Through Their Eyes:
Exploring older adults’ experiences with an intergenerational project

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Dedication

To the loves of my life – my grandmothers: Mia, Grandma, and Pam.
And to my grandfathers – I wish were here: Grumpa and Grandpa.
Abstract

Canada’s aging population and intergenerational programs’ ability to encourage active aging point to the need for further support and encouragement for these programs. The purpose of this case study was to explore and understand, from an insider’s perspective, the lived experiences of six older adults who participated in an intergenerational project – *Through Their Eyes*. Three questions guided this inquiry: *What are the experiences of older adults participating in the Through Their Eyes project? How did this experience influence their well-being? How did this experience influence their relationship to their community?*

I conducted critical qualitative research using semi-structured individual interviews, a focus group, a knowledge translation workshop, observations and field notes. The qualitative data were analyzed using constant comparative and inductive analysis techniques.

Analysis highlighted ‘opportunity’ as the central theme of the study. During a time in older adults’ lives when they are experiencing many losses, the *Through Their Eyes* project was an opportunity for gain. Specifically, the intergenerational project provided an opportunity for new relationships. There was a familial-type intimacy to the relationships older adults develop with students as participants’ often compared their student interviewers to their grandchildren. The *Through Their Eyes* project also offered a space and place for older adults to be heard regarding their community. Older adults wanted the information they provided for the project to help other aging adults in their community. Finally the intergenerational project added a joyful memory and experience for participants. When participants shared their thoughts on the *Through Their Eyes* project, it was clear that it was a joyful experience as all of them describe it as such.

Findings illustrated that the *Through Their Eyes* project encouraged active aging and enhanced quality of life for participants by providing an opportunity for social participation and allowing them to remain active and engaged citizens. The *Through Their Eyes* project fostered social participation by establishing connections between generations, addressing social isolation and loneliness, and breaking down stereotypes and age barriers. The *Through Their Eyes* project allowed older adults to remain active...
and engaged citizens in their neighbourhoods by providing an important opportunity for reciprocity and a place for them to be listened to in regards to their community matters. Insights into practical implications based on the findings from this study and suggestions for future research in the area of intergenerational programs are identified*. 

* Key words: active aging, community-dwelling, intergenerational programs, opportunity, qualitative
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Chapter 1 Introduction

The global population of individuals aged 60 and over will double by 2050 (World Health Organization, 2007). For the first time in history older adults will outnumber children under 15 (McDonald, 2012; WHO, 2007). In Canada, the number of seniors is expected to double from 5 million to 10 million over the next 20 years (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016). Canada’s older adult population make up the fastest growing age group, and is predicted to grow to 23%-25% of the total population by 2040 (Statistics Canada, 2016). In Ontario, seniors aged 90 and over are expected to triple by 2036 (McDonald, 2012). Locally, the St. Catharines-Niagara region has the second highest proportion of residents aged 65 and over in Ontario, with older adults representing 19% of the local population (Ministry of Finance, 2012). The aging population is a result of multiple factors including longer life expectancies, lower fertility rates and the aging baby-boomer generation (McDonald, 2012). Baby-boomers, individuals born between the years 1946-1960, are now entering their 70’s and 80’s in the upcoming decade.

These changing demographics have resulted in increased attention to seniors. The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) stresses the importance of understanding improvements in health services and policies for seniors (Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, 2010). Specifically, the 2009 Special Senate Committee on Aging lists several strategies to assist with Canada’s aging population including integrating care, improving access to services, supporting active aging in age-friendly cities, supporting caregivers, supporting the voluntary sector, combating ageism, and incorporating research and new technology (Senate, 2009).

1.1 Importance of the Study

A key challenge facing many older adults today is social isolation (WHO, 2007). Social isolation can be defined as “disengagement from social ties, institutional connections, or community participation” (Seeman, 1996, p. 442). Social isolation also includes a lack of social networks or support systems (Nicholson & Shellman, 2013). Social isolation is known to increase the risk of mortality (Alpert, 2017; Bower 1997) and negatively affect both mental and physical health (WHO, 2007). Research indicates the
presence of strong social networks reduces morbidity and mortality (Kawachi et al., 1996; Seeman, 1996).

As more adults enter old age, Canada is looking for effective strategies to support our aging population, including preventing isolation and the negative effects that accompany it. New research on intergenerational programs is showing great promise in addressing social isolation and supporting good health and quality of life for older adults (Isaki & Harmon, 2015). Much less is known about how these programs influence older adults relationship community, from their perspectives.

This study sought to make a contribution to this literature by exploring the lived experiences of older adults who participated in an intergenerational service-learning project to understand if, and how, the project influenced their well-being and their relationship to their community.

1.2 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand, from an insider’s perspective, the lived experiences of older adults participating in an intergenerational project – Through Their Eyes. The following question and sub questions guided the study:

What are the experiences of older adults participating in the Through Their Eyes project?

a. How did this experience influence their well-being?

b. How did this experience influence their relationship to their community?

1.2.1 Through Their Eyes Project. The Through Their Eyes project is an intergenerational project that connects Brock University students with community-dwelling seniors. In a third year research-based, service learning course, HLSC 3P96: Developing Healthy Communities, two or three students are paired with an older adult to conduct research. The purpose of the project is for students and older adults to work collaboratively to explore the age-friendliness of the older adults’ neighbourhood. This information is collected through individual interviews, a go-along interview, field notes and photographs. Students conduct an analysis of their findings using the World Health Organizations’ (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities model. Findings illustrate the strengths and challenges within the older adults’ neighbourhoods and highlight opportunities for
changing their communities to make them healthier places to grow old. The project ends with a final community forum where findings are presented in video format. The film is presented to all participants of the project as well as local stakeholders including representatives from the mayor’s office and members of parliament.

Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) identifies project sites. This organization owns affordable housing units and rents them to low-income seniors across municipalities in the Niagara Region. Recruitment fliers are posted around the selected project site building asking residents if they are interested in participating in a project with Brock University students. Residents are invited to attend an information session to learn more about the intergenerational project. At the information session, the professor (Dr. Paula Gardner) prepares a short presentation informing residents on specific project details – that we are examining the age-friendliness of their neighbourhoods, that they are the experts and we need their help. Afterwards, the project coordinator and NRH staff talk one-on-one to attendees of the information session and ask them if they are interested in signing up. We obtain their contact information and follow up with them to see if they are still interested in participating. We then pair the interested individuals with a student team.

The Through Their Eyes project has explored five neighbourhoods in the Niagara Region, over the past four years (2014-2017). More information on the project can be found at https://throughtheireyesproject.com.

1.3 Creative Presence and Researchers Positionality in Qualitative Research

Creative presence calls for the researcher to be engaged as an individual in the research (Eakin, 2015). Acknowledging my creative presence allows me to have an awareness of my positionality – assumptions, prejudices, interests, thoughts – and how they will affect what I do, the questions I ask and the way I make sense of data. This self-reflection is meant to bracket, not exclude, these awareness’s from the research (Relles, 2016, p. 312). This process initiated several questions to consider: how might my previous involvement influence me as a researcher, including the way I conduct the study and interpret the results? Why might that matter? Does it cloud me to certain things? How have I prejudged this? (Eakin, 2015). Before proposing the research study, I reflected on these questions and recorded my thoughts in my field notes notebook. These
reflections revealed my thoughts and assumptions on the project: that my involvement may cloud me from negative experiences; that I may assume the project is beneficial; that my previous encounters with these older adults may make it difficult for them to refuse participating in the study. Recognizing these assumptions and thoughts can enhance the quality of research (Eakin, 2015). Acknowledging these thoughts and assumptions at the onset ensured I would continue considering them throughout the entire research process.

I conducted this research because I have an invested interest in, and experience with, intergenerational programs. I have developed knowledge specific to the Through Their Eyes project after being involved for four years in three separate roles: student, project coordinator and teaching assistant. Having experienced the project in three distinct ways, I have a unique perspective and lens to bring to the research study. Additionally, playing a significant role in this intergenerational project has allowed me to see first-hand the impact it has on the lives of older adults, initiating a desire to continue exploring the project and its’ influence. The following table is a summary of my experience with the project.

Table 1

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I was first introduced to the Through Their Eyes project, in 2014, as a student in the third-year service-learning course. In this class, I developed an awareness of Canada’s aging population and was introduced to topics such as active aging and age-friendly cities. We applied this knowledge in our interviews with the older adults to understand what made their neighbourhoods age-friendly or not-so age-friendly. At the project culmination, I had the opportunity to interview some older adults at a final community
forum. We made a video of these short interviews, which can be seen at: http://throughtheireyesproject.com. It was through these brief interviews with seniors that I learned firsthand the positive feelings they felt about the experience: “It was very nice…. The respect we got, the questions they asked, nothing was a problem. It was really an eye opener… they should do it more and for longer.” Similarly another person commented,

“I think it was wonderful, I think it should’ve been done a long time ago [I agree]. Great, I loved it, I enjoyed their company and I had a great time with them and I’m gonna [sic] miss them”.

Another participant mentioned, “Overall the whole thing was very stimulating. I haven’t had intellectual stimulation for quite a while so that was very refreshing.” These quotes were profound and provided the foundation to my inquiry on the experiences of older adults with the Through Their Eyes project.

The following year in 2015, I was the project coordinator for the Through Their Eyes project. In this role, I had the opportunity to further interact with older adults through recruitment, check-ins and updates from students in the field. At the end of the project, again, I witnessed the positive impact it had on the lives of older adults. While videotaping a student reflection presentation at the final community forum, I captured moments on camera between students and their older adult participants. Listening to their conversations it felt as if they had known each other for years – yet, they had merely interacted two times over the duration of the project. After the community forum, a student and I interviewed three older adult participants and compiled the footage into another video, which is also on the project website: http://throughtheireyesproject.com. In this interview one of the older adults said,

“I really enjoyed having the young people come and talk because I really feel that most young people today aren’t really interested in what we have to say because all we really talk about is the past [laughs]”.

Another individual commented, “I feel like I sort of met friends, you all are very friendly.” My experience as the project coordinator left me wondering: how can a short-term project have such an impact on the lives of older adults?
Experiencing these two roles – student and project coordinator – propelled me to apply for graduate school to further explore the experiences of older adults who participated in the project. In graduate school I was given the platform to explore a phenomenon I was deeply interested and invested in.

In 2016, in my first year of graduate school, I was the teaching assistant in the winter team of the Through Their Eyes project and then both the project coordinator and teaching assistant in the fall 2016 term of the project. During these two terms, I was immersed in the intergenerational project while writing my thesis proposal for the current research study. My responsibilities grew as I had a more hands-on role in the recruitment of older adult participants. I delivered two presentations at information sessions, which allowed me to make connections with several older adults. At the community forum during both these projects (winter term 2016 and fall term 2016), I reconnected with those individuals I had met during recruitment. Although those interactions were brief, I still felt like I developed a genuine connection with some of the older adults, as we were interested in catching up with each other’s lives.

My involvement in the Through Their Eyes project over the years provided new insights. We learned that older adults did not feel like they lived in a socially cohesive community. Specifically, we learned there was a lack of trust among residents towards younger adults and feelings of isolation and alienation in older adults’ communities. My assumptions entering the study were: that the project is beneficial to older adults’ well-being; that since participating in the intergenerational project, older adults relationship to their community is positively influenced; that older adults like these programs; that they want more of these programs available.

Although some may view my previous experience as a bias, I feel the unique connection I have with the Through Their Eyes project is a benefit. Joan Eakin (2016) expresses that critical qualitative researchers should strive for “value-added interpretive analysis”, an approach that maximizes the creative presence of the researcher. By recognizing my creative presence, I am being implicit about how that can shape my data collection and interpretive analysis. In summary, this research study has given me the opportunity to delve deeper, hear more, ask again, notice new, and understand more fully, the lived experiences from an older adults perspective.
1.4 Organization of the Thesis

In *Chapter 2 Literature Review* I present my review of the literature.

In *Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework and Paradigm* I outline the conceptual frameworks that influenced and guided the study. I also state how the study aligns with my paradigms and philosophical stance.

In *Chapter 4 Methodology* I present a detailed description of the case study methodology that was utilized in the study. I then discuss the data collection and analysis procedures that were employed. I conclude the chapter by stating ethical considerations and the limitations to methodology.

In *Chapter 5 Findings* I present the findings from extensive critical qualitative inductive and content analysis. I highlight the central theme of opportunity with three subthemes.

In *Chapter 6 Discussion* I explore how the overall theme of opportunity promoted active aging among older adults. Specifically, the *Through Their Eyes* project promoted social participation among older adults and allowed them to remain active and engaged citizens.

In the final chapter, *Chapter 7 Conclusion*, I provide a summary of the main findings of this study. I then discuss contributions to knowledge and contribution of the *Through Their Eyes* project with insights into practical implications for future intergenerational programs. I end by stating the overall limitations to the study and identify suggestions for future research in the area of intergenerational programs based on the findings from this study.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

Several bodies of literature informed and are relevant to this study: active aging; age-friendly cities and aging in place; the current health status of older adults in Canada; social isolation and social connectedness; and intergenerational projects.

2.1 Active Aging

In response to the growing demands of the aging population, in 2002 the World Health Organization (WHO) developed a Policy Framework on Active Aging.

The WHO describes active aging as “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (WHO, 2002). This means implementing active aging polices and programs specifically tailored to the needs and preferences of older adults to support them as they age. These programs and policies include health services, but they are also focused on supporting older adults’ in other aspects of their life including socially, culturally, spiritually and economically (WHO, 2002). Addressing these multidimensional factors will result in fewer disabilities and premature deaths, lower health and medical costs and improve quality of life for older adults while maintaining autonomy and independence (WHO, 2002).

The active aging framework is a holistic approach to aging that addresses the critiques of traditional successful aging models, where successful aging was defined as having a “low probability of disease and disease-related disability, high cognitive and physical functional capacity, and active engagement with life” (Rowe & Kahn, 1997, p.
The foundation for Rowe & Kahn’s successful aging definition originated in their 1987 article that differentiated between ‘usual’ and ‘successful aging’. This broadened the previous perspectives towards aging, which focused heavily on disease and disability (Rowe & Kahn, 1987; 1997). By conceptualizing the successful aging model, Rowe & Kahn (1997) provided a more robust view towards aging because it was “multidimensional, encompassing three distinct domains” (p. 433).

