

# **Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Early Care and Education Phase 3, Year 3 Evaluation**



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## **Engaging Baby Boomers in Early Childhood Phase 3 Evaluation**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Boomers and Babies is a cross-generational program supporting efforts by early childhood care and education organizations to engage baby boomer age volunteers in activities that are known to contribute to children’s school readiness. The baby boomers generation is defined as those individuals born between 1946 and 1964. The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) completed a three-year implementation phase that was built on a pilot period and expanded the reach of the project across the state.

This collaboration was part of the Community Experience Partnership, a national initiative of The Atlantic Philanthropies, involving 32 community foundations located across the United States. These foundations sought to find new ways to engage the rapidly growing older adult population in activities that serve others, improve quality of life, and address community needs. The Oregon Community Foundation is one of nine community foundations in the “Community Solutions” track implementing initiatives focused on engaging older adults in specific community issues.

The Community Experience Partnership’s National Cross-Site Evaluation is an effort to collect similar information from all programs focusing on engaging boomers in volunteer work. The San Francisco-based evaluation firm, Learning for Action, developed a common set of data elements relevant to all “Community Solutions” sites. The goal is to aggregate characteristics of older adults participating in these diverse projects and reveal notable differences among sites, thus enriching the initiative-wide story of the Community Experience Partnership.

#### **Phase 1**

In the Spring of 2008, OCF contracted with Oregon State University (OSU) to conduct a feasibility study identifying the opportunities and barriers to engaging baby boomer volunteers in early childhood settings. This study, *Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Oregon’s System of Early Care and Education* was released in July, 2008 as Phase 1 of the Boomers and Babies initiative (Pratt, MacTavish, Rennekamp, & Bowman, 2008). The study offered findings from early care and learning professionals, boomer-age volunteers, and volunteer placement agencies from across Oregon.

#### **Phase 2**

In October 2008, The Oregon Community Foundation in partnership with The Atlantic Philanthropies, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, Knowledge Universe, and Juan Young Trust West funded three pilot projects aimed at integrating boomer-age volunteers into early childhood programs.

The objectives of the Boomers and Babies Phase 2 pilot initiative were as follows:

- Strengthen early childhood programs – and in particular, their ability to impact children’s positive growth and development – through baby boomer volunteerism
- Bring more caring adults into children’s lives in meaningful ways
- Support tangible increases in the capacity of early childhood organizations to serve young children and families
- Raise awareness of early childhood as an attractive volunteer arena for older adults
- Create meaningful opportunities for boomers to use their experience and skills to give back to their communities
- Educate the early childhood field about how to use volunteers effectively
- Learn more about engaging boomers

The results of the Phase 2 pilot year are outlined in *Boomers and Babies: Pilot Project Evaluation* (Rennekamp & Sektnan, 2009).

### Phase 3

#### *Year One (2010-2011)*

In 2010, two of the pilot programs received funding to carry on project implementation through March 2012. These organizations, Adelante Mujeres in Forest Grove and the Family Nurturing Center in Medford, solidified their programs and formed partnerships with other organizations in their communities to promote boomer volunteerism in early childhood settings. Below is a brief description of each of these programs and their objectives for the pilot funding. Oregon State University continued to evaluate the progress of these two sites, along with the major successes and challenges experienced by the organizations during Phase 3 of the initiative. A summary of the accomplishments for the first year of Phase 3 are year are outlined in *Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Early Care and Education Phase 3 Evaluation* (Manoogian, Nott, Rennekamp, & Sektnan, 2011).

<b><i>Pilot Grants (2008-2012)</i></b>
<p><b>Adelante Mujeres</b> – A child development program serving bilingual and monolingual immigrant children and their families in Forest Grove. At Adelante, volunteers are “Reading Pals”, who come weekly to the early childhood classrooms and read to preschool children in English.</p>
<p><b>Family Nurturing Center</b> – Jackson County’s Children’s Relief Nursery collaborates with other agencies serving young children and families to create a county-wide “Circle of Caring” project which includes support of home-based child care programs, services for high-risk parents and children, and programs for young children with special needs. Most volunteers are placed in therapeutic classrooms, where they engage in reading, play, and other activities with the high-need children served by the program. Through the Child Care Resource Network (CCRN), volunteers make regular visits to family child care provider homes to read with the children in care. Through Child Development Services (CDS), volunteers serve preschool-age special needs children in classrooms.</p>

### *Learning Community*

In addition to the funding of pilot grants, the final phase of the Boomers and Babies initiative included the creation of a statewide Learning Community of early childhood education organizations. The Learning Community met over the course of a year to develop and hone volunteer management skills of staff, specifically focusing on recruiting and retaining boomer-age volunteers. Sixteen early care and learning organizations serving at-risk children birth to age five throughout Oregon were selected to participate.

Each organization received a \$5,000 grant to assess its readiness and capacity to successfully recruit, integrate, and use boomer-age volunteers in their organizations. The primary tool used for assessment and planning was the “Volunteer Management Audit” by Energize, Inc. Partners also received guidance from the Boomers and Babies Core Project Team in the form of ongoing consultation; access to resources relevant to boomer volunteer management; and two all-day convenings for training, technical assistance, and opportunities to learn from other Learning Community participants. Participants developed an action plan for involving boomer volunteers in their early childhood programs. The Learning Community continues to share resources among the members.

### ***Year Two (2011-2012)***

In 2011, members of the Learning Community were invited to submit proposals to initiate a volunteer program targeting boomer age volunteers. The two pilot sites completed their final year of funding during 2011-2012. In addition to the two pilot programs, five early childhood organizations were selected to receive up to two years of funding to develop and launch extensive boomer volunteer programs focusing on direct service with children. One of these funded projects was a partnership between two organizations, and these two organizations reported their accomplishments separately. Therefore, six grant sites are referred to throughout the report. Additional financial support was provided by the PGE Foundation, Knowledge Universe, the Juan Young Trust West, and several OCF Donor Advised Funds. A summary of the accomplishments for the second year of Phase 3 are outlined in *Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Early Care and Education Phase 3, Year 2 Evaluation* (Sektan, Manoogian, Rennekamp, & Nott, 2012).

On the following page is a list of the organizations funded in the final phase of the Boomers and Babies initiative, including their proposed plans and an overview of the primary focus of the volunteer activities for each.

<b>Project Grants (2011-2013)</b>
<p><b>Family Building Blocks/Family Development Center</b> - Family Building Blocks, Marion and Polk County's relief nursery, will collaborate with another relief nursery, Family Development Center in Roseburg, which participated in the Boomers &amp; Babies Learning Community. Together they will create a Boomer Volunteer Toolkit that will eventually be available to all relief nurseries in the state to assist them with effective boomer volunteer engagement. These organizations will also increase the number of boomer volunteers involved in their organizations. <i>Although this is one funded project, the two organizations report their accomplishments separately and are listed individually in the report.</i></p>
<p><b>Gladstone School District 115</b> - The Gladstone Center for Children and Families, a partnership between the Gladstone School District and several early childhood non-profit agencies including Head Start, Healthy Start, John Wetten Elementary, and the Family Stepping Stones Relief Nursery, will be developing a center-wide volunteer program to streamline and coordinate the engagement of boomer volunteers. Volunteers will support learning directly in the classrooms and "activity zones" as well as provide necessary administration assistance to the center.</p>
<p><b>NeighborImpact</b> - NeighborImpact, the Community Action Agency providing emergency, housing, and early care and education services for Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties, will engage boomer volunteers to assist with Story Time, School Readiness, Social-Emotional Development and Math Kits in Head Start classrooms and in-home child care settings. Bilingual volunteers will work directly with ESL children. The Education Service District and the Deschutes County Library will work together to identify the children with needs and provide volunteer training. <i>Partial support for the NeighborImpact project comes from the PGE Foundation.</i></p>
<p><b>Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start Inc.</b> - Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start (UMCHS) will expand and sustain a culture of volunteerism across the seven rural counties it serves. Boomer volunteers will work in each of UMCHS's 17 classrooms as well as be trained to do home visits for families, as part of the agency's parenting education Hub project. There will be a focused effort on engaging retired Hispanic community members as volunteers and on long-term volunteer retention.</p>
<p><b>Volunteers of America Oregon</b> - The Family Relief Nursery at Volunteers of America Oregon (VOA) will expand its volunteer program to effectively engage boomer volunteers to work directly in the classrooms as well as provide administrative capacity to the organization. Viewed as a pilot program for VOA, its strategies will eventually be implemented in other VOA programs to expand the impact of older adult volunteers throughout the wider organization.</p>

### **Year Three (2012-2013)**

During the third year of the initiative, the six grantees receiving funding in 2012 continued to build and strengthen their boomer volunteer programs. The goals of this continued investment were to demonstrate that boomer volunteerism strengthens early childhood organizations and improves children's readiness for school, as well as explore how to better attract boomers to these volunteer opportunities.

