

# Connecting Generations

If you walk through the halls of Mason Wright during a typical weekday, you might happen upon a group of *Bright Futures* pre-schoolers taking a stroll with their teachers or bringing smiles to the faces of Mason Wright residents and staff. On another day, you'll see 3rd graders from Rebeccah Johnson School reading aloud to their Mason Wright reading buddies. And soon, students from Bay Path University

will join the list of intergenerational visitors when a group of students brings "memory kits" to share with interested resident volunteers as part of a research project granted by AARP and the Council of Independent Colleges. The kits are intended to be used as communication tools between students and the residents they visit, appealing to various areas of interest such as travel, health and beauty, and cooking.



While the ability to enjoy fulfillment and independence after retirement is a wonderful opportunity, it is important to keep the generations connected. Studies show that, compared to peers in



traditional preschools, children in intergenerational day-care programs are more patient, express more empathy, exhibit more self-control, and have better manners. And while the seniors are not actually changing diapers or feeding babies and toddlers, they tend to feel needed and useful and are often more focused and happy when children are around. In a society that often has stereotypically negative attitudes of older people, that feeling of purpose and belonging is rare, treasured and life-affirming. At Mason Wright, we believe that when generations come together, everyone can benefit!