![Figure 2: A Model of Successful Aging (Rowe & Kahn, 1997).](image)

However, the successful aging model has received several critiques. “Rowe and Kahn’s model is the most widely used approach, but it fails to address the implications of the fact that a disease-free older age is unrealistic for most people” (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005). Depp and Jest (2006) review of 29 studies note that the most common successful aging components were physical function, cognitive function, well-being and social engagement. It has also been noted that successful aging has a strong emphasis on maintaining high physical function (Lin, Hsieh, Cheng, Tseng & Su, 2016). This excludes a large proportion of the aging population who often have limitations to physical function; one does not need optimal physical function or be free from disease or disability in order to be aging well. Additionally, the ‘successful’ terminology creates a binary where there can be older adults who are aging ‘successfully’ and ‘unsuccessfully’. Finally, successful aging also does not take life inequalities into account (Stephens, 2016). This lays the blame on the individual when aging is much more complicated.

In the active aging framework, programs that promote social connections are just as important as those that improve physical health status (WHO, 2002). Thus, the active
aging framework is more comprehensive and accounts for the multiple factors that influence the ability to actively age.

2.2 Age-friendly Cities and Aging in Place

To support the Active Aging Policy Framework, the WHO created a guide to engage countries in building age-friendly cities (WHO, 2007). An age-friendly city is one that encourages active aging by being accessible and inclusive to all adults regardless of their age, needs and capacities (WHO, 2007). The Age-Friendly Cities model was developed with the contribution of older adults from 33 cities around the world. Participants were asked what qualities made their particular neighbourhood age-friendly, as well as what features were missing from their community that would improve their health. The results revealed that there were eight domains that constitute an age-friendly city: housing; outdoor spaces; community support and health services; communication and information; civic participation and employment; respect and social inclusion; and social participation (WHO, 2007).

Figure 3: The WHO’s Eight Domains that Constitute an Age-Friendly City (WHO, 2007).

The age-friendly model was founded on the notion that older adults want to age in place, meaning grow old and staying in their neighbourhoods as long as they can (WHO, 2002). Aging in place can mean remaining in the same home they have occupied for a number of years. However, it can also mean relocating to a new residence while remaining in the same community (WHO, 2002). The desire to age in place is common among older Canadians. Over 90% of individuals aged 65 and older currently live in
private dwellings (Statistics Canada, 2016). Regardless of health conditions, the majority of Canadians over the age of 55 want to remain in their present home for as long as possible (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2008). Furthermore, older adults who decide to move stay within 50 km of their previous residence (Lin, 2005).

Active aging and aging in place ideologies are supported by the Canadian government. Recommendations from the 2009 Special Committee on Aging report suggest to “move immediately to take steps to promote active aging and healthy aging and to combat ageism” as well as “facilitate the desire of Canadians to age in their place of choice with adequate housing, transportation, and integrated health and social care” (Senate, 2009). These recommendations are being implemented and are providing both the federal and provincial governments as well as organizations specific frameworks to follow. Nationally, it requires the federal government to actively promote the Age-Friendly Cities Guide (Senate, 2009). At the local level, this includes specific campaigns to target the importance of remaining active though all ages of life.

Adopting the age-friendly framework provided structure to make concrete changes in multiple domains. Over the last decade, numerous age friendly initiatives have been implemented across approximately 800 Canadian communities (Levasseur, 2017). However, little is known about the effectiveness and outcomes of these age-friendly community initiatives in Canada (Orpana et al., 2016, p. 214). However, these have been reported in The United States (U.S.). Overall, communities are feeling positive of age-friendly initiatives. The benefits have been reported in both Oregon and New York City (NYC). Age-friendly NYC was named best existing age-friendly initiative for creating greater inclusion for older adults (Age-friendly NYC, 2013). Oregon’s age-friendly initiatives present a case study of how a city can become engaged in planning and research efforts to develop age-friendly policies (Neal, DeLaTorre & Carder, 2014).

2.3 Current Health Status; Social Isolation and Social Connectedness

Many Canadians over the age of 65 live with one or more chronic diseases, have a mobility issue, or experience a mental health problem (Government of Canada, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2016). In 2002, it was reported that four out of five community dwelling older adults suffered from a chronic health condition (Government of Canada, 2002), with the most prevalent chronic conditions being: high blood pressure, arthritis,
back problems, eye problems, heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and urinary incontinence (Statistics Canada, 2016). Additionally, one in four older Canadians has a long-term disability (Government of Canada, 2002). In 2016, 74% of adults aged 65 and older reported a somewhat or very strong sense of community belonging. This sense of belonging can influence a person’s long term physical and mental health (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016).

An increasing number of older adults are suffering from social isolation (Alpert, 2017; WHO, 2007), which can be defined as “disengagement from social ties, institutional connections, or community participation” (Seeman, 1996, p. 442). Social isolation negatively affects both the physical and mental health of older adults (WHO, 2007). Canada’s National Seniors Council (2014) states, “the link between mental health and social isolation cannot be ignored” (p. 10). Older adults living in isolation are more likely to suffer from stressors that increase unhealthy behaviours such as smoking and drinking (Alpert, 2017). Social isolation also increases the risk of mortality (Alpert, 2017; Bower 1997) and can be a significant risk factor for re-hospitalization (Mistry, Rosansky, McGuire, McDermott & Jarvik, 2001).

“The social isolation of seniors can cause communities to suffer a lack of social cohesion, higher social costs, and the loss of an unquantifiable wealth of experience that older adults bring to our families, neighbourhoods and communities” (Canada’s National Seniors Council, 2014, p. 7). Some factors that can contribute to older adults becoming socially isolated include living alone, being 80 years of age or older, having no children or no contact with family, lacking access to transportation and living with low income (Canada’s National Seniors Council, 2014). Other factors include hearing difficulty, pain, emotion, cognition and fear of falling (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Several studies in recent years have shown that social support and social networks benefit the health of adults (Giles, Glonek, Luszcz & Andrews, 2005). Research indicates the presence of strong social networks reduces morbidity (Kawachi et al., 1996; Seeman, 1996) and is protective against mortality (Giles, Glonek, Luszcz & Andrews, 2005). Strong social support also increases individual’s physical and mental health (WHO, 2007). Additionally, social networks can influence good health behaviours such as remaining active and successful smoking cessation (Canada’s National Seniors Council,
In order to combat social isolation Canada needs to focus its attention on increasing opportunities for social connectedness.

2.4 Intergenerational Programs

There are a growing number of programs and strategies aimed at addressing concerns related to population aging. For example, physical activity programs are aimed at encouraging older adults to enjoy an active lifestyle and provide numerous physical and cognitive benefits (Candela, Zucchetti, Magistro & Rabaglietti, 2015). Additionally, nutritional programs like The Older Americas Act Nutrition Program use a community-based nutrition program to help older adults remain in their home (Lloyd & Wellman, 2015). These structured programs have numerous benefits to the health of older adults.

The WHO argues that intergenerational programs provide the opportunity to promote active aging among older adults (WHO, 2002). Intergenerational programs typically involve interaction or collaboration between older and younger age groups in which there is a sharing of skills, knowledge, and/or experiences (Chamberlain, Fetterman, & Maher, 1994, p. 197). Recent research has shown that intergenerational projects can positively impact the lives of older adults by combating social isolation and promoting connections and relationships between younger and older populations (Isaki & Harmon, 2015). The other benefits known to older adults participating in intergenerational projects include: increased self-esteem and perceived quality of life; decreased depression symptoms; and remaining active and engaged within their community (Fair & Delaplane, 2015; Isaki & Harmon, 2015; Knight et al., 2014). In addition, intergenerational programs are seen to challenge ageist attitudes and create a sense of generativity (Hatton-Yeo, 2015; Hewson, Danbrook & Sieppert, 2015; Knight, Skouteris, Townsend, & Hooley, 2014).

There are many examples of intergenerational programs both nationally and internationally. In the U.S., for example, the Bridges Growing Together is an intergenerational project in Sudbury Massachusetts that has spanned over 20 years. The project has been integrated into the public school curriculum and involves children in grades 3 through 6 and older adults aged 55 or older (Weaver, 2014). Individuals interact in small groups in a teacher-led session based on different topics each week. From written evaluations, the program was found to have benefited all participants. Children
developed positive attitudes about aging and stronger family and community connections. Older adults were able to share their wisdom and establish connections with peers and children (Weaver, 2014, p. 199). Another example from the U.S. is an intergenerational service-learning project. Older adults and undergraduate students engaged in 3 joint activities throughout the semester to determine ways a semester long intergenerational program would benefit both students and older adults (Borrero, 2015). Older adults reported that they enjoyed working with students and expressed a want to spend more time together. Undergraduate students reported that they were inspired and impressed by the levels of knowledge of their older adult counterpart (Borrero, 2015, p. 190).

In Canada, post-secondary students and older adults in Calgary connect in a digital storytelling course. Participants created individual stories based on the theme of “stories of home”. Findings showed that both students and older adults enjoyed the experience and thought that it enhanced their knowledge of their opposing generations (Hewson, Danbrook & Sieppert, 2015). In British Columbia, the Meadows School Project connected older adults and high school students in a unique intergenerational project. Thirty students from grades 9-12 attended their full day of school in an assisted living residence for five weeks in the fall semester, and three weeks in the spring semester, with two or three visits in the months in between. Findings showed the project positively influence senior’s emotional health and improved loneliness (Carson, Kobayashi & Kuehne, 2011).

2.5 Literature Review Results

Overall, active aging has been successful and adopted. Active aging and age-friendly initiatives are good ways to capture factors to healthy aging. One thing that is missing, we know social cohesion helps decrease isolation, however it is less common in the literature.

Despite the growing body of literature on the benefits of intergenerational projects, there are few studies that examine the experience from the older adult perspective; the majority of studies focus on the younger participants’ experience and their benefits from participating in an intergenerational program, and the majority of studies are from the United States. Additionally, most intergenerational programs in the literature involve young children or youth and much less is known about
intergenerational programs involving university students and older adults. Furthermore, the benefits of intergenerational programs in long-term care facilities have been widely reported. Much less research is on community based intergenerational programs aimed at improving well-being and social cohesion in older adults who are aging in place.

The results of the literature review highlight several gaps in knowledge: a) there is a lack of research that focuses on the older adult participants from their own perspectives in Canada; b) much less is known about how these projects influence older adults relationship to their community (i.e. social cohesion); c) much less is known about intergenerational programs involving university students.
Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework and Paradigm

The purpose of conducting this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of older adults participating in an intergenerational project, *Through Their Eyes*. Specifically, the study sought to understand how this project influenced older adults well-being and their relationship to their community. I employed two conceptual frameworks to guide the study: Martin Seligman’s Well-Being Theory and the concept of social cohesion. The philosophies of both critical social theory and constructivism shaped the design of the study.

3.1 Well-being

Martin Seligman’s Well-Being Theory was used to guide the exploration of well-being. The Well-Being Theory has five components that make up the PERMA model; positive emotions (P); engagement (E); positive relationships (R); meaning (M); and accomplishment (A). Seligman suggests these five components are a guide to help individuals find paths to flourishing and will allow individuals to have “lasting well being” (Authentic Happiness, 2016). Seligman defines positive emotions as a positive view on life using the concept of enjoyment, rather than pleasure, because this includes stimulation and creativity. Engagement is defined as opportunities that allow individuals to learn, grow and nurture happiness. Positive relationships are defined as social connections including strong emotional and physical interactions. Seligman defines meaning as having a purpose and reason for life. In addition, this includes understanding the greater impact of one’s work and why they chose to pursue it. Finally, accomplishments are defined as goals and ambitions. Seligman states, “when [goals and ambition are] achieved there’s a sense of pride, fulfillment, accomplishment and success” (Authentic Happiness, 2016).

*Figure 4: Theory of Well-Being: The PERMA Model (Authentic Happiness, 2016).*
The Well-Being Theory was chosen for this study for two reasons. First, it was chosen for its’ simplicity (i.e. it’s clearly defined and explains concepts). Second, its’ components are well aligned to elements of the WHO’s active aging framework and the goals of intergenerational programs (i.e. positive relationships, enhancing quality of life).

Since being introduced in 2011, the Well-Being Theory has been used primarily in research in positive psychology. Using this theory in the Health Sciences, and specifically in community health, contributes to the PERMA Theory literature.

### 3.2 Relationship to Community

The relationship to community was explored using the concept of social cohesion. There are various definitions of social cohesion from disciplines including sociology, social psychology and public health. Kawachi and Berkman (2000) define social cohesion as the “extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in a society” (as stated in Carrasco & Bilal, 2016, p. 128). Wilkinson (1996) defines it as a “group characteristic that influences health at the individual and group levels and that is evidenced by the level of trust, reciprocity and solidarity in society”. Social cohesion is also characterized “by closely knit social relationships among residence with strong mutual trust and reciprocity” (Inoue, Yorifuji, Takao, Doi & Kawachi, 2013). Additionally, Kerrigan et al., (2015) state “social cohesion is understood as a core element of community empowerment that brings community members together to analyze, articulate and demand their human rights and entitlements” (as stated in Carrasco & Bilal, 2016, p. 128). Finally, the WHO (2003) defines social cohesion as “the quality of social relationships and the existence of trust, mutual obligations and respect in communities (p.22).

To my knowledge, not one definition of social cohesion is accepted as the primary definition in the health science literature. For the purpose of this study, I employed Kawachi and Berkman’s (2000) definition of social cohesion as a starting point because it is widely used: “extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in a society”. Additionally, appreciating the strengths of other definitions, I am focusing on four key components: “connectedness”, “solidarity”, “community empowerment” and “reciprocity”. 
Figure 5: Conceptual Framework for Social Cohesion

3.3 Paradigm and Approach

Ontology asks questions such as “what is the nature of reality?” and “what do we believe about the nature of reality?” (Gittler, 1951). Epistemology is the study of knowledge (Goldstein, 1996) and seeks questions including “what is the nature of knowledge?” and “how do we know what we know?” (Gastaldo, 2011). Believing in relativism and the notion that there are no universal truths, my study will account for the multiple meanings older adults construct from participating in the Through Their Eyes project.

My paradigm is a combination of critical social theory and constructivism. Savin-Baden & Major (2013) define a critical social theorist as someone who is interested in learning the insider’s perspective, and more specifically, the perspectives of marginalized groups, on a particular phenomenon. This theory also states that power struggles define reality (Gastaldo, 2011; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Critical social theorists believe that research is transformative in nature and seeks to change the lives of those who are marginalized (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.23). Constructivism, also known as interpretivism, is the idea that knowledge lies within the minds of individuals, constructed from what they know from personal experiences (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.29). Constructivists in other words understand that reality is “dynamic and socially constructed” (Gastaldo, 2011).