## METHODOLOGY

The Phase 3 Boomers and Babies evaluation used a variety of evaluation methods and data sources. The following section outlines each of these methods and data sources.

### Six-Month and Year-End Reports

Boomers and Babies projects completed a six-month report in December 2012 and a final, year-end report in June 2013. These reports were completed online using SurveyMonkey®. The reports included, but were not limited to, the following topics:

- programming and volunteer numbers
- recruitment and training
- volunteer management and support
- organizational change
- unexpected outcomes
- obstacles encountered
- benefits to children in program
- impact on community

### Administrative Staff Interviews and Survey

Administrative staff includes the executive director and volunteer coordinator at each project site. At the end of the project year, telephone interviews were conducted with the executive director and volunteer coordinator at each grant site. Before the interview, administrative staff were asked to complete an online survey. Survey topics included:

- program's organizational infrastructure for supporting boomer volunteers
- extent to which volunteers were integrated into their organization or program
- extent to which they experienced particular barriers to integrating boomers into their program
- extent to which they viewed volunteers as directly impacting children in their program
- helpfulness of the learning community
- likelihood that they would continue to utilize boomer volunteers and sustain the volunteer coordinator position after the funding for the initiative ends

Interview questions addressed recruitment strategies, roles of boomer-age volunteers, training of volunteers, and attitudes of staff towards volunteers. Barriers and challenges to project implementation, lessons learned, and volunteers' impact on the organization were also discussed.

A total of 12 executive directors and volunteer coordinators participated in the interview and survey. Ten of the administrative staff were female, with two male volunteer coordinators. Eleven were White, with one of mixed race. Eighty-three percent of administrative staff held a bachelor's or graduate degree, with the remaining seventeen percent having some college credit. Administrative staff had worked between 9 months and 35 years at their organization. One-third had worked at the organization for less than five years, with an additional third having worked between five and ten years, and the final third having worked at the organization for over 11 years.



## Teacher Survey

An online survey was used to capture the early childhood teacher's perceptions of integrating boomer volunteers into their classroom. The executive director of each new project grant was sent a link for the survey to forward to their teachers. The survey asked teachers to rate the:

- overall organization's infrastructure for supporting boomer volunteers
- integration of volunteers into their particular classroom
- barriers to integrating boomers into their classroom
- perceptions of volunteers since the project began
- impact on the organization's ability to serve children

A total of 42 teachers from the six project sites responded to the survey. Of those responding to the demographic questions, 35 were female and 5 were male. Thirty-one of the teachers were White (78%), five were Hispanic/Latino (13%), one was Native American (3%), one was Black/African American (3%), one was Asian/Pacific Islander (3%), and one was biracial/mixed (3%). Fifty-two percent of the teachers held a bachelor's or graduate degree, with the remaining having an associate's degree (28%), some college credit (13%), or a high school diploma/GED (8%). Teachers ranged in ages from 23 to 59 with an average age of 37 years. Six of the teachers (19%) fell within the boomer range with birth years between 1946 and 1964. Teachers had worked between 6 months and 22 years at their organization, with an average of five years. Sixty-one percent had worked at the organization for less than five years.

## Boomer Volunteer Survey

In the spring of 2013, a survey was used to capture the perceptions and experiences of boomer volunteers at all eight grant project sites. The survey was distributed in two forms: an online survey and mailed survey. For the online survey, a SurveyMonkey® link was sent to administrative staff to forward to volunteers for whom they had email addresses. The OSU team also mailed each site a specified number of survey packets to be mailed to volunteers for whom email addresses were not available. Administrative staff addressed the packet and mailed it to their boomer volunteers. Surveys were returned by the volunteers via mail directly to OSU. The returned surveys were entered in SurveyMonkey® by OSU evaluation staff in order to combine them with the surveys completed online.

The survey asked volunteers to rate:

- the program's organizational infrastructure for supporting boomer volunteers
- their integration into the organization or program
- their motivation for volunteering
- how they have been impacted by volunteering
- how their volunteer work impacted the children they served
- their perceived barriers to volunteering in an early childhood setting
- the likelihood that they would continue to volunteer in the future

Across the eight sites, a total of 99 volunteers completed the boomer volunteer survey. Two-thirds were collected online, and one-third by mail. Table 1 lists the number of respondents by site.

**Table 1: Number of Respondents by Project Site**

	Respondents
Adelante Mujeres	2
Family Nurturing Center	9
Family Building Blocks	38
Family Development Center	3
Gladstone School District 115	13
NeighborImpact	10
Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start Inc.	12
Volunteers of America Oregon	10
Unspecified	2

### Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data consisted of survey responses from administrative staff, teachers, and boomer volunteers as well as data from the project sites in their six-month and year-end reports. Data were analyzed using descriptive techniques including calculating means and standard deviations.

Quantitative data from online surveys completed by administrative staff and teachers were also analyzed using dependent t-tests to assess whether participants reported statistically significant changes in mean scores between the assessments in 2012 and 2013. Tests were conducted separately for administrative staff and teachers. Dependent t-tests calculate whether there was a significant difference between means of different samples. The test assumes the means are equal; results are significant when there is a statistical difference in the rating between assessments ( $p < .05$ ). Due to the small pool of administrative staff and therefore low statistical power ( $N = 28$ ), we were unable to detect more than two significant effects for this subgroup.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data consisted of interview transcripts, administrative reports, and open-ended answers to survey questions. All data was analyzed with distinctions made according to whether the respondent was a boomer volunteer, teacher, or administrative staff member. Pseudonyms were used for names of volunteers, staff members, and children. In some cases, proper pronouns that distinguished gender were altered to protect confidentiality.

## FINDINGS

The Phase 3 evaluation explored three overarching objectives for the funded projects: **increasing organizational capacity to support boomer volunteers, engaging boomer volunteers in meaningful service, and impacting positive outcomes for children.** The following sections explore the grantees progress in each of these objectives during the last year of Phase 3.

### 1. Organizational Capacity

For early childhood programs to be strengthened through baby boomer volunteerism, organizations must address capacity issues related to volunteer involvement. In the Boomers and Babies study (Phase 1) and pilot project evaluation (Phase 2) conducted by OSU, both early childhood professionals and boomers indicated that successful integration of boomer-age volunteers would hinge on the ability of the early childhood agency to recruit, train, place, and supervise volunteers. During the past year, OSU evaluated the organizational capacity of funded organizations to integrate boomer volunteers into their early childhood programs.

Key indicators of successful integration of boomer volunteers in relation to organizational capacity include:

- Increased volunteerism
- Utilization of effective recruitment strategies
- Increased coordination of volunteers
- Integration of boomer volunteers into the organization

#### *1.1 Increase in Volunteerism*

A key objective for each project site was to bring more caring adults into children's lives in meaningful ways. The six sites were successful in increasing the number of boomer age adults volunteering within their organizations. The following sections discuss the number of volunteers, hours volunteered, and children served for the six new grant sites.

##### *Number of Volunteers*

During the past year, a total of **464** new boomer volunteers were recruited by the organizations. Of the newly recruited boomers, 25% volunteered in recurring roles while 75% volunteered in episodic roles. Recurring roles are roles in which a person volunteers on a regular basis, such as working in the classroom or in administrative functions. Episodic roles are usually limited-duration or one-time roles, such as facility maintenance, building book shelves, providing transportation for field trips, or volunteering at a fundraiser or specific event.

In addition to boomer volunteers, organizations recruited **1,191** non-boomer volunteers during the program year for a combined total of **1,757** new and existing non-boomer volunteers at their organizations. In total, **1,655** boomer and non-boomer volunteers were recruited in the 2012-2013 program year, for a total of **2,481** current volunteers at

the end of the project year. Table 2 displays the number of volunteers for boomer, non-boomer, and all volunteers. See Appendix 1 for a summary of volunteers at each site.

