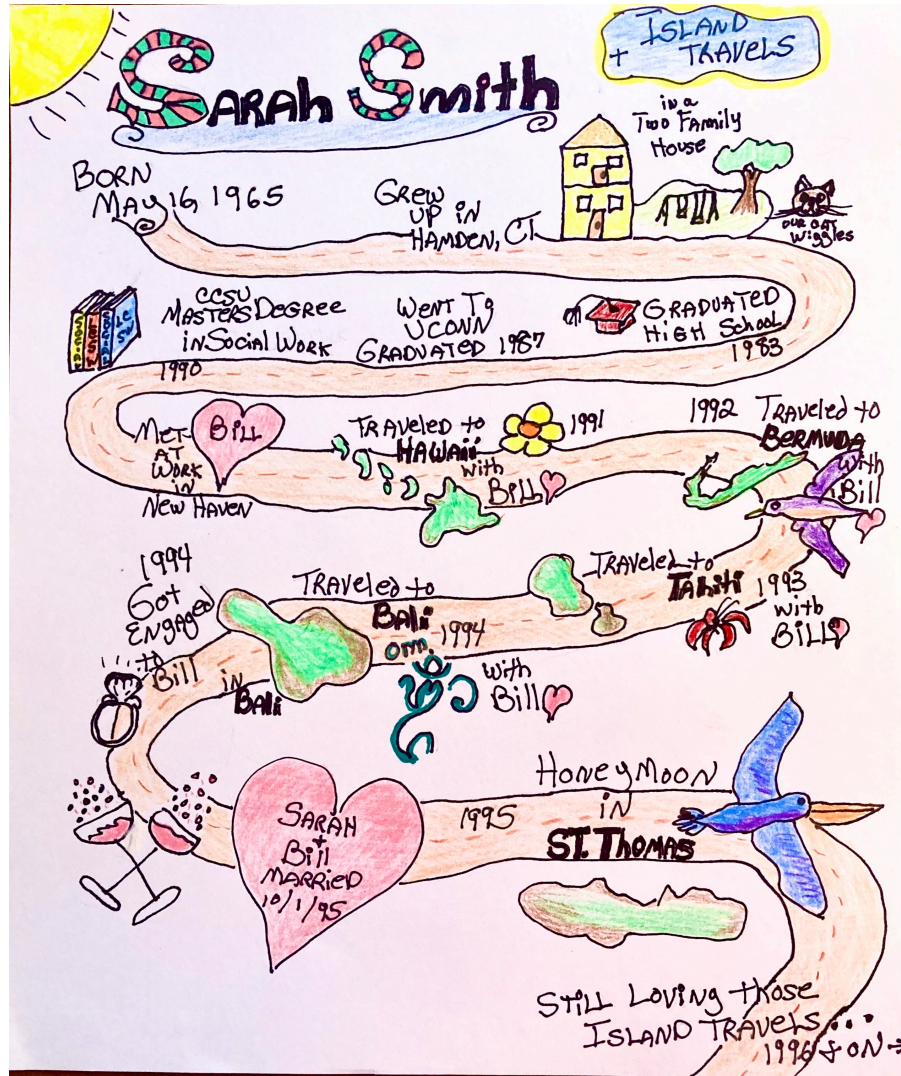
Here are some additional reasons why reminiscing with seniors is a beneficial tool: preserving family history, improves senior's quality of life, reduces symptoms of depression, promotes physical health, works through unresolved conflicts, eliminates boredom, improves communication skills, reduces stress and enhances self-esteem.

Collage Your Family



Create a portrait collage of a loved one, an ancestor or of yourself. You make a background that represents that person, glue a copied photo of your person to the background and collage small items that represent that person.

The Life Path Project



Create a “Life Path Book or Poster Project” which charts significant moments in your life by drawing and labeling the path that your life has taken on a poster or in a book. When finished, you will have a compelling reminder of how far you’ve come and the things you’ve done.

Family Story Poems

Got Milk?

Corn Flakes!
I love those with bananas
In milk.
Strawberries in the summer
With a glass of milk.
That's so great.
I love milk.
I drink it like a kid.
We used to have milk
Delivered to the door.
Remember that?
We used to get five quarts
In the metal box outside
The door, every week.
The kids would drink it
Like water.
I used to drink coffee every morning,
But not anymore.
Now I drink milk instead.
I love it.

Document your personal history stories and turn them into short, narrative poems. Easy phrases to complete into sentences about the past will be provided and sentences will be turned into story poems we can all relate to. Once a story poem is finished, we create a watercolor “splash” background on which you print your story.

Family Story Poems

Staying Cool

*"I like the beach
In the summer.
I don't swim, but I
Like to get wet
To cool off.
I wade in and
Stand there to feel the
Cool water on my feet.
Now I'm feeling
Fresh and breezy.
It's the best."*

Wisdom from Hospice

**"Staying Cool" is
a finished
Family Story
Poem, that
shows a
woman's love for
the beach in the
summer.**

Make Your Own “My Place of Peace” Poem

On the next page are seven phrases. Write one phrase at a time on your paper and finish each phrase as you are writing it, to make a sentence about your peaceful place. If you have not discovered a peaceful place for yourself, use your imagination to create one that suits you. Without over thinking it, finish each sentence quickly.

When you are done with all seven phrases, arrange your sentences to look like a poem. Use two or more lines per sentence. Keep your punctuation in place. Arrange your sentences as creatively as possible, and do not be afraid to deviate from the original wording.

Directions for My Place of Peace

- 1. My favorite place of peace is**
- 2. This place makes me**
- 3. My peaceful place looks like**
- 4. In this calm place I hear**
- 5. A moment of relaxation feels**
- 6. Here I close my eyes and imagine**
- 7. And inside me it touches my**

Background Art for Your Poems

Use watercolor paper and watercolor paints for this part of the project. This is a playful and easy way to have your watercolors drip or spatter, which creates a colorful splash background of your paper.

1. Set up your watercolor paints, cup of water, brush and paper.
2. Lightly drip water on to the paper with your fingers or lightly splash some water on the paper with your paint brush.
3. Dip your watercolor paint brush from your kit into a small cup of water, then into one block of color of the watercolor paints. Gently mix the color with the water and your brush will absorb the color. Then add the color on the brush to the water on your paper. Tip the paper so the water runs and spreads the color around the paper.

Splash Paintings with Poems

Minnie the Mouser

Minnie the Mouser
Is a clean and furry
Calico girl.
I let her speak
For herself.
She purrs,
Not much meowing.
She's most always happy.
Her eyes are green
Her fur is mostly dark
With some orange.
She is soft and quiet.
She makes me feel good.
I miss Minnie The Mouser.

by Andi S.

Gotta have a little Wisdom
To get along in life.
Not much, but
A little is good.
So, here it is....
Take a big handkerchief
With you,
To keep your nose out of
Other people's business.

Wisdom from Hoopiee
By
Susan E. Rosano

The Easter Parade

One year, I took Meme to the Easter Parade
In New York City.
She made an Easter hat
To be worn walking down Fifth Avenue
In the Easter Parade.
The hat had a chicken on it
With baby chicks and
Little plastic Easter eggs,
In a nest with green Easter grass.
When I saw it, I told her
"I'm not walking you down
Fifth Avenue with that stupid hat on.
But I went anyway.
She made it herself, did a beautiful job
And was very proud of that hat.
Well, wouldn't ya know,
She won first prize in the hat competition.
Meme was so excited,
She was jumping up and down.
As the winner, she was interviewed by
Connie Stevens and
Had her picture on the front page
Of the New York Times.
I'll never forget it!

By Gene F.