I designed my research study to align with the philosophies behind critical social theory and constructivist by focusing on the older adult perspective in the Through Their Eyes project. In a culture predominantly focused on youth, older adults’ needs can be forgotten or dismissed, often leaving them marginalized. Niagara Region Public Health has recognized older adults in St. Catharines as a priority population, identifying them as
some of the most vulnerable and least likely to be heard in community matters. Designing the study to align with my two paradigms allows older adults’ voices and perspectives to be the target of my investigation while opening up the opportunity to explore multiple perspectives and meanings.

3.4 Critical Qualitative Research

Qualitative research takes place in natural settings. Using subjective measures, qualitative research is able to understand concepts, phenomenon and experiences from an insider’s perspective (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Qualitative research can be defined as “social research that is aimed at investigating the way in which people make sense of their ideas and experiences” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 11).

Critical qualitative research questions the role of social structures by challenging assumptions and understandings (Centre for Critical Qualitative Research, 2016). Critical qualitative research understands “knowledge and practice as socially situated and mediated by power relations” (Eakin, 2016, p.108). A critical qualitative research design was appropriate for my research study as the aim was to understand the experiences of older adults who participated in a specific intergenerational project, *Through Their Eyes*. Andrews, Gillett & Voros (2016, p. 5) state there are a number of core competencies that distinguish a critical approach. The following table describes how these were considered and applied in this study:

**Table 2**

*Andrews, Gillett & Voros (2016) Critical Core Competencies in Relation to Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Competency</th>
<th>Relation to Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocating alongside and on behalf of people and issues that are neglected or marginalized in mainstream policy, administration and research</td>
<td>My study sought to give older adults a voice by hearing first hand their experiences with participating in an intergenerational project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing pressing social and health issues</td>
<td>A social and health issue affecting many older adults is social isolation (WHO, 2007). New research on intergenerational programs is showing great promise in addressing social isolation and supporting good health and quality of life for older adults (Isaki &amp; Harmon, 2015).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing on philosophy and social</td>
<td>I drew on my philosophical paradigms – a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theory to inform research</td>
<td>combination of the critical social theory and constructivism – to inform and conduct the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving communities as partners in research</td>
<td>Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) was, and still is, a key informant in locating older adult communities to participate in the <em>Through Their Eyes</em> intergenerational project and aid in the dissemination of the project findings. They acted as a gatekeeper for this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking and acting “outside the box”</td>
<td>Incorporating the arts-based knowledge translation workshop acted as a unique addition to the research study. The older adult participants were given the advocacy and autonomy to decide what would be shared about their experiences and how we would share this information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how local situations and events are related to global scale processes</td>
<td>The WHO has recognized population aging as a global health concern and are interested in developing and learning about effective strategies that will support our aging population. Studying this population makes it a local study with global implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing aspirations of and for individuals and society</td>
<td>In a culture predominantly focused on youth, older adults’ needs can be forgotten or dismissed, often leaving them marginalized. My role as a critical qualitative researcher is to advocate for those who are marginalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being humble and reflexive</td>
<td>I embodied a highly reflexive stance during the entire research process (i.e. reflective and reflexive notes before, during and after interviews in my field notes; reflecting on my creative presence before, during and after the conducting study; and ongoing discussions with my supervisor).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing solidarity</td>
<td>“Researchers have an obligation to their fellow human and to the world in general (Gillett, Andrews &amp; Savelli, 2016, p.7).” I stand in solidarity with older adults who are aging in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Questioning the nature of evidence | A critique of evidence-based health care (EBHC) is that it’s becoming a “dominant scientific worldview.” Meaning, it “selectively legitimizes and includes certain knowledge but degrades and excludes other
– often qualitative – knowledge (Eakin et al., 1996).” By designing a critical qualitative research study, I add diverse findings to the literature. I’m also questioning common stereotypes that see older adults as unsuccessful, weak or non-contributing.
Chapter 4 Methodology

I employed a case study methodology to conduct this research. A case study is defined as “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 96). A case study allows researchers to study a phenomenon within their context (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This methodology places boundaries around the case, or cases, identifying the focus (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.94). These boundaries include time, place and activity (Creswell, 1998). In this study the case (i.e. unit of analysis) was older adults experiences participating in the Through Their Eyes project, bounded by time: when they participated in the project (2014-2016); place: the Niagara Region; and activity: the Through Their Eyes project. The case is more about the six participants in this specific context. Since they’ve participated in the Through Their Eyes project, it means they are over the age of 55, that they live in low-income housing for adults 55 years of age and older and it also means they have already met with students. They live in a community for older adults, but reside in their own single dwellings. Because all of my participants volunteered to participate in this study, it is likely that they were outgoing and extroverted. This also means they most likely had a positive experience with the Through Their Eyes project because they were eager and willing to open up about their involvement. They are also all on a fixed income with a low social economic status. All of these factors define this particular case and characterizes these individuals.

A defining feature of case studies is the inclusion of multiple methods – interviews, direct observations, participant observations, document analysis, archival records and physical artefacts (Crewswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this study I utilized individual interviews, a focus group interview, a knowledge translation workshop, observations, field notes and artefacts.

I explored the individual experiences of six older adults participating in the Through Their Eyes project. This study aligns well with a case study methodology because the research questions seek to understand and explain the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of this particular phenomenon. Specifically, the research objectives seek to understand older adults experience with the Through Their Eyes project and how it influences their
individual well-being and relationship to their community. Understanding an insider’s perspective requires in-depth exploration and analysis, which is also why a case study methodology was employed.

Modified from Creswell (2013), the following table briefly describes the case study protocols I utilized in my study. Additional details are included in the data collection and data analysis sections.

Table 3

*Procedures for Conducting a Case Study Modified from Creswell (2013)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Procedures</th>
<th>My Case Study Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The problem relates to understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more</td>
<td>My case study related to understanding an activity – older adults experiences with the <em>Through Their Eyes</em> project with respect to their well-being and social cohesion from multiple perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individuals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive approval from institutional review board.</td>
<td>Received ethics clearance November 9th, 2016, report 16-066.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate a research site using purposeful sampling procedures.</td>
<td>Niagara Region due to the project location. Purposeful sample as study participants had to be individuals who participated in the <em>Through Their Eyes</em> project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify how many cases you plan to study.</td>
<td>One case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the case boundaries</td>
<td>The unit of analysis is older adults experiences with the <em>Through Their Eyes</em> project. Bounded by time: when they participated in the project (2014-2016); place: Niagara Region; and activity: the <em>Through Their Eyes</em> project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify a gatekeeper to provide access.</td>
<td>Community partners (Niagara Regional Housing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect extensive data using multiple forms of data collection.</td>
<td>Individual interviews, focus group interview, knowledge translation workshop, field notes (including reflexive notes) analytic memos and observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read through data to develop an overall understanding of it.</td>
<td>Transcribe all individual interviews. Multiple listening’s to focus group and knowledge translation workshop. Read through all transcriptions, field notes and observations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Describe the cases in detail and establish a context for it. Develop themes about the case. Conduct a within-case analysis.

Multiple readings of the data for coding, categorizing and developing themes.

Write report, taking into consideration description, analysis and interpretation. Include your biases. Generalize to other cases.

When writing the report, I ensured I was explicit about my positionality. I employed conceptual frameworks to help make sense of the data.

4.1 Participants

In order to gain a rich understanding of this intergenerational project, I explored the experiences of six older adults. The age of participants ranged from 71 years to 90 years of age with the average age of 78.3 years and the median age of 75 years. The group of participants consisted of five females one male. Selected participants were individuals who had participated in the Through Their Eyes project at one of the four research sites in the Niagara Region (Sites A-D). Table 4 provides details about the sites.

Table 4

Research project site details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Location Details</th>
<th>Building Details</th>
<th>Number of Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Low rise, 3 buildings</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>High rise, 1 building</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Low rise, 2 buildings</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Location Details</th>
<th>Building Details</th>
<th>Number of Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Low rise, 3 buildings</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The building surrounds downtown and has the feel of row townhouse style housing. The area is close to some amenities
Within walking distance: The local aquatic and community centre is less than a 5-minute walk away. A bus stop with seating is located outside the building.
Short drive away: There are no grocery stores, local business or banks within walking distance, however several options are available less than a 10-minute drive away.

This building is located downtown and has the feel of an apartment style housing. Within walking distance: A bus stop is located outside the building with no seating available. The apartment is in walking distance to the thriving downtown culture that is home to local businesses, banks, restaurants, coffee shops, banks and the bus station.
This building is also a short walk away from a performing arts centre and concert venue.
Short drive away: There are no grocery stores within walking distance, however several options are available less than a 10-minute drive away.

This building surrounds downtown and has the feel of a courtyard townhouse style housing.
Within walking distance: A bus stop with seating is located outside the residence. There is also a community church less than a 5-minute walk away.

Short drive away: There are no grocery stores or local businesses within walking distance. The residence is a 5-minute drive away from the downtown area with some grocery stores, restaurants, banks and other amenities.

| D      | Urban       | High rise, 1 building | 132 |

This building is very similar to Site B. It is also located downtown and has the feel of an apartment style housing.

Within walking distance: This site is close to a thriving downtown culture that houses local businesses, banks, restaurants, coffee shops, banks and the bus station. This building is also a short walk away from a performing arts centre and concert venue.

Short drive away: There are no grocery stores within walking distance, however several options are available less than a 10-minute drive away.

4.1.1 Recruitment. I utilized the connections established from my involvement in the Through Their Eyes project to recruit participants. These relationships have been developed with coordinators from Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) over the past four years working with the project. I used advertising as a recruitment strategy at each of the project sites. Recruitment Posters (Appendix A) and Information Sheets (Appendix B) were posted in the lobbies of Sites A-D. Snowball sampling was employed. This is an approach that utilizes key informants, or gate keepers, to provide the researcher with possible study participants that will then lead you to other possible participants, thus creating a chain, or a snowball (Patton, 2002). My gatekeepers were coordinators from NRH who informed residents of the study and guided their attention to the recruitment posters for further information. The NRH coordinators emailed me the names and phone numbers of residents who expressed interest in participating in the research study and agreed to have their name forwarded to me. Additionally, I contacted some participants from previous years who had indicated on the Letter of Consent that they could be contacted for future research (see Appendix C for telephone script). I utilized a rolling recruitment strategy meaning I began the data collection process upon receiving the first participant, while recruitment continued until I had six participants. Only six older adults were recruited, therefore no one was refused to participate in the study.

Recruiting with an aging population was challenging. This may be due to health concerns, limited energy, appointments or the time commitment. Older adults may also
be nervous and have hesitations with being involved in research. These reasons could explain why it took four months to receive six participants.

4.1.2 Selection. Using a purposeful sampling strategy, the eligibility criteria for selection of participants were as follows: a) participant of the Through Their Eyes project from one of the four project study sites and, b) willing to be interviewed in their home.

4.2 Data Collection

Data was collected over a 6-month period from December 2016-May 2017. As described above, rolling recruitment was employed and data collection began as soon as the first participant signed up. I utilized semi-structured individual interviews, a focus group interview, a knowledge translation workshop, direct observations, field notes and artefacts for this case study. There were three phases to data collection: individual interviews, a focus group interview, and a knowledge translation workshop. Additionally, observations were ongoing throughout the data collection. Artefacts were observed in participants’ homes during individual interviews. Field notes were recorded before, during and after all interviews.

4.2.1 Phase 1: Individual Interviews. The first phase of this research study involved conducting two individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with each of the six participants for a total of 12 individual interviews (see Appendix F for semi-structured interview guides). The recorded interviews ranged from 30 minutes to just over an hour. However, visits often extended long past the recordings stopped because of talking and spending time together. Interviews were conducted in the participants’ homes and were scheduled according to their availability. Interviews were audio recorded and I transcribed all 12 interviews myself (verbatim). The informed consent (Appendix D) and participant information sheet (Appendix E) were both addressed during the first visit and prior to the interview.

The aim of the first interview was to: a) build rapport, b) gain an understanding of their day-to-day life and, c) initiate a dialogue about the Through Their Eyes project. The aim of the second interview was to: a) explore detailed recollections of the experience and, b) learn if/how the project had an influence on their well-being and their relationships to their community. Interviews were best suited because I wanted to explore
detailed recollections. In addition to providing in-depth detail, interviews in the home were advantageous because they allowed for a relaxed and comfortable environment. When successful, this atmosphere has the ability to foster rich and genuine information that is not possible with a survey or questionnaire (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

4.2.2 Phase 2: Focus group. A focus group interview was conducted as phase two of the study (See Appendix G for interview guide). This was scheduled after all individual interviews had been completed. The focus group interview took place at Site B’s common room. The reason for this location was to accommodate one of the participants’ mobility issues. Two of the participants had cars and were able to drive to this location. Two other participants agreed to be picked up by myself (i.e. had no limitations to being picked up by me). The focus group interview was audio recorded. A graduate student acted as scribe and logged observations and analytic memos. I also recorded observations during the focus group interview. Five of the six participants partook in the focus group interview. Unfortunately, one participant was unable to attend due to health concerns.

The aim of the focus group interview was to: a) allow for further clarification, explanation and understanding of the findings from individual interviews and, b) gain new knowledge and insights. It also provided the opportunity to ask any questions that arose after preliminary analysis on the individual interviews. Additionally, I wanted to conduct the focus group to provide older adults the opportunity for empowerment and advocacy. Please see Appendix H for the Focus Group Agenda.

Following the focus group, I asked participants if they were interested in participating in a knowledge translation workshop. All participants indicated they were interested and we brainstormed ideas to identify a focus for the knowledge translation workshop. Participants decided we would translate what we learned from this study to local newspapers and radio shows (e.g. Niagara This Week, The St. Catharines Standard, Welland Tribune, Brock News).

4.2.3 Phase 3: Arts-based knowledge translation workshop. The final phase of data collection was the arts-based knowledge translation workshop (see Appendix H for workshop guide). Arts-based and participatory research allows researchers and participants to express their experiences and understandings through other means
Arts-based research can involve writing, music, performance, dance, visual art, or other creative media in order to express an experience or perspective (Leavy, 2011; Ledger & Edwards, 2011). This type of approach values the use of the creative process as a way of making meaning. Participatory research includes people whose voices are seldom heard and who are viewed as “lacking the competency to be active in research” (Velzke & Baumann, 2017, p. 67). It has been noted in the literature that there is also a clear lack of older adult voices in research (Holroyd-Leduc et al., 2016). Participatory methods can be used to increase involvement in research of those who may have been excluded in the past (Clough et al., 2006). In participatory research, such as a knowledge translation workshop, older people remain involved citizens and “challenge existing perceptions” (Clough et al., 2006, p. 29).