**Table 2: Number of Volunteers**

	Total
<b>Number of Volunteers</b>	
<b>Boomer Volunteers</b>	
Number of NEW Boomer volunteers recruited this year	<b>464</b>
<i>in RECURRING volunteer roles</i>	<b>25%</b>
<i>in EPISODIC volunteer roles</i>	<b>75%</b>
Total number of ALL Boomer volunteers	<b>724</b>
<i>in RECURRING volunteer roles</i>	<b>36%</b>
<i>in EPISODIC volunteer roles</i>	<b>64%</b>
<b>Non-Boomer Volunteers</b>	
Number of NEW Non-Boomer volunteers recruited this year	<b>1,191</b>
Total number of Non-Boomer volunteers	<b>1,757</b>
<b>All Volunteers</b>	
Total number of volunteers recruited this year	<b>1,655</b>
<b>Total number of volunteers</b>	<b>2,481</b>

*Note:* Results from June 1, 2012 – May 30, 2013.

The six project sites reported having **161** boomer volunteers when the project started in 2011. Over the two years of the grant, sites recruited a total of **757** new boomer volunteers, with **724**<sup>1</sup> boomer volunteers still actively engaged at the end of the grant period in 2013. Of the 757 newly recruited volunteers, 45% served in recurring roles and 56% served in episodic roles. As a result of the initiative, the combined **number of active boomer volunteers across the six sites was quadrupled** as compared to before the project. Table 3 (on the next page) displays the number of boomers before and at the end of the initiative for each of the six project sites.

<sup>1</sup> The number of recruited volunteers is higher than the number of active volunteers at the end of the initiative because of attrition. Not all volunteers who were recruited in the first year continued to volunteer for the entire two years of the grant.

**Table 3: Boomer Volunteers by Site**

Project Site	Boomers		
	Prior to the Initiative	Recruited During the Initiative	Active at End of Initiative <sup>1</sup>
Family Building Blocks	117	87	118
Family Development Center	10	385 <sup>2</sup>	385
Gladstone School District 115	6	78	51
NeighborImpact	12	61	38
Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start Inc.	14	61	74
Volunteers of America Oregon	2	85	58
<i>Total active volunteers</i>	161	757	724

In addition, **1,924** non-boomer volunteers were recruited over the two years of the initiative. In total, the six project sites recruited **2,681** boomer and non-boomer volunteers over the two years of their grant, more than doubling their volunteer work force (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Boomer and Non-Boomer Volunteers Recruited from 2011 to 2013**

	2011-2012	2012-2013	Total
<b>Volunteers Recruited</b>			
New Boomer Volunteers recruited	293	464	757
New Non-Boomer Volunteers recruited	733	1,191	1,924
<i>Total volunteers recruited</i>	1,026	1,655	2,681

### *Volunteer Hours*

During the past year grantee organizations had a total of **42,227** hours volunteered by all boomer and non-boomer volunteers. Almost a fourth (24%) of the total volunteer hours were completed by boomer volunteers.

The 464 boomers recruited in the last year volunteered a total of **3,186** hours. On average, 49% of the *total* hours were spent with children in the classroom (1,576 hours) and 25% of the *total* hours with children in literacy activities (810 hours). Based on the value of volunteer time determined by the Independent Sector<sup>3</sup>, the estimated dollar value of this service is more than **\$61,000**.

<sup>2</sup> The vast majority (92%) of boomer volunteers with the Family Development Center were in episodic or one-time volunteer roles.

<sup>3</sup> The Independent Sector ([http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time)) is a national organization that collects data about volunteers and their work in many organizations. The volunteer time value is derived from an average, production wage, plus benefits for the most recent year available at this time. Calculations based on the 2011 valuation of \$19.33 per hour for Oregon, which is the most recent value available.

Combining newly recruited boomer volunteers with other boomer volunteers already serving at the organizations, a total of **10,280** hours were volunteered by this population at the six sites this past year. Sixty-three percent of those total hours were with children in the classroom and 27% with children in literacy activities. This volunteer time contributed by all boomers is valued at almost **\$199,000** and is equivalent to almost five full-time positions.

Table 5 displays the number of hours volunteered by newly recruited boomers, all boomers, and non-boomer volunteers. For the number of volunteer hours for each organization, see Appendix 2.

**Table 5: Volunteer Hours**

Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Hours		
	2011-2012	2012-2013	Total
<b>Newly Recruited Boomer Volunteers</b>			
Hours volunteered by NEW Boomers recruited this year	<b>3,873</b>	<b>3,186</b>	<b>7,059</b>
Hours spent with children in the classroom	<b>2,035</b>	<b>1,576</b>	<b>3,611</b>
Hours spent with children in literacy activities	<b>1,664</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>2,474</b>
<b>All Boomer Volunteers</b>			
Hours volunteered by ALL Boomer volunteers	<b>8,638</b>	<b>10,280</b>	<b>18,918</b>
Hours spent with children in the classroom	<b>4,435</b>	<b>6,476</b>	<b>10,911</b>
Hours spent with children in literacy activities	<b>2,654</b>	<b>2,754</b>	<b>5,408</b>
<b>All Volunteers</b>			
Hours volunteered by Non-Boomer volunteers	<b>29,899</b>	<b>31,947</b>	<b>61,846</b>
Hours volunteered by ALL Boomer volunteers*	<b>8,638*</b>	<b>10,280*</b>	<b>18,918*</b>
<b>Total Hours by all volunteers</b>	<b>38,537</b>	<b>42,227</b>	<b>80,764</b>

Note: Results from June 1, 2012 – May 30, 2013. \*row repeated in table for clarity of presentation

In comparing the hours volunteered over the two years of the grant, there was a 19% increase in the volunteer hours for all boomers between the first (8,638) and second (10,280) year. In total, **18,918** hours were contributed by boomer volunteers over the two years, which is **equivalent to almost nine full time positions** and valued at over **\$365,000**. An additional **61,846** hours were added by non-boomer volunteers over the two years, for a total of **80,764** hours volunteered by boomer and non-boomer volunteers over the two grant years, see Table 6.

**Table 6: Boomer and Non-Boomer Volunteer Hours from 2011 to 2013**

	2011-2012	2012-2013	Total
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>			
Boomer Volunteers hours	8,638	10,280	18,918
Non-Boomer Volunteers hours	29,899	31,947	61,846
<i>Total volunteer hours</i>	38,537	42,227	80,764

### Children Served by Volunteers

Boomers served children both directly and indirectly through their volunteer work with the grantee organizations. Direct service includes direct contact with children, such as in classroom settings. Indirect service includes serving children in other ways, such as creating learning kits or providing playground maintenance. Newly recruited boomer volunteers served **957** children directly and **1,608** children indirectly in the past year. Since one child could be served both directly and indirectly, this number represents a duplicated total of **2,565** children. All active boomer volunteers served **1,411** children directly and **2,645** children indirectly in the past year, for a duplicated total of **4,056** children. Table 7 displays the number of children served for each year of the grant. For children served by each organization, see Appendix 2.

**Table 7: Children Served by Volunteers**

Children Served by Volunteers	Children Served	
	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>Newly Recruited Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Children served by NEW Boomer volunteers <i>directly</i>	<b>707</b>	<b>957</b>
Children served by NEW Boomer volunteers <i>indirectly</i>	<b>2,382</b>	<b>1,608</b>
<b>Total Children Served by New Boomer volunteers*</b>	<b>3,089*</b>	<b>2,565*</b>
<b>All Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Children served by ALL Boomer volunteers <i>directly</i>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>1,411</b>
Children served by ALL Boomer volunteers <i>indirectly</i>	<b>3,147</b>	<b>2,645</b>
<b>Total Children Served by ALL Boomer volunteers*</b>	<b>4,554*</b>	<b>4,056*</b>

\*Number may be duplicated because a child could be served both directly and indirectly.

### Summary

In summary, each of the project sites substantially increased the number of boomer volunteers and the amount of hours contributed by this target group to their organizations. The six grantees began the two-year grant with a combined total of **161** boomer volunteers, and ended the grant with **724** active boomer volunteers. During the 2012-2013 program year, these active boomer volunteers contributed over **10,280** hours of service, impacting **1,411** children directly and **2,645** children indirectly.

Over the two-year course of the grant, **757** new boomer volunteers were recruited. Newly recruited volunteers contributed a total of **7,059** hours, with the majority of hours spent with children in the classroom (56%) or on literacy activities (34%). A total of **18,918** hours were contributed by all boomer volunteers over the two year grant. This growth in boomer volunteerism translated into an equivalent of **almost nine full time positions, valued at over \$365,000**. The surge in volunteers increased the early childhood organizations' capacity to serve young children through both direct services and enhanced resources.

### 1.1.1 Volunteer Roles

Volunteer roles were expanded at many sites this past year, allowing for both consistent volunteer experiences over time as well as episodic volunteer experiences. Many volunteers fill multiple roles and serve in several different ways with the organizations. Table 8 displays the number of boomer volunteers who have served in each of the following roles during the past two years. For volunteer roles by each organization, see Appendix 3.

**Table 8: Volunteer Roles**

Volunteer Roles	Number of Volunteers	
	2011-2012	2012-2013
Read to children	140	149
Assist in classrooms	128	181
Lead enrichment activities with the children	141	100
Facility maintenance (painting, yard work, etc.)	96	42
Prepare learning activities for classrooms	76	11
Serve on organization's board	47	14
Organize volunteer activities	19	49
Work in office	25	10
Mentor other volunteers	12	16
Provide training for program staff	13	0
Drive bus	2	43
Other	146	332

The majority of volunteers were in roles that had direct contact with children, including reading to the children, assisting in the classroom, and leading enrichment activities for the children. In addition to the roles in the table, many volunteers filled other roles specific to the services offered at the organizations. Some examples include:

- Representing agency at community events or advocating in community
- Family Nights
- Organizing and staffing the clothing closet or food pantry
- Providing special project support (making curtains, garden boxes)
- Coordinating and training volunteers
- Providing program support (tracking volunteer hours, clerical work, intern support, newsletter development)
- Helping with capacity enhancement projects (safety gates, nature-scape playground, irrigation systems)
- Coordinating and assisting with special events (Jog-a-thon, Harvest Festival, book drives)
- Coordinating or volunteering at fundraising events
- Assisting with marketing and recruitment
- Reaching out to community to recruit volunteers or resources



### 1.1.2 Demographics of Volunteers

The following is a summary of demographics collected from boomer volunteers involved in this initiative. Demographics were collected by project sites at the time an individual committed to becoming a volunteer. The OSU evaluation team also collected demographic information from boomer volunteers completing the Boomer Survey. The demographics from these two sources cannot be combined, as there would be duplication of information supplied by some volunteers. Therefore, the demographics of these populations are reported separately below.

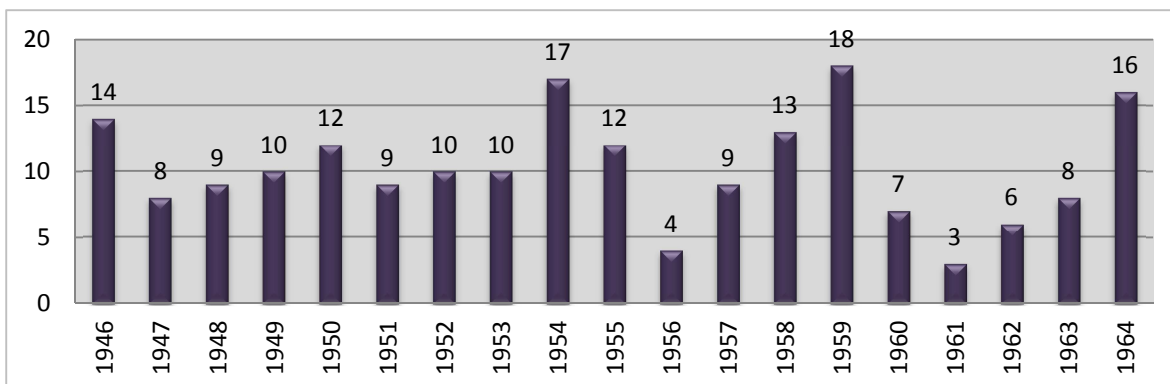
#### *Volunteer at Intake*

When boomers start volunteering at their organization, project sites ask them to complete an intake form that includes demographic information. Due to new requests made by the Community Experience Partnership's National Cross-Site Evaluation team, several demographic items were added to the report collected from the sites. However, since these were added after organizations had already begun collecting information about boomer volunteers, information on demographics is not available for all volunteers. In addition, project sites have commented on the difficulty to collect this information from volunteers at intake, especially for those volunteers who only volunteer one time or on an episodic basis. Therefore, the following demographic results represent a smaller, sub-sample of the total number of volunteers.

Of 585 boomer volunteers for which gender information was reported, 67% (391) were female and 33% (194) were male. Of the 461 boomer volunteers whose race was known, 97% were reported as White/Caucasian and 3% were reported as Hispanic/Latino. In addition to English, twenty-four boomer volunteers spoke Spanish (8%) and three used sign language (1%).

Age was reported for 195 boomer volunteers. Just over half (51%) were born between 1946 and 1954 and are therefore on the older end of the age range for the boomer generation. Figure 1 displays the number of volunteers born in each year from 1946 to 1964.

**Figure 1: Number of Boomer Volunteers Born in Baby Boomer Years**



Of the 423 boomer volunteers whose education level was known, the majority (74%) had a High School Diploma or GED. Twelve percent were College Graduates, 9% had some college credit, and 4% had a Graduate Degree, see Table 9.

**Table 9: Education of Boomer Volunteers, N = 423**

	Number of Volunteers	Percentage
<b>Education</b>		
Less than High School	2	<1%
High School Diploma or GED	313	74%
Some College	38	9%
College Graduate	52	12%
Graduate Degree	18	4%

Employment status was reported for 282 boomer volunteers, see Table 10. The majority of volunteers (54%) were reported as still working full or part time, with 43% being retired, and 2% being unemployed but seeking work.

**Table 10: Employment Status of Boomer Volunteers, N= 282**

	Number of Volunteers	Percentage
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Employed full-time	125	44%
Employed part-time	28	10%
Retired	122	43%
Unemployed, but seeking work	7	2%
Unemployed and not seeking work	0	0%

In summary, the following demographic information was gathered at intake about boomer volunteers:

- 67% were female
- 97% were White/Caucasian
- 16% had a college or graduate degree
- 54% were working full or part time
- 51% were in the older boomer age range (59-67 years old)
- 9% spoke an additional language

#### *Volunteers Completing Survey*

In the spring of 2013, boomer volunteers at the two pilot and six new grant project sites were asked to complete a survey regarding their experiences with the initiative. Of the 99 boomer volunteers completing the survey, 97 provided some demographic information. The following demographics represent the sample of boomers from whom perspectives are shared throughout this report.

Seventy-eight percent of boomer volunteer survey participants (74) were female. Ninety percent of the volunteers were White, 7% were of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, and 2% were biracial/mixed. The majority of volunteers (71%) had a college degree, see Table 11.

**Table 11: Education of Boomer Volunteers, N = 96**

	Number of Volunteers	Percentage
<b>Education</b>		
Less than High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade)	1	1%
High School Diploma or GED	3	3%
Some College	24	25%
Associate's Degree	12	13%
Bachelor's Degree	30	31%
Graduate Degree	26	27%

Fifty-five percent of volunteers reported being retired or not working, while 36% of volunteers reported being employed either part-time (20%) or full time (16%). Fifty-six percent of the boomer volunteers indicated they had been or are currently employed in a job that focused on children, such as a schoolteacher, teacher's assistant, pediatrician or pediatric nurse, preschool director, school counselor, or a gymnastics instructor.

Volunteers ranged from age 49 to 83 years, with 73% being born before 1955. Of the 95 volunteers who reported on their marital status, 79% were married, 13% were divorced, 4% were single, and 3% were widowed. A total of 72 volunteers reported their household income, see Table 12.