Incorporating an arts-based, participatory component in my research allowed participant’s to express their feelings beyond verbal data. Not only did I wish to understand their experience, but I also wanted to assist in mobilizing action. The arts-based component provided an opportunity for empowerment and allowed participants to decide how the findings could be translated to the local community.

The knowledge translation workshop was conducted four weeks after the focus group interview. The knowledge translation workshop took place at Site B’s common room. A graduate student acted as scribe and wrote down observations and analytic memos. I also recorded observations during the workshop. The knowledge translation workshop was audio recorded. Three of the six participants attended the workshop. One participant was unable to attend due to health concerns, another had a last minute conflict in her schedule and the final participant could not be reached to confirm the interview was still taking place. The aim of the knowledge translation workshop was to: a) collectively express the participant’s experiences through a shared culminating and reflective arts-based project and, b) provide them with the opportunity to take action and decide how their voices would be heard. Please see Appendix J for the Knowledge Translation Workshop Agenda. I described to participants that the knowledge translation workshop would be a way to collectively express their experiences with the Through Their Eyes project through a shared activity or project; that it was a way they could take action and decide how their voices would be heard. Additionally, I provided an
information sheet (Appendix K) where I prompted them to reflect on a couple questions including: if you could say one thing, what would it be? If you could change one thing what would it be? Would you want to let other people know about the project? The intention for this information sheet was to start the dialogue and provide a little guidance before they decided on the direction.

The first idea participants proposed during the workshop was filming a video of them explaining the Through Their Eyes project. The aim would be to show this video to help recruit older adults at future project sites. However, after discussing this further they decided to go with another idea. Their reasons for deciding against the video were varied: a few were concerned with the time commitment of filming video; a couple were apprehensive about the logistics of making a video (regardless of me stating my full support in the endeavour and assisting with the technology aspect as much or as little as they wished); and one sat back during the discussion and wanted to go with what the group decided. After dismissing the first idea, participants agreed the knowledge translation workshop would be a means for them to translate what we learned from this study to local newspapers and radio shows (e.g. Niagara This Week, The St. Catharines Standard, Welland Tribune, Brock News). Specifically, participants wanted others to know: how the project benefited them; their favourite part; the one thing they would tell others; and a call for action: “we want more of these programs” (see Appendix L for participants’ answers to these questions). The process (i.e. the dialogue and emotions) were used as data and included in the findings. However, the final product of the knowledge translation workshop is beyond the scope of this study. The article that we are writing is ongoing and therefore not included in data analysis.

4.2.4 Ongoing: Observations and field notes. Direct observations were ongoing throughout the data collection process. Observations occurred during the in-depth individual interviews, the focus group interview and the knowledge translation workshop. An observation guide structured the recording of field notes into categories as: artefacts and observable emotions and body language (see Appendix M). I recorded these notes on the interview guides and later recorded them in my field notes. Additionally, I would record reflective notes during the individual and group interviews in my observations as they occurred.
Field notes were also ongoing throughout the data collection process. These were recorded before, during and directly after each interview. Field notes before the interview were reflective and included my thoughts, ideas, feelings, questions, assumptions and concerns. Field notes during and after interviews were both reflective and descriptive which included noting the setting, actions, behaviours and conversations. After the interviews, I also included reflections on ways in which I connected with the informant and in what ways we didn’t connect (i.e. did our conversations seem natural, conversations we shared or didn’t share similar views on, getting off topic). In these notes I performed early analysis of what I learned, the themes I began to identify and questions I had for follow up interviews (See Appendix N for field notes guide).

4.2.5 Artefacts. Artefacts were observed in participants’ homes during the individual interviews. After completing of the Through Their Eyes project, older adults were given pictures and thank-you cards from their student partners.

I was interested in learning if participants held onto these artefacts. During individual interviews, I purposefully surveyed the room looking for remnants from the project. I also asked participants to if they kept any items. Many participants had retained the photographs, thank you cards and even the nametag they used at the final community forum. The connection participants had with these artefacts were different. For one participant, retaining the photographs was for reminiscing about the past. For another, keeping the nametag (in which she had written on it her students phone numbers) was for reconnecting in the future.

4.3 Data Summary

Extensive data was collected using in-depth individual interviews, a focus group interview, a knowledge translation workshop, observations and field notes.

Table 5

Data Summary Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Recorded Interview (minutes)</th>
<th>Transcript (typed pages)</th>
<th>Field Notes (hand-written pages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>36+33= 69</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6+6= 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibyl</td>
<td>67+46= 113</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6+4=10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazel</td>
<td>34+65= 99</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3+6= 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldie</td>
<td>37+39= 76</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6+6= 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>40+30 = 61</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4+5 = 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dottie</td>
<td>52+66 = 118</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4+6 = 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Translation Workshop</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total's</strong></td>
<td><strong>743</strong></td>
<td><strong>235</strong></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4 Data Analysis

Analysis began as soon as data collection started and was a continuous process. Constant comparison was utilized to analyze the data. This approach involves identifying categories, comparing codes and quotes to those already coded, examining patterns between codes to reveal categories, and determining which categories are the central focus (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 437). Inductive analysis was also utilized which involves a “bottoms up” approach where the researcher moves from observations towards broad generalizations or themes (Creswell, 2013, p. 45). Through the inductive process, analysis moves from the specifics to broader codes and themes. Coding is typically done twice. In the initial coding, usually referred to as open coding, the researcher conceptualizes the data line-by-line (Creswell, 2013, p. 422). During the second round of coding, sometimes called focus or axial coding, researchers move from individual codes to seeking patterns in those codes (Creswell, 2013). Coding requires the researcher to fully immerse themselves in the data by re-listening to audio recordings and performing multiple read-throughs of the data (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). As codes accumulate, researchers seek a way to organize or classify them (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 427). They look to move beyond individual codes to seeking patterns within those codes. The next step is to convert the codes and categories into themes. It is this stage that “marks the movement from description, categorization and preliminary analysis toward interpretation” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 427).

### 4.4.1 Summary Data Collection and Preliminary Analysis

Figure 6: *Summary Data Collection and Early Analysis* illustrates and summarizes the data collection and early analysis process. The image reflects the messiness of qualitative research. Several items are purposeful in this diagram. The size of the dotted circles shows the amount of
data that was utilized in each phase. Most of the data that was used and drove the final analysis came from the individual interviews as they generated the most significant data. This is why the circle for Phase 1: Individual Interviews is the largest. Inside the dotted circles are in vivo codes and direct quotes from participants. The quotes and codes were chosen purposefully: they were repeated several times by many participants, they were the ones I found relayed the strongest way, and really resonated with what I know about the project from my experiences.

I also purposefully selected field notes to parallel findings and reflect the most passionate and repeated thoughts. Additionally, I included details on what took place during immersion to reflect all the work that goes into this stage of analysis. The figure ends with transcription and coding. Details on these steps will be textually described in the chapter.
Figure 6: Summary Data Collection and Preliminary Analysis

Field Notes
- I'm struggling with keeping my roles separate
- I want to be true to the data
- I want to see action
- I am overwhelmed with all of this data
- I want to hear more about their relationships & community forum

Now it is stronger
- Are there any discrepancies?
- "Yah they want to do this"
- I'm excited about the KT workshop
- I want to see action
- "Oh oh - they have 100 ideas!"
- They all seem so comfortable around each other

They're still concerned over having a voice
- They want to continue this
- Advocacy group
- I'm disappointed there is only 3 of them

PHASE 1: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS (12)
- Listened to recordings
- Read field notes, observations & reflections
- Pulled out key quotes
- Finalized focus group interview guide and agenda

PHASE 2: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW
- Listened to recordings
- Read field notes, observations & reflections
- Read student analysis memos & observations
- Prepared KT workshop materials and agenda

PHASE 3: KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION WORKSHOP
- Listened to recordings
- Read field notes, observations & reflections
- Read student analysis memos & observations

Transcription and Coding

“I'm proud of them”
“they were interested”
“pleasant lovely girls”
“good experience”
comfortable
great time
connection
“pleasant experience”
“outreach into the senior community”
grandmother/granddaughter
“meaningful to me”
“voice was heard”
‘very much surprised”
“feeling of well-being”

IMMERSION

“listened to”
friendly
caring
comfortable
intimate
learning experience
loving
advocacy group
regret
“seemed interested”
pleasant
distant
interesting
“please keep this going”

IMMERSION

enlightening
worthwhile
comfortable
“get out there”
“made me more aware of community around me”
“feels like no one else is kind of listening to us”
“have another meeting”
“advocacy group”

IMMERSION

“fun”
4.4.2 Summary Data Analysis Procedures. Moving from Figure 6, I combined Creswell (2013) and Savin-Baden & Major’s (2013) approaches to data analysis:

• **Step 1: Transcribe.** I transcribed all twelve individual interviews verbatim myself.

• **Step 2: Individual Interview Coding.** Transcripts were read several times. Codes and analytic memos were written in the margins of transcripts. Field notes observations, and reflections were also re-read. I pulled out key quotes, phrases and observations and added them into the open coding document that I already started during preliminary analysis. I continually compared new codes to the already existing codes to find consistencies and differences (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

• **Step 3: Focus Group and Knowledge Translation Workshop Coding.** I listened to both the focus group interview and knowledge translation workshop multiple times. I re-read all text (field notes, observations, and analytic memos) and pulled out key quotes, phrases into the open coding table. Again, I continually compared new codes to the already existing codes to find consistencies and differences (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

• **Step 4: Code and Categorize.** As codes accumulated I moved from individual codes to seeking patterns within those codes. I read through the open coding tables and began a new word document for the second round of coding. I used constant comparison to determine which codes were the central focus.

• **Step 5: Convert.** Once the codes were categorized, I stepped back to conceptualize: what does this mean? What is the significance? I converted my two categories – well-being and social cohesion – into a unifying idea (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). I utilized these conceptual frameworks to help make meaning of the data. These two concepts worked well to push my interpretations further and learn how the *Through Their Eyes* project created an important opportunity for gain.

• **Step 6: Create.** I presented an in-depth picture of the case using narratives and figures. With instruction from my supervisor, I created three story lines around the core theme of opportunity for gain.
4.5 Quality Assessment

Tracey (2010), states eight criteria for quality assessment in qualitative research: worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical, and meaningful coherence. These differ from traditional terms such as reliability, validity and generalizability that are used to evaluate quantitative studies. Alternatively, these eight terms criteria specifically assess quality in qualitative research. Table 6 outlines how these were employed in the study.

Table 6

*Tracey’s (2010) Eight Criteria for Quality in Qualitative Research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria &amp; Meaning</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Employing them in my Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worthy Topic</strong></td>
<td>The research is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative</td>
<td>Population aging, aging in place, social isolation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rich Rigor</strong></td>
<td>The research study utilizes abundant, appropriate and complex theoretical constructs, time in field, data collection and analysis processes.</td>
<td>Utilized conceptual frameworks to establish guidelines for the study. I collected an extensive amount of data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sincerity</strong></td>
<td>The study is characterized by self-reflexivity and transparency about methods and challenges</td>
<td>I practiced reflexivity and was clear about the role I had in the research process (see Role of The Researcher section). I also maintained transparency about the challenges by commenting on these in the Limitation section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td>The research is marked by thick description and concrete detail.</td>
<td>True to the participants, I used thick description and direct quotes to stay close to their words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resonance</strong></td>
<td>The research influences or moves readers or audiences through naturalistic generalizations and transferable findings</td>
<td>Participants’ comments for more programs like these make sense for moving forward. Adopting similar practices may provide a similar positive impact. It is my aim and goal for these</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Significant Contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The research provides a significant contribution</td>
<td>conceptually/theoretically, practically, morally, methodologically and/or heuristically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The findings could be helpful</td>
<td>for other researchers exploring intergenerational projects. This research could also be useful for individuals who hope to set up an intergenerational project. This research also makes a contribution to knowledge by exploring the older adult perspective as well as supports other literature in this area. The study also provide further rational for the need for more programs like these.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ethical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The research considers procedural ethics, situational or culturally specific ethics, relational ethics and exiting ethics</td>
<td>Submitting to Brock University’s Social Science Research Ethics Board (SREB) ensured this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Meaningful Coherence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The study achieves what it purports to be about, uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals and meaningfully interconnects literature, research, questions, findings and interpretation with each other</td>
<td>The study is methodologically congruent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.6 Role of the Researcher

Reflexivity is a necessary process in research. I approached the study from the perspective of someone who has been significantly involved in the Through Their Eyes project. I recognized that my personal experience affected how I collected and interpreted the data.

I utilized my field notes to write reflexive notes to document and reflect on my assumptions throughout the research process. This involved writing reflective notes before each interview, which included my thoughts and feelings going into the interview and any assumptions I may have. I then further reflected on these same thoughts and
feelings in my field notes after each interview. I wrote similar notes before and after the focus group interview and knowledge translation workshop. I furthered my reflexive stance through ongoing discussions with my supervisor.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations were considered in this study – informed consent, confidentiality and vulnerable population.

4.7.1 Informed consent. I brought two copies of the informed consent to the first interviews with each participant. I went over this together with the participant, which allowed them to ask questions as they arose. I informed the participants that they could withdraw at any time, explained the minimal risks associated with participating in this study and the measures taken to reduce those risks. I then asked participants to sign and date both copies of the consent form. Finally, I signed both copies of the informed consent leaving one copy with the participant and retaining one copy for my records.

4.7.2 Confidentiality. Participants were made aware on the Informed Consent that their participation in the research study would be confidential. Only my supervisor and I had access to the data. Although their participation was confidential, participants understood that they could not be kept anonymous because other people (i.e. other participants, building managers and NRH coordinators) knew of their participation. All participants agreed to this on the consent form and also verbally expressed to me that this was not an issue.

4.7.3 Vulnerable Population. Additionally, this study involved older adults with low income. This is a vulnerable population because they are economically disadvantaged. I was reflexive and careful with access to the data while weighing power dynamics.

4.8 Limitations to Methodology

The following limitations to case studies were identified: conducting interviews and recording observations.