**Table 12: Income of Boomer Volunteers, N = 72**

	Number of Volunteers	Percentage
<b>Household Income</b>		
\$20,000 or less	4	6%
\$20,001-40,000	10	14%
\$40,001-60,000	14	19%
\$60,001-80,000	14	19%
\$80,001-100,000	10	14%
\$100,001-120,000	7	10%
Over \$120,000	13	18%

Survey participants had volunteered with their organization for varying lengths of time. Nine percent of participants had volunteered for less than three months, 17% for 3-6 months, 12% for 7-12 months, 18% for 1-2 years, 23% for 3-4 years, and 20% for more than five years. Of the volunteers who completed the survey, 18% indicated they volunteered two or more times per week, 43% indicated they volunteered once per

week, 22% volunteered once or twice a month, and 16% of boomers indicated volunteering sporadically. Of those volunteers who indicated volunteering sporadically, job commitments, going to school, and volunteering for only special events or projects were cited as their reasoning. When volunteering, boomers indicated various lengths of time they volunteered during each visit to the organization. The amount of time per visit ranged from 1 to 10 hours, with the majority (44%) volunteering 3-4 hours per visit. The total time per month that boomer participants volunteered ranged from 1 to 52 hours with an average of 12 hours a month.

In summary, the following demographic information was gathered from the survey sample of boomer volunteers:

- 78% were female
- 90% were White/Caucasian
- 71% held a college or graduate degree
- 36% were working either full or part-time
- 66% were in the older boomer age range (59-67 years old)
- 79% were married
- 43% indicated volunteering once per week
- 44% indicated volunteering 3-4 hours per visit

### **1.2 Utilization of Effective Recruitment Strategies**

Perspectives on the recruitment process were gathered from administrative staff and boomer volunteers. The following sections discuss recruitment from each of these perspectives.

#### **1.2.1 Administrative Staff Perspective on Recruitment**

Administrative staff were asked to describe the recruitment strategies and their effectiveness in recruiting boomer-age volunteers. All administrators agreed (slightly, mostly, or completely) that their organization used effective recruitment strategies. Also, all but one administrator agreed that their organization worked with other community partners to recruit volunteers.

**Table 13: Recruitment Strategies, Administrative Staff Perception**

2013	Administrative Staff	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Recruitment Strategies</b>		
Organization utilizes effective recruitment strategies	<b>5.08</b>	0.64
Organization works with other community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	<b>4.67</b>	1.03

\* Response categories ranged from 1 = *Completely Disagree* to 6 = *Completely Agree* for Administrative Staff, N = 12.

### *Using Effective Recruitment Strategies*

Most programs reported positive outcomes regarding their recruitment efforts, although some strategies worked more effectively than others. The strategies programs reported using to identify and recruit volunteers also varied. On the final report, administrative staff were asked to report on whether their organization used a selection of recruitment strategies, see **Error! Reference source not found.**

All of the organizations said they used “word of mouth” as a recruitment strategy with staff, boomer volunteers, and others affiliated with the organization sharing information with potential recruits within their social networks. Five of the six sites reported using newspaper articles and recruitment events as means of recruitment, while four reported placing information in a community partner newsletter. Half of the groups indicated using newspaper advertisements. Other strategies that programs reported utilizing over the last year included:

- Facebook and other Social Media
- Booths at Kindergarten Orientation
- Community Tours
- Volunteer-focused Luncheons
- Work Parties
- Holiday Giving Events
- Speaking Engagements
- Fundraising Events
- Local Radio
- Meetings, Conferences, and Gatherings with other Organizations

Administrative staff were also asked to report which of these strategies proved the most effective in recruiting boomer-age volunteers. The administrative staff indicated **the most effective method was word-of-mouth and informal networking with others.** One administrator shared how word of mouth and positive Boomer experiences have been key:

*Word of mouth has far exceeded the other strategies in regards to recruiting and marketing boomer volunteers. Time and time again a boomer-age volunteer has come to our program to volunteer because their friend or relative shared about the wonderful experience at the organization. I believe this is a testament to our staff that have embraced the need for volunteers and boomer volunteers with this organization.*

Having an existing group of boomer volunteers has proven to be beneficial for these organizations in a variety of ways. As one administrator noted, initial recruitment of boomers started a cycle of boomers recruiting boomers:

*The volunteer coordinator talked to a lot of community and service groups, but I think once he got connected to the boomers most of the recruitment was through referral by the boomers themselves.*

Asking boomers formally to invite friends, family members, and others to volunteer or attend fundraiser luncheons has proved effective as described by an administrator:

*Using the volunteer-focused luncheon, we were able to attract many new supporters of our work through their friends and family that are already volunteering with the organization. Having volunteers take the lead on introducing their contacts to us proved to be effective both financially and socially. Many of our newest volunteers came to us as a referral from another volunteer and were excited to join the team because of the testimony they had heard from this person.*

As the end of the statement indicated, quality experiences for boomer volunteers have been important. Another staff member also noted meaningful and quality experiences for the volunteers have been beneficial in having the current boomers recruit other boomer volunteers.

*We strive to foster a positive social connection with each of our volunteers and provide them with a valuable experience regardless of their volunteer role. We recognize that they are donating their time and talents to serve our children and families and that our strong presence in the community would not be the same without their support. Using our volunteers to recruit their friends, neighbors, and social contacts has proven very successful. This relationship-based recruitment strategy has been very effective in bringing quality boomer volunteers to the organization who are committed to our mission of keeping children safe and families together.*

Administrative staff also mentioned it is important to listen to the thoughts and ideas boomer volunteers have regarding the program and their own role as volunteers.

*Checking in and communicating often with volunteers has been very beneficial to ensuring reciprocity in the relationships, and that volunteers have viewed their roles as meaningful and have felt successful.*

This cycle of boomers recruiting new boomers has proved to be a resource once untapped and not thought of prior to this grant. One staff member didn't realize the lack of boomer-aged volunteers until they assessed their volunteer pool at the beginning of this grant. The funding gave sites the impetus to be *more cognizant of boomers* and led them to *build an atmosphere and culture around recruiting and training boomer volunteers* for their programs.

Another fruitful method of recruitment one administrative staff member cited was an information table setup during kindergarten orientation. Staff members handed out volunteer applications, spoke with families, and asked whether people had grandparents interested in being involved.

*I think the booth at Kindergarten Orientation was the most successful. I tried to speak with every parent and talked to them about grandparents volunteering as well as themselves.*

Some sites noted the importance of having a continual presence in the community. One administrative staff member noted they are constantly doing presentations, tours, and engaging people through social media. The staff member noted, “*There is a constant presence in the community recruiting new volunteers.*” Another site indicated they have gone to a volunteer expo to gain more recruits.

Recruitment via newspapers has also been an avenue for exposure and recruitment. Although cited as not being as effective as word of mouth, a few organizations have placed notices in newspapers looking for boomer volunteers. One organization’s boomer volunteer initiative was also featured in a local newspaper. The volunteer coordinator said it increased the attention on the program and led to more boomer recruits.

**In all, however, word of mouth was cited as the most frequent and successful avenue for recruiting boomer volunteers.**

#### *Using Community Partnerships to Recruit Boomers*

All of the organizations reported that they had worked with a variety of community partners to identify and recruit new boomer volunteers. The types of organizations that Boomers and Babies sites worked often with included:

- libraries
- universities
- churches
- medical centers
- volunteer placement programs
- civic organizations
- local businesses

Four of the six sites reported engaging at some point with other organizations in planning for boomer volunteers. Four sites also indicated distributing boomer volunteer information in the newsletters of community partners. Two sites had signed Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) with community partners regarding boomer volunteer recruitment and utilization.

A few sites utilized their partnerships with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). Some volunteers were also involved as CASAs and recruited other members through their connections with that program. In other cases, some boomer volunteers chose to start working with CASA because of the relationship between the project and CASA. One administrative staff member noted on the relationship, “*Just keeping the conversation going helps in recruitment efforts.*”

The sites have also partnered with golf courses, women’s groups, churches, and other organizations as means to give presentations and speeches on the Boomer volunteer initiative. Other sites have benefited from the support of community agencies, schools, community colleges, and local businesses in recruiting boomers. Sites found it helpful to work with organizations that are geared towards boomers, such as the Senior Encore

program, Elders in Action, the Rotary Club, Foster Grandparents, and others. Some staff members reached out to these other organizations particularly when they needed help for a one-time event. Finally, a couple of the organizations noted informal partnerships with other agencies, while one staff member noted that boomer volunteers tend to come in on their own.

Overall, all sites worked with other community programs and organizations to recruit boomer volunteers, however not all arrangements were formal and the sites used a variety of means to partner with these groups.

#### *Challenges Related to Recruitment*

Although the organizations were very successful in their boomer volunteer recruitment efforts, they did identify some challenges. One key challenge, identified during interviews, reflected the **restriction of time boomers can volunteer because of their work obligations**. Many boomer volunteers are still in the workforce and can only volunteer outside the confines of their work hours. This also makes episodic volunteer opportunities more attractive for this population.

*The biggest challenge has been fitting their hours to the availability because most of the boomers are either working or looking for paid work. The big draw has been the project opportunities where they don't necessarily have to make a weekly commitment. It needs to be a commitment that fits their lifestyle. The other challenge is finding the boomers and identifying where they are.*

Another challenge in recruiting boomer volunteers is finding them.

*One of the biggest challenges for us is that in our area a lot of our boomers are still working, and actually there are probably a significant number of boomers who are not working but we have not been able to find a way to successfully tap into them.*

For some of the boomers, familial obligations, sometimes on top of their work obligations, can also be a barrier to their ability to volunteer. Many boomers live very busy lives which makes it hard to find time to contribute.

*I guess the only challenges would be that a lot are taking care of their elderly parents and a lot of them are still working and are not yet retired. So with that, we are getting a lot of younger boomers that are in their early fifties so they are not really a part of that retirement community yet.*

Outside of recruitment challenges particular to the boomer population, time constraints also challenged recruitment for one site. One staff member indicated that recruiting boomer volunteers is not difficult, but finding the time to do it was a challenge during the past year. As volunteer programs grew, the management and training of the volunteers took more time than anticipated which left less time for recruitment.

**Overall, most sites indicated there have not been any major challenges towards the recruitment of boomer volunteers.** One organization indicated they have a large



volunteer population and just made a more concerted effort towards recruiting that demographic once the grant began. In addition, most organizations accept all volunteers, even outside of the boomer age group, but gear their recruitment materials and place a heavier emphasis towards the boomer population.

*It hasn't been a challenge because I haven't let it be, and I make it work with volunteers of all ages. But I have put emphasis on getting baby boomer volunteers.*

Overall, the major challenges in recruiting boomer volunteers are the boomers' own work and familial constraints.

### 1.2.2 Boomer Volunteer Perspective on Recruitment

Boomer volunteers were asked to report on their site's recruitment strategies, see Table 14. According to survey responses, 82% of volunteers agreed (mostly or completely agree) that their organization used effective recruitment strategies. Also, 87% of volunteers agreed with their organization's ability to work with other community partners to recruit volunteers.

**Table 14: Recruitment Strategies, Boomer Volunteer Perception**

2013	Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Recruitment Strategies</b>		
Organization utilizes effective recruitment strategies	<b>5.29</b>	0.92
Organization works with other community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	<b>5.39</b>	0.91

\* Response categories ranged from 1 = *Completely Disagree* to 6 = *Completely Agree* for Boomer Volunteers, n = 84.

#### *Recruitment*

Boomer volunteers were asked how they first heard about opportunities to volunteer and what motivated them to engage in Boomers and Babies projects. **Boomer volunteers echoed the project administrators saying that recruitment events were an effective recruitment strategy for Boomer and Babies programs.** Seventeen boomers indicated they started volunteering after attending an organizational tour, luncheon, or other outreach event (i.e., "*I met the organization at a volunteer fair and thought they had an interesting mission*"). In particular, eight indicated getting involved through attending fundraising luncheons. An additional five joined through outreach at their respective churches and ten heard about the program through community newspapers and newsletters. One boomer noted, "*The organization advertised in the community newsletter and other outlets for volunteers. I became interested and contacted the center before school started in the Fall of 2012.*"

**Similar to the remarks made by program staff, word of mouth was a key strategy in gaining boomer volunteers.** Twelve boomers indicated that they had decided to

volunteer through personal contacts, and seven volunteers started through connections with their employers and coworkers.

*Heard about it through friends that support/volunteer with[the organization], I retired as an R.N. and started working in the classroom for 3 hours a week, now I am in the classroom for 7-8 hours a week and go to the hospital mom/baby unit and do Healthy Start screening also as a representative for the organization.*

Working with other organizations also proved to be a fruitful way of recruiting new boomer volunteers. Thirteen boomers indicated they became involved through their connections with similar organizations or other programs within the same organization (CASA, United Way, schools).

In addition, six boomers started through their own efforts to find volunteer opportunities. One boomer mentioned, *“I retired and had always thought that it was a good organization and I believe in what they are doing, and I wanted to get involved.”* Finally, two joined because their grandchildren attend the schools.

**Overall, according to the boomers, recruitment events and word of mouth were the most effective methods to recruit boomer volunteers.**

#### *Boomer Motivation for Volunteering*

On the survey, boomer volunteers were asked about their motivation for becoming involved with early childhood organizations. Table 15 shows the number of boomer volunteers who indicated each reason for volunteering. Respondents could select more than one reason. Through an open-ended question, 67 boomer volunteers also shared in greater detail their motives for engagement.

**Table 15: Boomer Volunteers’ Reasons for Involvement**

Reasons for Volunteering	Boomer Volunteers	
	Count	Percent
To learn new skills myself	92	96%
To be a leader in my community	70	73%
To feel connected to my community	58	60%
To help early childhood programs	55	57%
To share what I know: my skills, knowledge, and experience	48	50%
To learn about other kinds of work	48	50%
To help my community	39	41%
To feel more connected to other people	26	27%
To make me healthier and feel better (by being active and giving back)	20	21%

Boomer Volunteers, N = 96

The most highly cited reasons for becoming involved in the program stemmed from the boomers' desire to **learn new skills and engage in the community. Boomers were also motivated to help early childhood programs and the development of children and families.** In the open-ended section, seventeen boomers indicated wanting to help the programs and the children as their biggest reason for volunteering. They recognized that aiding children during their early years has benefits not only for the child but also their families and the larger communities. For instance, one boomer stated:

*[I volunteer] to make a positive difference in a child's life. My own grandchildren are surrounded by people who are able to care for them and meet their needs. I wanted to help provide the same for children who are in a less fortunate situation. Also, [I want] to support the parents who are living in very stressful conditions.*

Two boomers cited that supporting the children now is important for their outcomes later in life. They both saw early support as key to the prevention of abuse and future poverty. One noted:

*We need to break the cycle of generational abuse and neglect by working from the bottom up. [The organization] does this by changing the experiences of the high risk children from negative to positive.*

Other boomers saw it as a way to give the children more attention and contribute to positive perceptions of themselves. One boomer volunteer mentioned:

*I love children and wanted to help make a difference in how they feel about themselves and help them develop self-confidence and important skills that will help them get a good healthy start in their young lives.*

In addition, half of the boomers volunteered to share their talents with the children. Some of the boomers worked, or currently work, in educational settings and wanted to utilize their talents to help more children.

*I work presently at an elementary school and have done this for 20 years. I don't have grandchildren of my own and really enjoy the young ages of these children. They are great fun to be around.*

Other volunteers came from settings outside of early childhood programs and education but saw an opportunity to share their skills in the classroom.

*I felt I had the skills to make a difference and there is a need for volunteers.*

Although not included as an item on the survey, many boomers indicated in the open-ended section that their key reason for engaging in the program was their **interest in interacting with young children** and seeing them develop over time.

*I love children and want these young people to have a chance to succeed.*

A few boomers saw this as an opportunity to work with a different demographic than their previous work experience. One boomer noted this opportunity:

*I am recently retired from the legal field. I wanted to do volunteer work that made a difference, and that made me smile. Of the options available, working with kids seemed perfect. I also felt working for 30 years with attorneys, judges, insurance adjusters, plaintiffs, and defendants, prepared me for 5 year olds!*

For many boomers, the timing was right to volunteer. Some boomers were retired and had the flexibility while others were at points in their lives where volunteering fit well into their schedules.

*I heard they needed volunteers and I recently retired from nursing and wanted to contribute to the community and have fun.*

Other boomers were “empty nesters” or had children at old enough ages where they required less care and the parent wanted to work with small children again. One boomer noted:

*My children are in their late teens and I wanted to work with young children.*

The reputation of the organization also played a key role in gaining boomer volunteers. In open-ended survey responses, seven boomers mentioned the quality of the organization as a reason for knowing about the program and wanting to engage in volunteer work there. One boomer explained:

*It is a well-run program that addresses a very pressing need.*

Finally, two boomers cited the opportunity for personal, intrinsic reward as the major reason for engaging.