Interviews in qualitative research are advantageous because they have the ability to foster rich and genuine information (Boyce & Neale, 2006). However, they do not
come without the limitation of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. If not careful, power dynamics can influence the research process (Patton, 2002). Additionally, conducting interviews can cause the person to act in a certain way, referred to as the interviewer effect, where participants may act a certain way to impress a new person (David & Sutton, 2011). How I responded to these two limitations was by building rapport with individuals and having multiple interactions with participants. Additionally, conducting the first two interviews in their home allowed for a relaxed environment.

Another challenge with case study research is the recording of observations. Challenges with observations include remembering to take field notes and keeping from being overwhelmed (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 172). These were mitigated the following ways: leaving ample room on the semi-structured interview guides for observations to be recorded; referring to the observation guide before the interviews to remind myself what I’m looking for; referring to the observation guide during the interview as I felt necessary; referring to the observation guide after the interview while the environment and actions were still fresh in my mind; and multiple read-throughs of observations and field notes. An additional limitation with observations is the limited scope the observer can take in (Patton, 2002). I moderated this by simply being mindful and present during interviews and trying to observe as much as I could. Additionally, using a visual reminder (i.e. bringing a physical copy of the observation guide to each interview) helped ensure I was recording as much information as possible.

4.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand, from an insider’s perspective, the experiences of older adults who participated in the Through Their Eyes intergenerational project. A combination of critical social theory and constructivist outlined the design of the study. The qualities of critical qualitative research structured the methodology, data collection and data analysis. Data were analyzed following constant comparative and inductive analysis techniques (Creswell, 2013; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Quality was assured by supporting Tracy’s (2010) eight criteria for quality in qualitative research. The ethical considerations and limitations were stated.
Chapter 5 Findings

The aim of the study was to explore and understand, from an insider’s perspective, the lived experiences of six older adults who participated in the *Through Their Eyes* intergenerational project. The findings reveal that the project positively influenced the lives of participants by providing an important opportunity for growth in three areas: new relationships, a space and place to be heard, and a joyful memory and experience. I begin this chapter by introducing the participants. I then discuss the core finding of opportunity for gain. Opportunity for new relationships is explained through the meaningful and genuine relationships older adults developed with their student interviews. Opportunity for a space and place to be heard is explained by showing how the project offered a means for participants to share their voice and be included in research. Finally, an opportunity for a joyful memory and experience is articulated through the joyful memories that reverberated long past the project culmination.

5.1 Participant Profiles

Six older adults agreed to participate in this research study. Participants volunteered to participate in this study, as well as volunteered to participate in the *Through Their Eyes* project, therefor they may differ in terms of characteristics (i.e. outgoing) to those who would not choose to participate in the intergenerational study and subsequently a research study. Profiles of each participant are described below in the order of recruitment:

Table 7

*Participant 1 Profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Site</td>
<td>Site A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year participated in the project</td>
<td>Winter 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sue appears to be reserved and quiet but once you get to know her you learn she has a witty sense of humour. She has a beautiful singing voice and enjoys breaking out
into song if a word reminds her of a certain course. This happened a couple times during the interview, at one point she shared a French song from her childhood.

Table 8

*Participant 2 Profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sibyl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Site</td>
<td>Site A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year participated in the project</td>
<td>Winter 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sibyl is outgoing and has a heart of gold. She enjoys talking with others as much as she enjoys listening to other people’s stories. She’s inquisitive and was interested in getting to know me on a personal level. During our interviews she took great pride in talking about her son and two granddaughters. Our conversations often drifted towards their tight relationships. She is a creative person and enjoys crafting cards with handwritten and personalized poems inside.

Table 9

*Participant 3 Profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Hazel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Site</td>
<td>Site B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year participated in the project</td>
<td>Winter 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hazel has a hyperbolic sense of humour. She loves to exaggerate and can be very sarcastic at times. I felt we had a strong relationship as we had prior one-on-one interactions during the *Through Their Eyes* project. Many times we got carried away and off topic in conversations, which caused our visits to extend long past the scheduled time. Hazel unfortunately fell ill during data collection and was unable to join both the focus group interview and knowledge translation workshop.
Goldie is a bubbly and smiley person who is always dressed to the nines by matching her makeup to her outfits. She absolutely loves her little dog named Bandit and enjoys taking him on walks throughout her neighbourhood. She is extraordinary – she has taken it upon herself to start creating activities for seniors in the building such as hosting movie nights or bingo. I learned she feels a real sense of duty when it comes to advocating for seniors rights in her community.

Frank is best known as a friendly clown. He started clowning when he was 40, so he is always sure to mention that his clown personality is only 50 years old. Frank is an engaged community member. He is an avid pickle ball player, hitting the courts three times a week at his local recreation centre. When he is not on the courts he is giving back to his community by either mentoring a little brother or fundraising for the Rotary Club.
Name | Dottie  
---|---
Gender | Female  
Age | 73  
Project Site | Site B  
Year participated in the project | Winter 2015

Dottie is a spunky little thing. She is the joker in the room and had the whole group laughing during both the focus group interview and knowledge translation workshop. She can also be very sarcastic. Her limited mobility does not stop her from enjoying an active lifestyle, which involves caring for grandchildren and participating in various actives in her building.

5.3 Opportunity

Analysis led to three core subthemes, which can be organized around opportunity. Opportunity is defined as “an occasion or situation that makes it possible to do something that you want to do or have to do” (Cambridge University Press, 2018). For older adults during a time in their lives when they are experiencing many losses, the *Through Their Eyes* project provided an opportunity for gain. Examples of loss at this time include the loss of a spouse or other loved ones, the loss of social networks, and the loss of work (i.e. retirement) or opportunities to work (Smith, 2012). Many older adults also experience the loss of driving and the loss in physical contact with children who have moved away. This can also be a time of shrinking opportunities for connection and meaningful engagement, and reduced health and physical function. Intergenerational programs, like the *Through Their Eyes* project, can be immediately impactful to older adults because they provide an opportunity for gain during a time in older adults lives when they are experiencing many losses. Specifically, the *Through Their Eyes* project provided an opportunity for new relationships, offered a space and place to be heard, and added a joyful memory and experience for participants.

5.3.1 Opportunity for new relationships. The *Through Their Eyes* project was an opportunity for older adults to develop new relationships with a generation that they don’t typically interact with. Traditionally these two generations don’t understand, or are
fearful of, each other. The relationships older adults developed with students in the *Through Their Eyes* project were genuine and meaningful. Genuine (adjective): sincerely and honestly felt or experienced; authentic (Mariam-Webster, 2018). Meaningful (adjective): important or valuable (Cambridge University Press, 2018). This was evidenced by the way older adults spoke about students, their desire to stay connected with them after the project’s culmination, all despite the limited interactions of the project.

The relationships older adults built with their student interviewers were a common topic of conversation in our interviews. Participants often described the relationship they developed with their student interviewers similar to the relationship they have with their grandchildren. It was clear there was a familial-type intimacy to the relationship older adults built with their student interviewers as many participants described them as such. These were quality relationships. For example, Sue said, “Altogether it was a nice experience to meet them. It was just as if they were my own granddaughters” (Sue, 87, individual interview). In another example,

It’s just that it makes a connection. It makes a connection that in some way she was able to relate to me, that she almost felt like she knew me because I seemed to be so much like her grandmother. (*Dottie, 73, individual interview*)

Additionally, having the opportunity for new relationships was significant because older adults expressed the desire to stay connected to the students after participating in the *Through Their Eyes* project. The fact that they wanted to stay connected with students illustrated how meaningful the relationship was to them. To illustrate, during an individual interview I observed an artefact a participant had retained long after the project. She held onto the nametag she used at the final community forum months later. I commented on this in my field notes:

Early on in our interview [with Goldie] I noticed she had her nametag from the final community forum stuck to her dinning room dresser next to the phone. At the next opportunity I asked her about this. She explained that during their last interview, her and her student interviewers had spoken about tentative plans for another visit. She had hoped to have the students over again and cook them dinner. I asked if this had happened and, disappointedly, she said they weren’t able to coordinate their schedules. A couple months had passed since they last
spoke, but she was still hopeful that they would meet again sometime in the near future (reflection, individual interview).

Having the nametag positioned right near the phone was a visual reminder that these two students came into her life. This purposeful placement illustrated a desire to remember and continue the relationship. After reflecting on this experience, I asked follow up questions during the focus group interview to see if any participants contacted their students after the project. Goldie explained further:

I always meant to get in touch and I didn’t, and I regret it. Now they’re gonna be gone, school will be over and, uh, I wish that I had. I wish maybe they reached out to me; I would’ve loved it. But I enjoyed it so much. They were huggy and just like a couple of granddaughters and it was nice. I enjoyed it very much and I’m very grateful it took place in my life. And I would volunteer for mostly anything you guys had going cause I enjoyed it that much (Goldie, 77, focus group).

Goldie’s regret prompted me to ask the group what their relationship would look like if they kept in touch with their student interviewers. Participants expressed a variety of options including becoming pen pals, cooking dinner or simply having the students visit from time to time. Frank revealed: “I’m on my own. All my kids are out west... I certainly welcome anybody that wants to come and pay a visit. Always happy to see new faces and new people” (Frank, 90, focus group).

While they enjoyed the time they spent with students, participants understood the relationship might not continue. They wanted to leave the friendship open and let students decide if or how they were to continue their relationship. They didn’t want to seem pushy. During the focus group one participant said, “I’d love that. As long as they, you know, don’t feel it as an extra thing they have to do” (Sue, 87, focus group). This comment sparked Sibyl to interrupt: “Oh come on, put yourself out there” (Sibyl 72, focus group). Sue continued,

I don’t mind that, but I just wouldn’t want to expect it. It would have to be on their part, that they felt they wanted to continue the relationship. It would have to be something they were interested in doing (Sue, 87, focus group).

Sibyl added,
It’s a busy time for young people… I understood both of them were really off and away kind of thing, that they were really, really busy and I did not expect them to continue the relationship (Sibyl, 72, focus group).

I could sense that there was an internal struggle here; the older adults wanted to continue the relationship, but were also hesitant to put that responsibility onto the students.

Finally, meaningful relationships were developed with students despite their limited interaction. During the project, older adults and students came into contact four times (approximately 4-6 hours total). This consisted of an information session, two individual interviews and a community forum at the projects culmination. It was significant that older adults reported such positive feelings towards the younger adults from their short visits. Thomas & Weaver (2016) state that it is the quality of, not the frequency of, intergenerational contact that is associated with younger adults developing non-prejudicial attitudes towards older adults (p. 910). I believe the same can be said here. It was the quality of interactions older adults had with university students in the Through Their Eyes project, not the frequency of, that allowed these two groups the opportunity to foster genuine relationships. When asked about their most vivid memory several participants began by describing the relationship they built with their students:

Most vivid memory is what pleasant lovely girls they were. They were interested in what I had to say. It was just a nice experience for me and it brought two more people in to my life (Dottie, 73, individual interview).

Hazel similarly recalled the strong relationship she developed with her student interviewers:

Interviewer: Why do you think that memory is so vivid?
Hazel: Honestly, because I had a great time. Honestly. I thought it was going to be old language, a stick in the mud. But it wasn’t, it was great. The ladies are the kind of people I would like to hang around with” (Hazel, 77, individual interview).

Although it was a short-term project, the older adults interacted with students in a meaningful and purposeful way. Meaningful and purposeful for older adults in that they engaged collaboratively to share their thoughts and opinions on the age-friendliness of their neighbourhoods and saw concrete opportunities for change come out of it.
In summary, the *Through Their Eyes* project provided an important opportunity for older adults to gain new and unique relationships. Regardless of hesitations, the desire to stay connected was clear. Older adults wanted to continue the relationships with their student interviewers after the projects culmination, despite their limited interactions. The desire to stay connected shows just how impactful this relationship was. I witnessed how this project provided an opportunity to build quality, meaningful and genuine relationships.

### 5.3.2 Opportunity for a space and place for voice to be heard.
Older adults often feel like their voices are not heard, and it has also been documented in the literature that their voices are often absent in research (Kirkby-Geddes & Macaskill, 2016). They are the experts in their lives and provide a unique perspective on the values and priorities of their neighbourhoods and communities (Holroyd-Leduc et al, 2016). Giving a voice to older adults in research allows them to remain engaged in their community and be part of decision-making (Muscedere, 2016). The *Through Their Eyes* project was an opportunity for older adults to project their voice in this way. In gaining a voice, older adults were given the opportunity for advocacy and action, which resulted in feelings of pride and accomplishment.

I got the sense that participants felt that they were not usually listened to in regards to community matters. This frustration was both articulated by some of the participants and observed by myself. The *Through Their Eyes* project provided an opportunity for older adults to be listened to as they passionately described what they were feeling in regards to their housing and community matters. For example, during the knowledge translation workshop one older adult said: “feels like no one else is kind of listening to us” (*Sibyl, 72, knowledge translation workshop*).

Elaborating on this she explains:

> It makes me feel as though my voice could be heard, that there was something that I felt strongly about, needed to be improved on or needed to be seen, that I could have a voice.” (*Sibyl, 72, individual interview*)

Similarly, another participant reported,
I think it was a wonderful idea. It was an outreach into the senior community and I think that’s pretty important. It’s important to know what’s going on, it’s important to know what we need here” (Goldie, 77, individual interview).

I also reflected on my interview with Sue, observing her frustration:

Sue shared a story with me. She volunteers at the Alzheimer’s society and told me about a time when they did a huge study and report on the seniors in her area. She told me that nothing was done afterwards. I could see that she was upset and discouraged about this. She went on to tell me that she hoped my work could make a difference (Personal reflection).

The Through Their Eye project further provided an opportunity for advocacy and an audience for action. Older adults wanted the information they provided for the Through Their Eyes project to help other aging adults in their community. Their participation in the project can be viewed as a form of citizen science. This term is used to describe activities in which citizens – armatures or laypersons – participate in research (Cooper, Dickinson, Phillips, & Bonney, 2007). Being able to give back to their community by sharing their feedback and helping students in an “important” research project created a sense of purpose in older adults. This sense of purpose facilitated feelings of being contributing members of society – that they were valued, important and part of something larger than themselves. The fact that their feedback was used to help other older adults and students was important to them. For example, focusing on seniors: “I was curious as to anything I had to say, would it somewhere along the line maybe help seniors” (Dottie, Female, 73, individual interviews). Other participants wanted to help the students. Hazel, focusing on students, stated, “Well, it was explained to us, that it was helping you and your education. And, uh, I was looking forward to helping” (Hazel, 77, individual interview). Although some participants expressed nervousness and apprehension to sign up, the fact that they wanted to help seniors and students in their community outweighed those concerns.