*I was recovering from breast cancer, and decided I needed to think about something outside of my own personal concerns.*

**Overall, boomers’ motivation for volunteering in the early childhood settings comes from their desire to contribute to the healthy development of children and families, as well as their love for the children.**

### ***1.3 Increased Coordination of Boomer Volunteers***

Increased organizational capacity for boomer-age volunteer involvement includes not only the use of effective recruiting strategies, but also the creation of an infrastructure to coordinate boomer volunteers once they have committed to volunteering.

Indicators of the infrastructure to effectively coordinate volunteers includes the volunteer coordinator position, procedures for screening, training, assigning volunteers, a tracking system for volunteer information and hours, providing adequate supervision, communication strategies for keeping volunteers informed, and performance feedback. Components of volunteer coordination also include matching their roles with their interest and expertise, assigning meaningful tasks, and allowing for flexibility in

scheduling of volunteers. Administrative staff and boomer volunteers provided feedback on these aspects of coordination.

### 1.3.1 Administrative Staff Perspective on Coordination of Volunteers

All of the grantees reported an increased organizational capacity to effectively coordinate their boomer volunteer programs. One administrator reflected:

*We had no infrastructure at all before. And that's what is so great about this initiative because we have learned what it really takes to run a volunteer program (i.e., planning, staff buy-in, follow-up, job descriptions, feedback from volunteers). If you don't have all the ingredients in place it is not going to be successful.*

During the interviews, administrative staff and volunteer coordinators were polled on similar items related to the overall capacity of their organization to coordinate boomer volunteers. Generally, there was agreement that the organizations had developed the organizational infrastructure to support volunteers, see Table 16. Response categories ranged from 1 = Completely Disagree to 6 = Completely Agree.

**Table 16: Coordination of Boomer Volunteers, Administrative Staff Perception**

2013	Administrative Staff	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Coordinating Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Organization has paid position/staff time for coordinating volunteers	<b>6.00</b>	0.00
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	<b>5.92</b>	0.28
Organization has a system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	<b>5.67</b>	0.47
Organization provides adequate supervision for volunteers	<b>5.08</b>	0.49
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies for keeping volunteers informed	<b>5.17*</b>	0.55
Organization provides performance feedback to volunteers	<b>4.50</b>	0.87
Volunteer's roles matched with their areas of interest and expertise	<b>5.50</b>	0.50
Volunteers assigned meaningful tasks and roles within the organization	<b>5.58</b>	0.49
Volunteers have clearly defined roles & responsibilities	<b>5.18</b>	0.39
Volunteers have flexibility in scheduling to meet their individual needs	<b>5.50</b>	0.65
Organization trains volunteers to meet the needs of your classroom	<b>5.17</b>	0.69

Administrative Staff, N = 12. \*Significantly increased from 2012 to 2013, see Appendix 4.

For many programs, the Boomers and Babies grants provided the motivation to reassess and revamp existing procedures to effectively integrate boomer volunteers. For instance, one volunteer coordinator talked about how deliberate attention to the program:

*...helped us fine tune what it was we were already doing and then in some areas that we either wanted to change or needed to change and were able to make those changes and make sure that we were effective.*

Additional discussion of these changes is incorporated with feedback from administrative staff, teachers, and boomers through interviews and surveys in sections 1.3.3 – 1.3.7.

### 1.3.2 Boomer Volunteer Perspective on Coordination of Volunteers

Overall, boomer volunteers positively rated the volunteer coordination within their organization, see Table 17. Response categories for boomer volunteers ranged from 1 = Completely Disagree to 6 = Completely Agree.

**Table 17: Coordination of Boomer Volunteers, Boomer Volunteer Perception**

2013	Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Coordinating Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Organization has paid position/staff time for coordinating volunteers	<b>5.37</b>	1.23
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	<b>5.61</b>	0.87
Organization has a system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	<b>5.66</b>	0.72
Organization provides adequate supervision for volunteers	<b>5.57</b>	0.76
Volunteer's roles matched with their areas of interest and expertise	<b>5.45</b>	0.81
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies for keeping volunteers informed	<b>5.42</b>	0.87
Volunteers receive regular communication from program staff	<b>5.46</b>	0.87
Organization provides performance feedback to volunteers	<b>5.20</b>	0.96
Volunteers assigned meaningful tasks and roles within the organization	<b>5.53</b>	0.76
Volunteers have clearly defined roles & responsibilities	<b>5.40</b>	0.90
Volunteers have flexibility in scheduling to meet their individual needs	<b>5.69</b>	0.80
Volunteers trained by the organization to meet the needs of the program	<b>5.47</b>	0.76

Boomer Volunteers, N = 99.

Additional discussion of these items is incorporated with feedback from administrative staff, teachers, and boomers through interviews and surveys in sections 1.3.3 – 1.3.7.

### 1.3.3 Procedures for Coordinating Volunteers

An overarching theme among the administrative staff was the procedural changes relevant to volunteer activities since becoming a Boomers and Babies grantee. As part of the six-month and year-end report, grantees were asked whether they had created, maintained, or revised volunteer procedural changes during the past year. Specific procedures included the following:

- volunteer manuals
- intake forms
- screening
- clearly defined job descriptions
- supervision
- feedback process
- tracking of hours
- communication systems
- volunteer recognition

As would be expected for the six grantee projects, efforts were focused on maintaining or revising the volunteer procedures they had developed during the previous year as a result of the initiative.

Not surprising, the funded projects invested in the creation of new procedures and the revision of existing processes. The majority of the projects reported the revision of volunteer manuals, clearly defined job descriptions, and protocols for volunteer supervision, and one of the projects reported creating new methods of these procedures. Many also revised their existing volunteer intake forms, methods for tracking volunteer hours, and systems for communicating with volunteers. Additionally, one of the projects created a process for feedback, screening procedures, and recognition systems for volunteers. The rest reported either maintaining or revising the methods they had used previously.

By implementing procedures for screening and assigning volunteers and tracking volunteer information and hours, the organizations have increased the capacity of the organizations to coordinate volunteers. All of the staff chose the highest categories for these items on the survey indicating they felt that the organizations had a system in place for tracking, screening, and assigning volunteers based on their personal experiences. One administrator highlighted how they were able to implement new procedures for screening and tracking volunteers:

*We didn't have anything in place at all before I started here (no handbook or policies). Everything has changed in that we now have a structure, including an application that volunteers have to fill out, a handbook to give volunteers, a brochure with other information, and a process that we do when somebody comes in and is interested in volunteering (i.e., tour, interview).*

Many administrators shared that they had bolstered their screening process to better identify interest, skills, and fit when placing volunteers into positions. Additional contact with the volunteer during the screening process, for instance, could include tours, interviews, and shadow experiences in addition to background checks in different

programs. One volunteer coordinator described their specific screening process:

*The first thing we do is take them on a tour of the agency and give them a very broad understanding of everything that we do, all the programs that we run, all of the volunteer positions, all of the funding that we have, and then about our families (tours open to the public). At the end of the tour, anyone interested in volunteering meet with staff and get help filling out the applications and at that point we pass around the job description books that we have that show all of our openings; Volunteers select a few of their favorite choices. At that time, depending on what they are interested in, we fill out a background check. There are two different background checks depending on the role they are going to fill. We also have a separate supplemental questionnaire and reference form for those interested in working directly with the children and families.*

In addition to screening, 100% of staff thought their *organizations provided adequate supervision for volunteers*. The majority of boomer volunteers also felt that supervision was provided, with 98% of volunteers in agreement with this item. This indicates that staff and boomers generally felt positive about the volunteer supervision.

#### **1.3.4 Training Boomer Volunteers**

Training of boomer volunteers is an important component in the coordination of volunteers and increasing the capacity of the volunteer program. The survey item *volunteers trained to meet needs of the program classroom* was rated positively by administrative staff (mean = 5.17). One hundred percent of the administrative staff agreed with this item. The high rating is most likely attributed to administrators noting the increase in training opportunities for volunteers.

All program administrators reported that they conducted training on site for boomers. The six organizations offered a combined total of 35 training sessions for boomer volunteers during the past year. Approximately 189 total contacts were made with boomer volunteers in these trainings.