A number of participants were even prompted to take action themselves, including organizing events in their buildings:

“It was after [the Through Their Eyes project] when I decided to try and get some sort of social things going to draw some of the community together… So that had
an affect on it, the *Through Their Eyes* project had an impact on my decision to try and get something going for these people.” *(Goldie, Female, 77, individual interview)*

Specifically, Goldie started laying out puzzles for other residence in her building and began movie nights. During the focus group interview participants got excited about creating an “Advocacy Group” to get other older adults in their communities involved with activities: “[the *Through Their Eyes* project] lit a fire in my belly” *(Dottie, 73, focus group)*, as she wanted to continue working collaboratively with students to create change for seniors. This comment sparked a debate and I observed the other participants’ nod in agreement, signalling they, too, felt this way. They felt strongly about the importance of seniors being vocal in their communities.

In addition to being listened to and promoted to action, a sense of pride and accomplishment was felt among participants of the *Through Their Eyes* project. Accomplishment: achieved after a lot of work or effort; and pride: a feeling of satisfaction that you get because you have done something good (Cambridge University Press, 2018). Older adults were clearly proud to be included in a community project that targeted the age-friendliness of their own neighbourhoods. Accomplishment of tasks or activities with independence and autonomy is considered a practice that promotes quality of life in older adults (Ferreira, Tura, Silva, & Ferreira, 2017). Older adults gained a sense that they achieved something important from participating in the project and took great pleasure in this. The final community forum was a significant event for all participants. Participants reported that it was this event when they really felt a sense of accomplishment. They reflected back to seeing the presentation at the community forum:

“I was glad to see that. Glad to see myself up there too and glad to see the other people here from my building you know, on the film” *(Goldie, Female, 77, individual interview).*

Similarly, Frank described the event: “It was just an overall feeling of well-being, and everyone on the same wave length” *(Frank, Male, 90, focus group).* Goldie continued: “Electric. It was, everybody was just so glad to be there you could feel it. And I liked that they showed the film, that was nice” *(Goldie, 77, focus group).* By working collaboratively, older adults ensured students got the whole picture about their community, that they really understood the neighbourhood through their eyes. This role
as a citizen scientist created a sense of importance. They were proud that the information they shared at the community forum was of interest to key stakeholders who attended the event including local members of parliament and representatives from the mayor’s office. Obtaining this recognition further promoted a sense of pride and accomplishment among the older adult participants of the *Through Their Eyes* project.

### 5.3.3 Opportunity for a joyful memory and experience.

Joyful: meaning great happiness or a person or thing that causes happiness (Cambridge University Press, 2018). The *Through Their Eyes* project was an opportunity for a joyful experience and joyful memories that lingered long after the project. This joy was evidenced by the way older adults spoke so enthusiastically about the project and by the smiles and laughter the memories brought back. When participants shared their thoughts on the *Through Their Eyes* project, it was clear that it was a joyful experience as all of them expressed how happy they were to host the students and how much they enjoyed spending time with them. Over and over again I observed participants’ eyes light up when they were recalling a memory from the project:

I had a great time. Honestly, I thought it was going to be a stick in the mud but it wasn’t, it was great. Like if I was younger all you guys are the kind of people I would like to hang around with (laughs) (*Hazel, 71, individual interview*).

Other participants agreed: “*I was very glad for them to come and we had a good time together. They seemed to enjoy talking to me and I enjoyed their company*” (*Sue, 87*); and “*The girls were friendly... and I enjoyed their company and the company of their friends as well*” (*Hazel, 71, individual interview*).

When participants reflected back on their experiences, the memory seemed to reignite their joy. I witnessed how it brought back happiness and smiles into the present moment, regardless of what was currently going on in their lives. It felt as though the joy was still there yet it had been a few months to over two years for some participants since they were involved with the project. I felt like their joy in remembering the project fostered a willingness to share more information with me. Reflecting on my interview with Dottie:

During my second interview with Dottie she pulled out a photo album and directed my attention to a page where she placed two photographs of her with her
student interviewers. She had not only kept these images, but had purposefully integrated them among photographs with her friends and family. After pulling this album out on her own volition, she insisted on us taking a picture together to add to the album. The photographs she kept in and amongst others was to remind her of this experience (Personal reflection, individual interview).

These photographs allowed her to relive the experience and brought back the positive memories. Similarly, reliving the project through their memories seemed to positively affect participants’ mood. For example, in the second individual interview I noticed Hazel was discernibly having a bad day and experiencing some hard times. However, remembering the project seemed to change her attitude. The joy she experienced during the project resurfaced after we started talking about it. I reflected on this shift in mood after my interview with Hazel:

I was happy to see Hazel again. She seemed a bit off today. She’s a happy and energetic person but when I walked in she seemed sad and angry. The beginning of our conversation was dominated by gossip in the building. However, I noticed a change in mood once we started talking about the project. When I left her place after the interview, she appeared to be happy, energetic and sarcastic; more like her self (Personal reflection).

The feelings of joy were also contagious as I often noted that I too felt happier, inspired and refreshed when leaving the interviews. It became clear to me that not only did the Through Their Eyes project create joy at the time of the event but also that joy reverberated years later.

In summary, the intergenerational program, Through Their Eyes, enhanced the lives of older adults as they were provided an opportunity for gain. Specifically, the Through Their Eyes project provided an opportunity to gain new relationships, a space and place to be heard and a joyful memory and experience.
Chapter 6 Discussion

In this chapter I discuss how the findings from my study both support and add to the gerontology and intergenerational literature. Contributing to the aging literature, findings support that intergenerational programs promote active aging by providing an opportunity for developing new relationships, exercising power and having a voice, and does it in a way that is joyful. To recall, active aging is “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (WHO, 2002). Specifically, findings illustrated that the Through Their Eyes project encouraged active aging and enhanced quality of life and health for participants by providing an ‘opportunity’ for social ‘participation’ and remaining ‘active’ and engaged, core principles of active aging.

6.1 Encouraging Social Participation

The Through Their Eyes project fostered social participation by establishing connections between generations, addressing social isolation and loneliness, and breaking down stereotypes and age barriers. The Through Their Eyes project provided an opportunity for older adults to develop genuine relationships with students, which were remembered with strong detail years later. Working collaboratively with students, older adults were provided an opportunity for social participation. Social participation is the “extent to which an individual participates in a broad range of social roles and relationships” (Avisor, McLeod & Pescosolido, 2007). Synonyms of social participation in the literature include social engagement, social involvement and connectedness. The opportunity for older adults to participate was done through creating connections with students through meaningful engagement with students, which allowed them to feel safe and comfortable with this generation, thus limiting one barrier to participation.

The link between social participation (i.e. connectedness) and health has been documented in the literature and has been identified as one of eight modifiable health behaviours in mid- to late-life community dwelling adults (Ramage-Morin, Shields & Matel, 2010). Social participation is an important predictor of active aging (WHO, 2002). My study confirms WHO reports that argue intergenerational programs provide
opportunities for social participation by creating connections across generations (WHO, 2002).

6.1.1 Addressing social isolation and loneliness. Encouraging social participation is one way to address social isolation and loneliness, which is common among this age group (Government of Canada, 2016). The strong connections that were built between older adults and students add to the literature on social isolation. Intergenerational projects have been shown to combat social isolation by promoting connections and relationships between younger and older generations (Isaki & Harmon, 2015). Despite being a short-term project, findings from this study suggest intergenerational projects can help combat social isolation by building new relationships and fostering meaningful connection.

Why was this relationship so important? Why is it that despite wanting to continue the relationship with students, my participants had no expectations to do so and wanted to leave that up to the students? Are they isolated? Is this a response to their loneliness? This project was a way for older adults to connect with a younger generation, but they were clear they didn’t want to ‘burden’ the students. They understand it’s a busy time for them as students and young people. They also probably hear from their own grandchildren how busy their lives are. Findings from the Meadow School’s intergenerational project indicated that loneliness amongst older adults were decreased after participating in the program (Carson, Kobayashi & Kuehne, 2011). Using the literature to interpret this, I would argue that perhaps one reason the relationship older adults developed with students were so important because the older adults in my study feel socially isolated or lonely.

Findings from a study on loneliness noted that many older adults experience loneliness as a result of disrupted meaningful engagement (Smith, 2012). This was due to age-related changes and other loses including a death of a spouse or retirement. Loneliness may also result from a lack of satisfying human relationships (Drageset et al., 2015). My study suggests that through participation in an intergenerational project, older adults gain a meaningful and engaging activity and genuine relationships, and in turn, this helps combat loneliness. In fact, older adults themselves have identified meaningful engagement as a way to cope with loneliness (Smith, 2012). Older adults have also
reported being socially active and involved as a key component to active aging (Teater, 2016). Thus, encouraging meaningful engagement through intergenerational projects such as the Through Their Eyes is an upstream attempt and a public health approach to reducing loneliness in community-dwelling older adults.

6.1.2 Breaking down stereotypes and age barriers. My study supports the literature on intergenerational programs ability to combat stereotypes. The connections and authentic relationships that were built between generations may contribute to older adults having fewer stereotypes towards younger generations (Gallager & Carey, 2012). Teater (2016) noted that participating in an intergenerational project enabled older adults to accept differences among people of other generations. Additionally, previous research has shown children have less ageist attitudes towards seniors after participating in intergenerational programs (Hatton-Yeo, 2015; Hewson, Danbrook & Sieppert, 2015; Knight, Skouteris, Townsend, & Hooley, 2014). My study supports this research as creating relationships could foster fewer stereotypes and less ageist attitudes towards younger generations.

Older adults may have a better understanding of younger adults after spending time together in the intergenerational program. Being a student myself makes me realize younger and older adults have a great deal in common. The literature on generational intelligence helps make sense of this and how intergenerational programs help break down ageist attitudes. Generational intelligence is the ability to place yourself in the position of a person of another age (Biggs, Haapala & Lowenstein, 2011). Intergenerational programs, I would argue, are excellent places to build generational intelligence among older adults. Increased generational intelligence may result in older adults having fewer stereotypes towards younger generations. This may make older adults feel more safe and comfortable in spaces with younger adults and allow them to be more willing to go out and join activities, thus eliminating one barrier to social participation.

Our society is age segregated and intergenerational programs act to break down these age barriers and reduce ageism. Age segregation, both socially and physically, is common in our society (Thompson & Weaver, 2016, p. 910). For example, we have residential communities that are strictly for 55-and-over adults. Similarly, we have
recreation spaces – such as Facebook – that are organized “separately from spaces of older adults” (Thompson & Weaver, 2016, p.910). This causes fewer and fewer opportunities for post-secondary students to interact with older people (Doll, 2006).

“Today’s living, learning, and recreation activities separate people according to age. As a result, youth and older adults share neighbourhoods but live in different worlds” (Kaplan, 1994, p. 3). This quote highlights the systematic exclusion that happens in our society, keeping individuals in their specific age blocks. In order to integrate these two age groups, one idea is to supplement education with experience with older adults so students can understand and appreciate the complexities of aging (Doll, 2006, p. 64). One way to do this is embedding intergenerational contact and activities into higher education.

In the *Time after Time* intergenerational program, older adults noted that the contact with the younger students “contributed to them feeling the boundaries between the young and old diminish” (Teater, 2016). We’re doing a disservice to older adults by segregating them from society. Intergenerational programs act to break down age barriers and promote social participation and inclusion. These programs go against the notion that older adults should live and participate in spaces that are separate from the rest of society. We’re seeing more and more intergenerational programs in long-term care (LTC) facilities. However, there is similarly a need for intergenerational programs for those community-dwelling older adults who are choosing to age in place.

### 6.2 Remaining Active and Engaged

Another important determinant of active aging is remaining active and engaged in your community as you age (WHO, 2002). The *Through Their Eyes* project provided a space for older adults to be listened to which allowed them to remain active citizens and did so in a way that was joyful and celebratory.

This study builds on other literature that reports participating in intergenerational projects support older adults to remain active and engaged within their community (Fair & Delaplane, 2015; Isaki & Harmon, 2015; Knight et al., 2014). During the project, older adults participated in information sessions, two interviews with students and attended a final community forum. They did this willingly despite their often-precarious health status, energy level, the possibility of inclement weather, challenges with transportation
and the fear of the unknown. This level of commitment demonstrates how engaged the older adult participants were to the *Through Their Eyes* project.

This study supports the notion that older adults are looking for opportunities to give back to society and contribute to future generations (Warburton, 2014). Intergenerational, service-learning projects, like the *Through Their Eyes*, provide an opportunity for reciprocity. The older adult participants were the experts in this project that examined the age-friendliness of the older adult communities. Engaging older adults in topics, activities, or projects that are important to them and where they are the experts provides opportunities for them to be important contributors to their communities and future generations.

Accomplishment of tasks or activities with independence and autonomy is considered a practice that promotes quality of life in older adults (Ferreira, Tura, Silva, & Ferreira, 2017). Completing the intergenerational project created a sense of accomplishment in older adults because the project had an end goal and included a celebratory final community forum where key community stakeholders were present. However, more research needs to explore how intergenerational programs create a sense of accomplishment among older adult participants because accomplishment is important to older adults and we don’t know much about it in regards to intergenerational programs.

6.3 Summary

Intergenerational programs create opportunities for growth, advancement and gain during a time in older adults lives when they experience many losses. During the *Through Their Eyes* project, older adults were provided with an opportunity to develop new relationships, a space and place to be heard, and an opportunity to develop joyful memories and experiences. These opportunities promoted active aging among the older adult participants by encouraging social participation and allowing active involvement in their communities.
Figure 7. The link between intergenerational projects and active aging
Chapter 7 Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the study, addresses the research questions and discusses contributions to knowledge and future directions.

7.1 Overview of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to explore and understand, from an insider’s perspective, the experiences of six older adults who participated in the *Through Their Eyes* project. I wanted to explore a population whose voices and perspectives with these programs are sometimes missed in the literature. Since I’m also interested in community health, I wanted to explore not only how this program influences individual well-being, but also how it might influence participant’s relationship to their community. I focused on this particular intergenerational project because of my close involvement and participation over the years.

I utilized multiple research methods to explore older adults’ experiences. I first conducted semi-structured individual interviews on six participants of the *Through Their Eyes* project over six months. The aim of these interviews was to explore detailed recollections to understand the experience holistically and learn how the project influenced their well-being and relationship to community. Data from the individual interviews consisted of audio recordings, transcripts, observations and field notes. I then conducted a focus group interview after completing all twelve individual interviews. The aim of the focus group interview was to allow for further clarification, explanation and understanding from the individual interviews as well as gain new knowledge and insights. Data from the focus group interview consisted of audio recordings, observations, field notes and analytic memos. Finally, I conducted a knowledge translation workshop two weeks following the focus group interview. The aim of the knowledge translation workshop was to collectively express the participant’s experience through a shared culminating and reflective arts-based project. In addition, this arts-based component provided an opportunity for empowerment by creating a space for older adults to take action and decide how their voices were heard. Data from the knowledge translation workshop consisted of audio recordings, observations, field notes and analytic memos. Semi-structured interview guides structured the interviews. An observation guide
structured the recording of observations and field notes. The data were analyzed following case-study analysis procedures of inductive and interpretive analysis.

7.2 Addressing the Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand, from an insider’s perspective, the lived experiences of older adults who participated in the *Through Their Eyes* project. The research question and sub questions asked:

What are the experiences of older adults participating in the *Through Their Eyes* project?

\[ a. \text{ How did this experience influence their well-being?} \]

\[ b. \text{ How did this experience influence their relationship to their community?} \]

Overall, this was a positive experience and provided older adults with an opportunity they didn’t previously have. Intergenerational programs, like the *Through Their Eyes* project, can be immediately impactful to older adults because they provide an opportunity for gain. Specifically, findings illustrate the *Through Their Eyes* project provided an opportunity to develop new relationships, offered a space and place to be heard, and added a joyful memory and experience for participants.

**Opportunity for new relationships.** The *Through Their Eyes* project was an opportunity for older adults to develop new relationships with a generation that they don’t typically interact with. The relationships older adults developed with students in the *Through Their Eyes* project were genuine and meaningful.

**Opportunity for a space and place for voice to be heard.** The *Through Their Eyes* project was an opportunity for older adults to project their voice in regards to community matters. In gaining a voice, older adults were given the opportunity for advocacy and action, which resulted in feelings of pride and accomplishment.

**Opportunity for a joyful memory and experience.** The *Through Their Eyes* project was also an opportunity for a joyful experience and joyful memories that lingered long after the project.

I would argue the *Through Their Eyes* project did encourage well-being. Findings illustrate the intergenerational project developed meaningful and genuine relationships between the older adults and students, encouraged positive emotions, created a sense of pride and accomplishment among participants and fostered a deep level of commitment.
To a lesser extent, I also believe this project positively increased social cohesion. The *Through Their Eyes* project, build connectedness and solidarity between generations. It also encouraged community empowerment by allowing older adults to remain active and engaged in their community. Additionally, the project allowed older adults to be important contributors to their community thus, creating an important opportunity for reciprocity. However, this needs further explanation. There are some findings to support this but I still have questions. Creswell (2013) reminds us that this is but one persons, my, encounter with a complex case (p. 237).

7.3 Contributions to Knowledge

This research study contributes to the literature on aging and intergenerational programs by making the connection between active aging and intergenerational projects. Intergenerational programs, like the *Through Their Eyes* project encourage social participation and allow older adults to remain active and engaged in their communities. The study also adds to the intergenerational literature by exploring the viability of the PERMA Framework for Well-being to an intergenerational project. Seligman’s Theory for Well-Being served as an important tool for making sense of the data and worked well to define well-being for an intergenerational project. The study also adds to the intergenerational literature by indicating intergenerational projects can positively influence social cohesion. This study supports other research by indicating older adults are seeking to give back to their communities and contribute in meaningful ways, thus providing an important opportunity for reciprocity. However, more research needs to explore how intergenerational programs improve social cohesion because there is a gap in knowledge on this. Finally, the study makes the case for the importance of short-term intergenerational programs. Traditionally, these sorts of programs require a long term commitment. What this study shows is you can still make a meaningful contribution to the lives of older adults by setting up a small, short-term, research-based intergenerational program.

7.4 Application of Knowledge

Additionally, the study contributes to the knowledge on developing intergenerational projects. There is a need for intergenerational programs for those older
adults who are choosing to age in place. Intergenerational programs are supportive of health and well-being for older adults. Reflecting on my four years of experience with the project (student, project coordinator, teaching assistant and now researcher), an important contribution of this work is the unique format and structure of this project compared to other intergenerational programs. In particular: a) the specific age groups (older adults and university students), b) the focus of the project (research-based, service learning) and, c) timing (short term).

**Age groups.** What is unique about the *Through Their Eyes* project is that it involves older adults and university-aged students as the majority of the literature on intergenerational programs involves older adults and young children.

An outcome of the *Through Their Eyes* project is an awareness among older adults and students that they have many similarities. These include being on a fixed income; currently are or recently have lived in residence-style housing; regular users of public transportation; and dealing with either their parents or children wanting to control life decisions. Realizing these similarities is important because it allows students and older adults to build solidarity, promote empathy and have a better understanding of each other’s respective age groups, a concept termed as generational intelligence (Biggs, Haapala & Lowenstein, 2011). This common understanding also allows older adults to feel safe around younger age groups. I have observed older adults say that spending time with students allowed them to eliminate fears they previously had when they saw young students on the bus. Meaning, they will feel safer and more at ease running into this generation in public during their day-to-day lives.

Additionally, this age group can relate intellectually. The conversations, interactions and relationships the older adults developed with university students were a lot different than if they were with young children. This is significant because maintaining strong mental health is important as individual’s age (Valenzuela & Sachdev, 2009) and these conversations and interactions provided and important opportunity for mental stimulation.

**Focus of project.** Another unique aspect of the *Through Their Eyes* project is the way it is structured. As a research-based, service learning intergenerational project, *Through Their Eyes* can be viewed as a form of citizen science. This term is used to
describe activities in which citizens – amateurs or laypersons – participate in research (Cooper, Dickinson, Phillips, & Bonney, 2007).

When the project was introduced to older adults it was made clear that “real changes” were going to come out of this. This created importance and meaning to the project and meant that older adults could make a difference in their communities. Additionally, those older adults who already wanted to make a difference now had a means to. This was important because it fostered real investment in the project. This investment also made them curious about what else could be done in their neighbourhoods, which is important because it indicates their willingness to continue to be involved and for results to extend beyond their communities.

The fact that it was a research-based project was important to older adults because the information they shared had a direct impact on their neighbourhood and personal lives. Carson et al. (2011) uses the term “project experiences” when students and older adults interact in a range of intentional, planned activities during an intergenerational project. What’s significant about the Through Their Eyes project is that both generations interacted in planned, intentional activities in a purposeful way. The older adults were the experts on their community, and collaboratively with students they sought to uncover what was age-friendly and not-so age-friendly in their neighbourhood and identified opportunities for change. To explain further, the Through Their Eyes project was able to make concrete physical and social changes in their neighbourhoods. An example of a physical change was adding seating to the bus shelter across the street from one of the residences. An example of a social change was an individual taking on the responsibility of a community organizer. Their expert opinion was valued and the project provided a welcoming space for older adults in higher education (Pstross et al., 2017).

**Timing.** The majority of literature on intergenerational projects report on a long-term programs (e.g. friendly visiting, day care centres in long term care facilities). A defining feature of the Through Their Eyes project was that it was a short-term project.

During the project, older adults and students come into contact four times (approximately 4-6 hours total). It is significant that older adults reported such positive feelings towards the younger adults from just these four visits. Thomas & Weaver (2016) state that it is quality of, not the frequency of, intergenerational contact that is associated
with younger adults developing non-prejudicial attitudes towards older adults (p. 910). I believe the same can be said here. It is the quality of interactions older adults have with university students in the Through Their Eyes project, not the frequency of, that had such a strong positive influence on older adults well-being and social cohesion. Although it was a short-term project, the older adults interacted with students in a meaningful and purposeful way. Meaningful and purposeful for students in that the project contributes to their education, they gain hands on experience working with older adults and the research skills gained are applicable to future careers in public health and gerontology. Similarly, the project is meaningful and purposeful for older adults in that they engage collaboratively to share their thoughts and opinions on the age-friendliness of their neighbourhoods and see concrete opportunities for change come out of it. Finally, the success of this short term involvement is significant as traditional programs are long term (Carson, Kobayashi & Kuehne, 2011; Weaver, 2014).

7.5 Overall Limitations of Study

I have identified three overall limitations to the study: purposeful sampling, my previous involvement with the Through Their Eyes project, and observing one case.

A limitation developed through the process of recruitment. Because of purposeful sampling, it was likely that extroverted and outgoing individuals volunteered to participate in this study. Meaning, what may be missing from the data is people who are less outgoing and introverted.

Another overall limitation to the study is my previous involvement in the project. I have been immersed in the Through Their Eyes project for five years. Some may think that this could cause me to lack open-mindedness or that my pre-conceived notions may have blinded me to certain results. However, in my opinion my involvement acted as a benefit. It allowed me to gain access to these individuals; it also provided insights where an outsider may not have observed the depth that I witnessed. Additionally, I feel I gained the trust of my participants from having previous encounters with all of them prior to the start of the study. This may have allowed participants to be more forthcoming in their interviews.

For this study, I interviewed and observed one case, the experiences of participating in the Through Their Eyes project from the perspective of six older adults. A
limitation may be that these individuals all came from one region, mid-sized towns and were all community-dwelling older adults. All participants also lived in low-income homes for adults 55 years of age and older. Results may differ if older adults resided in suburban neighbourhoods, larger, more urban cities, or had a higher social economic status. This case was unique in that it represented the older adults experiences with a specific, local, intergenerational project that involved university students. Because of this, my findings are limited to this particular case and cannot be generalized, although that was not the intention. However, my findings are useful in their transferability to other intergenerational projects.

7.6 Future Directions

I have identified 4 suggestions for future research in the area of intergenerational programs based on the findings from this study.

1. Intergenerational programs, particularly with older adults and university students, promote active aging and quality of life for older adults. There is a gap in the literature on intergenerational programs with community-dwelling older adults. Researchers should continue to explore the experiences of this population because we know the majority of Canadians over 65 currently live in private dwellings and want to remain there for as long as possible. This study illustrates the importance of intergenerational projects and their ability to encourage active aging and enhance quality of life among community-dwelling older adults.

2. Researchers should continue to explore the relationship between intergenerational programs and how they influence social cohesion. This concept worked well to push my interpretation and gain insight into how the Through Their Eyes project facilitated social cohesion among participants. This study provides a useful starting point, however much more research is needed to fully understand how intergenerational programs can promote social cohesion.

3. Researchers should also continue to explore and apply Seligman’s well-being theory to intergenerational programs. Seligman’s model is well defined and is aligned to elements of the WHO’s active aging framework and the goals of
intergenerational programs. Seligman’s Theory for Well-Being served as an important tool for making sense of the data and worked well to define well-being for an intergenerational project. I encourage more researchers to explore and apply the PERMA framework for well-being with intergenerational programs.

4. Finally, researchers should also explore intergenerational programs ability to combat social isolation and loneliness more directly.

Canada’s population is aging and timing is critical. In the active aging framework, programs that promote social connections are just as important as those that improve physical health status (WHO, 2002). While enhancing physical health, we also need to care for the social health of older adults. We also know older adults want to age in place (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2008; Lin, 2005). I would argue, based on the findings and what I learned from this study, intergenerational programs encourage active aging and play an important role in creating age-friendly communities. We are looking for ways to support our population. Providing opportunities for community-dwelling older adults to participate in intergenerational programs is a public health approach to encourage active aging and enhance the quality of life of our aging population.
References


Carrasco, M. A., & Bilal, U. (2016). A sign of the times: To have or to be? Social capital or social cohesion? *Social Science & Medicine, 159*, 127–131. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.05.012


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https://doi.org/10.1080/01924788.2016.1127041


doi:10.1177/0894318416680708


York: Routledge, 1996.


Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Did you participate in the Through Their Eyes Project?

I am looking for volunteers to participate in a research study that explores the experiences of older adults who participated in the Through Their Eyes Project.

Your participation will involve me coming to your home and talking to you, as well as participating in a group interview with 5 other people.

If you would like to find out more information or volunteer to be apart of this study please call: Tia at: 905-977-1364

The study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Brock University Research Ethics Board (file #16-066).
Appendix B: Study Information Sheet

Study Information

Who I Am:
My Name is Tia Rogers-Jarrell and I am a Master’s student at Brock University in the Department of Applied Health Sciences.

The goal of my research is to support the health and wellbeing of older adults as they age. In this research study I am interested in exploring the lived experiences of older adults who participated in the Through Their Eyes Project.

What I Want to Do:
I want to interview six older adults who participated in the Through Their Eyes Project. I will interview each participant in their homes (twice) and then hold one focus group interview and one knowledge translation workshop with all six of the participants. I will use this information to understand how or if this particular intergenerational project impacted a) their well-being, and b) their relationship to their community.

Who Can Participate:
Anyone who has participated in the Through Their Eyes Project at one of the four research sites and is willing to participate in two individual interviews and two group interviews.

What You Have to Do:
Each interview will last between 1 and 2 hours. During our conversations I would like to tape record what you say so that I can further review it later.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate and want to withdraw from the project, you can do so at anytime. All the information you give us will be strictly confidential.
Appendix C: Telephone Script

Hello ________________.

This is Tia calling from Brock University (OR thank you for calling, I appreciate your interest in “Intergenerational Community Projects” research study). You may remember me from the Through Their Eyes project. I would like talk to you about a research study going on at Brock, are you interested in hearing about it? I’m going to read you the study information sheet. This will give you a better understanding of the study and its objectives (read the information sheet).

I would now like to ask you a few questions just to make sure all of the research criteria have been met. Is that OK?

1. Did you participate in The Through Their Eyes Project?
2. Are you willing to be interviewed twice in your home?
3. Are you willing to participate in a two group interviews, one focus group interview and one knowledge translation workshop, after completing the first two interviews (with up to 5 other people)?

Thank you so much for answering my questions.

a) You meet all of the criteria; do you have any questions for me? Now that you have a better understanding of the time commitment, I would like to invite you to participate in the study. Can we arrange a time to meet to sign a letter of consent and begin the interview process? What is your address?

OR

b) I’m sorry, I really appreciate your interest but you don’t quite fit the criteria for THIS particular study. But if you are interested in volunteering for other projects, I’d be happy to keep your name and telephone # on file?
Appendix D: Informed Consent

**Project Title:** *Intergenerational Community Projects: Exploring Older Adults’ Experiences with the Through Their Eyes Project*

**Principal Investigator (PI):** Tia Rogers-Jarrell, MA Candidate Department of Applied Health Sciences Brock University 905-977-1364 trogersjarrell@brocku.ca

**Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Paula Gardner, Assistant Professor Department of Applied Health Sciences Brock University (905) 688-5550 Ext. 6176 paula.gardner@brocku.ca

**INVITATION**
You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is explore and understand the lived experiences of older adults who participated in the *Through Their Eyes (TTE) Project.*

**WHAT’S INVOLVED**
Participation in this project involves the following:
  a) Signing this consent form
  b) Taking part in TWO individual interviews in your home. Each interview will last between 60-120 minutes.
c) Taking part in TWO group interviews (location to be either in the community or at Brock University). Each interview will last 60-120 minutes.
   a. One focus group interview
   b. One knowledge translation workshop
d) Having your interviews audio recorded and typed up
a) Being observed in your home environment and surroundings
   a. Observable emotions and body language
   b. Home environment

The audio recordings and observations will be combined with other participants and used to generate some overall findings. These findings will be shared with you and other people in either written reports or presentations.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS**
There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study however sharing your personal feelings and experiences may make you feel uncomfortable.

While there is no compensation for participating in this study, there may be some benefit to your participation. You may enjoy the visits and time spent with Tia, the SPI. You may also benefit knowing that your contribution may be helpful to community planners and organizations that support older adults in the Niagara Region.

Please note that any research taking place in a participant’s home presents opportunity for risks related to abuse/harm. Participants should be informed Tia is under obligation to follow mandatory reporting laws, meaning if you disclose or she views any abuse, she is required to report it.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**
Your participation in this study is confidential, only the principal investigator and student principal investigator will have access to the data. Your participation cannot be kept anonymous because other people (e.g. other participants, building managers) will know you are participating in this study. We will however keep your contact information anonymous (e.g. address and phone number).

Transcripts will be kept indefinitely on a secure (password-protected) computer. Access to this data will be restricted to Tia Rogers-Jarrell (SPI) and Paula Gardner (PI and faculty supervisor). We will review and integrate it with information we collect from other people we interview and come up with some overall findings and conclusions.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions that you do not wish to. You can withdraw from this study at any time by telling or calling Tia, or informing your building manager. If you decide to withdraw from this study, you may do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you choose to withdraw, your individual interview data will be electronically deleted and/or shredded within 24 hours.

Due to the nature of the two group interviews, it will be difficult to remove your contributions. By signing this consent form, you understand that if you withdrawal, your contributions in the group interviews will not be removed or destroyed.

**PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**
Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. I will provide a short summary of the research results as feedback to all participants so you have the opportunity to learn the outcomes of the research.
CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Tia Rogers-Jarrell using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University [file #16-066]. If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca. Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM
I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: ______________________________________

Signature: _____________________________ Date: __________

PI Signature___________________________ Date: __________

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Appendix E: Participant Information Survey

Name: __________________________________________

Gender: ____________________

Age: ______________________

Place of Residence: ______________________________

What year did you participate in the *Through Their Eyes Project*? ____________
Appendix F: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Guides

Individual Interview 1

The aim of the first individual interview will be to: a) build rapport, b) gain an understanding of their day-to-day life and c) get them thinking about and remembering the Through Their Eye’s Project.

Data will be collected using questions/prompts, observations as well as field notes. The interview will be audio-recorded.

Key types of information / focus of this interview:

a) **Daily life.** Get a sense of their everyday life with a particular focus on what they do outside of their apartment and in the community (i.e., Where they go in the community, who they see and what they do).

b) **Recollection of the Through Their Eyes Project.** Get a sense of what they remember about the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics And Open Questions</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily life</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to begin by talking about daily life. Walk me through what your days are like.</td>
<td>Can you give me an example? Elaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is it like to live in this area?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sort of activities do you like to do in the community?</td>
<td>What is it about _____ (activity or place) that makes you continually revisit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does this _____ (activity or place) make you feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How often do you participate or visit this place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Positive and negative emotions will be explored)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recollection of the Through Their Eyes Project

Now, I would like to discuss your experience with the Through Their Eyes Project. When did you participate in the project?

What do you remember about it?

What were your initial thoughts and emotions before meeting your student interviewers?

During the project, did you feel more connected to the community?

Thank you for your time, do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

| I notice this place is outside of your community, how do you get there? Why is it that you travel far? |
| OR (if doesn’t participate in any activities or visit anywhere) |
| Why not? Please explain |

Explain one memory from the Through Their Eyes Project that sticks out to you.

Do you remember the students? Do you remember where they took you?

Why is that memory so vivid? Can you recall how you felt in that moment? (Positive and negative emotions will be explored)

Excited? Nervous? Scared?

- Why? What about it caused you to feel ______? |

If so, why? If not, why? Can you give me an example?
**Individual Interview 2**

The aim of the second individual interview will be to: a) explore detailed recollections of the experience to understand the whole picture and b) learn if/how the Through Their Eyes Project had an influence on their well-being and their relationship to their community.

Data will be collected using questions/prompts, observations as well as field notes. The interview will be audio-recorded.

**Key types of information / focus of this interview:**

- **a) Well-being.**
- **b) Relationship to their community.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics And Open Questions</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Well-Being</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to begin by talking about well-being. How’s life? How are you doing generally?</td>
<td>Physical, social, and emotional well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You mentioned _______ in our first interview, what other activities, if any, do you participate in?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that ______ (activity or place) has an impact on the way you view your community? How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feel more connected? Safe? Respected? Trusted?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• OR unsafe? Uncomfortable?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive emotions? (i.e. Pleasure, satisfaction,)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negative emotions? (i.e. worry, disappointment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comfortable? Uncomfortable? Welcomed? Pleasure?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engaged? Distracted?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did time seem to stop?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you fully concentrated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Describe the relationship you built with your student participants over the duration of the project. How did you feel about the students you worked with?

Were you “in the moment”?

Did you *enjoy* the experience?

Was this relationship *meaningful* to you?

Why or why not?

Are you still in contact with your student participants?

Why or why not?

What might have been missing from this relationship you built?

- What could have been done differently that was missed in this relationship development piece.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to Their Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now lets talk about community. What does community mean to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe what you consider your community (your people, your neighbourhood)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you feel about your neighbours?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you belong here?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why/why not? Can you give me an example?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you feel like a respected member of your community?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel connected to your neighbours? Safe? Included?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If so, give me an example of when you felt _______ (safe, included). If not, what is it that makes you feel _______ (disconnected, unsafe, isolated)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<p>| Do you ever feel isolated in the | How would you describe the interactions you have with your neighbours? (i.e. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>community?</th>
<th>meaningful, engaging, or a burden)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe what your community was like during the Through Their Eyes Project?</td>
<td>Give an example, elaborate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you feel differently about your community during the project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  - Safe? Unsafe? Respected?  
  - Comfortable? Uncomfortable?  
  Can you give me an example? |
| What, if anything, has changed with your relationship to your community since the Through Their Eyes Project? | If so, why? If not, why?  
Can you give me an example? |
| Do you feel more connected to your community now, after participating in the Through Their Eyes Project? | The relationships with your neighbours.  
The activities you participate in.  
  - Love, joy? |
| Thank you for your time, do you have anything else you would like to add? Any questions you would like to ask me? | How so? What exactly has changed, can you describe an encounter that demonstrates this change? |
Appendix G: Focus Group Interview Guide

The aim of the focus group interview will be to: a) allow for further clarification, explanation and understanding of the findings from individual interviews and, b) gain new knowledge and insights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics And Open Questions</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good morning everyone. Lets start off with some introductions: your name, what building</td>
<td>A lot of you mentioned the strong relationships you built with your student interviewers, what else would you like to add to that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you’re from and what year you participated in the project (go around the table).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to begin by revisiting the relationship you developed with your student</td>
<td>How do you feel about that now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interviewers. Please describe the relationship you built with your student pairs over the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duration of the project.</td>
<td>I heard from some of you that you would still like to keep touch with your student interviewer, could you tell me why that is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of you are no longer in touch with your student interviewer, can you help me</td>
<td>important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand, even though you want to you’re not though?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you did have a relationship, what would you want that to look like? (Show them around?</td>
<td>Why are those memories so powerful, so vivid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee? Examples of what you might do, what might that look like?)</td>
<td>What can you tell me about the atmosphere in the room that day?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the individual interviews everyone talked about the community forum, what was so</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exciting about that?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How has your community changed since the Through Their Eyes project? Within the building and outside, what about your neighbourhood?

Thank you for participating in this Focus Group interview. Before we end, what are your final thoughts and comments about the Through Their Eyes project? Anything you didn’t get a chance to say?

Does anyone have any questions you would like to ask me?

Thank you again for your participation.

Some of you mentioned there was a lot of talk of the project during building activities? Can you comment on this?

One person became a community organizer after the project. They mentioned the Through Their Eyes project made them notice that there was a lack of community and connectedness in their building. Does anyone have a similar experience?
Appendix H: Focus Group Agenda

Intergenerational Community Projects, Exploring Older Adult’s Experiences with the *Through Their Eyes* Project

**Agenda**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:30 - 11:50 am</td>
<td><strong>Introductions, Overview and Review Media Consent Form</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Lets introduce ourselves!</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Names, what building you live in&lt;br&gt;• Briefly mention why you volunteers for the Through Their Eyes project. What sparked you interest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 - 12:35 pm</td>
<td><strong>Focus group interview</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>The aim of the focus group interview is to:</em>&lt;br&gt;• Allow for further clarification, explanation and understanding of your experiences with the <em>Through Their Eyes</em> project&lt;br&gt;• Gain knowledge that is built on other people’s knowledge by providing a chance to work collectively to move ideas further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:35 - 1:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Lunch and coffee break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 1:45 pm</td>
<td><strong>Knowledge translation workshop</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>The aim of the knowledge translation workshop is to:</em>&lt;br&gt;• Collectively express your experiences through a shared culminating and reflective arts-based project&lt;br&gt;• Provide the power to take action and decide how your voices will be heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 - 2:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Wrap up &amp; thank you’s</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Knowledge Translation Workshop Guide

The aim of the knowledge translation workshop is to; a) collectively express the participant’s experience through a shared culminating and reflective arts-based project and b) provide them the power to take action and decide how their voices will be heard.

This will be participant-generated. During the focus group interview we will brainstorm ideas.

**The reflective arts-based project may be:**
- A letter to the mayor
- Developing an advertising campaign or advocacy group
- Performing a play
- Getting airtime on a radio station
- A collage

**Questions to get the discussion started:**

How should we proceed? How can I help, or be of service?

What’s one thing you want others to know about intergenerational projects?

Let’s just say the mayor came to lunch and we were going to say one thing about the project or about your neighborhood, what would it be?
Appendix J: Knowledge Translation Workshop Agenda

Intergenerational Community Projects, Exploring Older Adult’s Experiences with the *Through Their Eyes* Project

Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:30 - 11:50 am</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; share your thoughts throughout the past month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 - 12:35 pm</td>
<td>Knowledge translation workshop – Part 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The aim of the knowledge translation workshop is to:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collectively express your experiences through a shared culminating and reflective arts-based project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide the power to take action and decide how your voices will be heard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Video</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are we going to film a video?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What would you like to say?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Storyboard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>AND/OR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Article</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are we going to write an article?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are we going to send a letter to the mayor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o What will we say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:35 - 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch and coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 1:45 pm</td>
<td>Knowledge translation workshop – Part 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video and/or Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Film video / parts of video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 - 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Next steps, wrap up &amp; thank you’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowledge Translation Workshop

During the Through Their Eyes project we learned about what you were happy about in your community and what you’re not so happy about.

- If you could change one thing what would it be?
- If you could say one thing, what would it be?
- Would you want to let other people know about the project?
  - If so, what is the best way to get the project into other buildings?
  - How would you spread the word of the project?

How should we proceed? How can I help?
Appendix L: Participants Questions and Answers for the Knowledge Translation Workshop

How did the project benefit you?
- Better outlook on different things - D.
- Made me more aware of the community around me - S instead of regressing like a lot of seniors (social isolation).
- Freedom of speech - feeling heard - felt really listened to.
- Fun time - met my hairdresser.
- Helps to step outside of comfort zone.

What was your favourite part?
- Amazed how comfortable I felt meeting the 2 students, it was as if I had known them forever.
- Really shocked by Paula and her friendly/informal demeanor.
- Loved listening about the student perspective.
- Students were also so comfortable with the seniors.
- Loved the community forum and getting to meet the other participants in the project.

How would you get others involved? What would you tell them?
- Get a gatekeeper to approach individually.
- As long as you are willing to meet someone new and have a conversation, it’s worth it.
- Clearly explain the purpose of the project and what is expected of them/their role.

Appendix M: Observation Guide

Observations will occur during the individual interviews, focus group interview, and knowledge translation workshop.

Key Focus:

a) Observable emotions and body language – is their body language different when they talk about the project as opposed to other topics?
   • Engaged, leaning forward
   • Whether or not they’re dismissive
   • Signs of openness, willingness, excitement, anger, frustration

b) Artifacts – what evidence/artifacts are in the home environment
   • Photographs with student interviewers from the Through Their Eyes Project
   • Thank you cards from the students
   • Other objects that may be related to the project
Appendix N: Writing Field Notes

Field notes will be recorded before, during and after individual interviews, the focus group interview and the knowledge translation workshop.

Key Focus:

a) **Descriptive Notes – document setting, actions, behaviours and conversations**
   - The physical setting
   - Meaning of perspectives
   - Direct quotes related to research questions and purpose of study
   - Impact I might have had on the situation
   - Sensory information: sights, sounds, textures, smells

b) **Reflective Notes – record thoughts, ideas, questions and concerns**
   - Note ideas, impressions, thoughts and criticisms about what I observed
   - Unanswered questions
   - Clarify points, correct mistakes/misunderstandings
   - Any thoughts about future interviews or observations

Some Additional Guiding Points and Questions:

a) Describe everything you can remember (this may help to link related phenomenon to one another or point to research directions later).

b) Analysis of what you learning in the setting regarding research questions
   - What themes can you begin to identify?
   - What questions do you have to help your focus?
   - Think about subsequent visits

c) Reflection of what you learned: what was it like? What felt comfortable/uncomfortable?
   - In what ways did you connect with the informant?
   - In what ways didn’t you connect with the informant?