Orientation to the organization and discussion of specific roles for volunteers were offered both in group settings and individually. Some program administrators reported that they conducted very specific training with in-house and outside program facilitators on topics related to early childhood development, at-risk child characteristics and behaviors, mental and physical health of children, and domestic violence and family contexts. Titles for some of these trainings included *Child Directed Play, Understanding Poverty, Effects on Child & Brain Development, Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Using Positive Directions to Support a Child's Self-Esteem, Drug Use, Abuse & Addiction, and Strategies for Working with Children of Trauma*.

Site administrators and coordinators also commented on the training they provided that was specific to certain volunteer roles. For instance, one volunteer coordinator explained how they improved the training experience for volunteers in episodic roles:

*I think we've been better about our episodic volunteers who are also getting some kind of training even if it's a one-time orientation or even just a brief 10-*



*minute instruction before they start their volunteer job. I think we've been diligent about giving them clear directions and expectations before doing their volunteer role.*

Most site administrators reported new volunteer trainings with topics that helped boomers learn about programs and integrate better into their volunteer roles. One administrator discussed how providing regular training helped with this aspect:

*For our classroom volunteers I think this grant really helped us to implement more of a regular training process for volunteers, that is not just boomer specific but really involving the teachers and the volunteers. By having regular trainings and using some of the resources we have in-house, we bring teachers and volunteers together to do presentations at least monthly so that the volunteers are really getting a good perspective on what's going on and how to work with children in the classroom.*

Program administrators reported using trainers from other community organizations, local early childhood programs, as well as having their own teachers take on a bigger role in training. One site administrator shared how they have expanded their training content for boomer volunteers to focus on literacy in the classrooms:

*We did a big training in the fall that involved a kindergarten teacher showing ways of working with kids on reading techniques and sounding things out. She demonstrated several ways that volunteers could help the children with literacy activities.*

Another administrator shared that the organization has opened all staff training to volunteers to broaden the opportunities available. She stated:

*We try to emphasize how these trainings will benefit them in many ways beyond the classroom and provide overall knowledge about the organization and the community. We've had trainings on anything from the culture of poverty to safety and CPR; so any training we offer in the facility is offered to the volunteers.*

A challenge regarding training was coordinating the training sessions according to the schedules of all the boomer volunteers. One administrator shared that they have *"continued to struggle to find a time to schedule trainings when the majority of volunteers are able to attend."* In their case, *"we have asked volunteers to identify areas they feel they would like further training and have found internal speakers as well as professionals in the community who can make the trainings interactive and informative."* One administrator mentioned that they have provided more individualized training to their volunteers in order to accommodate schedules and ensure that volunteers weren't lost due to a long waiting period.

Ninety-eight percent of boomer volunteers agreed that they were *trained to meet the needs of the program classroom*. Most volunteers commented that they felt adequately trained. One participant said, *"Nobody does volunteer training and fulfillment better than*

*our organization.*” However, one participant commented that they would like to see “*more training.*”

### 1.3.5 Assigning Volunteer Roles

In previous stages of this evaluation, boomer volunteers said that it was important for them to feel they were a “member of the team”, and an integral part of the organization. This includes being placed in roles that are **meaningful** to both the organization and them personally, and feeling that the contribution they are making is valued and appreciated by program staff.

At the end of the 2012-2013 program year, all of the administrative staff (100%) said that volunteers were assigned *meaningful roles and tasks within their organizations and classrooms*. In addition, all but two volunteers who completed the survey agreed with this statement. In addition, all of the staff agreed that *volunteers have clearly defined roles*. Ninety-seven percent of boomer volunteers agreed that their *roles and responsibilities are clearly defined*.

Administrative staff (100%) also agreed that there was *flexibility in scheduling volunteers to meet their individual needs*. Boomer volunteers also felt the organizations and teachers were *flexible to their scheduling needs*, with all but two volunteers in agreement.

In addition to volunteers’ roles being meaningful and flexible, it is also important that volunteers are matched to tasks and responsibilities based on their interests and expertise. All of the administrative staff (100%) agreed that *volunteers were matched to roles*, indicating they felt the organization had assigned volunteers to positions where they would feel the most comfortable and be the most proficient. Ninety-seven percent of volunteers agreed that they were *matched to tasks and responsibilities based on their interests and expertise*.

Programs geared their placement processes to their specific sites and needs. A volunteer coordinator shared their program approach:

*After identifying current and projected program and capacity needs, we develop specific projects, roles, and appropriate position descriptions to fill those needs. We then reach out to individuals, organizations, and local businesses to match their skills and expertise to those projects, roles and positions in order to create engaging and enriching experiences. Often we are able to specifically recruit for Boomers, other times we find that they come with the crowd—typically already in a leadership position. We also take pains to ensure that the project is tailored to their time constraints and desire to perform some or all of the tasks remotely, as well as providing opportunities to lead and mentor teams of other volunteers.*

Another site requires:

*...an interview/profile process and then we match the volunteer with their interests, talents, skills, and expertise. We try to ensure that it is a good match so*

*that the needs of the organization are filled, but also so that it is a rewarding experience for the volunteer.*

Generally, most directors and volunteer coordinators emphasized that they had intentional strategies for placing volunteers in positions that increased staff engagement with volunteers, ensured better fits between volunteer and placement context, and helped retain volunteers over time. One administrator emphasized it is important to:

*Clearly outline the expectations of the volunteer position and allow the volunteer to be honest about whether they wish to volunteer in that capacity. If the position description is not accurate, we have found that we risk losing the volunteer and their skills completely.*

### **1.3.6 Communication with Volunteers**

Effective communication was noted as a key factor in helping to integrate boomer volunteers within organizations. Administrators indicated on the survey that their organization was utilizing effective communication strategies (100% of staff agreed with this item). *Communication with volunteers* was highly valued by the administrative staff. Regular communication from program staff was rated strongly by boomer volunteers, with a mean of 5.42 on the six-point scale.

Another specific facet of communication is *providing performance feedback to volunteers*. Administrative staff rated this high, with 100% of staff agreeing with this item. The majority of boomer volunteers also rated this item high (97%).

To ensure a fit between volunteer and placement, administrators highlighted the need for frequent opportunities to provide direct feedback to the volunteers. A volunteer coordinator stressed the importance of following up with volunteers as a communication tool and a feature of their placement process. She stated:

*Follow-ups are maintained to answer any questions and make sure the volunteer experience is successful. If the volunteer works outside the classroom, a project is planned within the week. The volunteer coordinator also has monthly check-ins with each volunteer.*

Another administrator expressed the importance of maintaining communication with the boomer volunteers in order to retain them over time. She stated it is critical:

*To stay in communication with them and make sure that they're placed in a setting that is working for them, and to stay on top of them because boomers are sometimes elusive creatures. Things change for them and you have to be in constant communication in order to make sure you don't find out after they've gotten a new job.*

Finally, one volunteer explained how continuous feedback from the staff positively impacted her experience in the organization:

*The staff have always communicated appreciation for my time and energy. It is a joy to feel like I make a difference in a child's life.*

### **1.4 Organizational Capacity Summary**

All of the organizations substantially increased the number of boomer-age volunteers serving their organizations. During the past year, a total of 464 new boomer volunteers were recruited by the organizations. Including previously recruited boomer volunteers, the organizations had a total of 724 active boomers currently volunteering with their program at the end of the program year.

The increase in the capacity of the organizations to support volunteers led to their success in enlisting and engaging boomers. As a result of the initiative, organizations strengthened their infrastructures in many ways. All sites utilized a volunteer coordinator, which was viewed as a fundamental component for making the initiative effective. The organizations created or revised their procedures for screening, assigning, and tracking volunteers. Grantees also addressed other infrastructure components including providing adequate supervision, communicating with volunteers, and providing performance feedback.

Organizations used a variety of recruitment strategies including working with community partners. While all strategies were somewhat fruitful, the strategy which proved most successful was recruiting by word-of-mouth. Grantees strengthened their ability to coordinate their newly recruited volunteers by matching volunteer roles with their interest and expertise, assigning meaningful tasks, allowing for flexibility in scheduling of volunteers, and providing training. The six organizations offered a combined total of 35 training sessions for boomer volunteers during the past year. Approximately 189 total contacts were made with boomer volunteers in these trainings.

Boomers served in an array of roles with the organizations. Sixty-four percent of all boomers volunteered in reoccurring roles, whereas 36% volunteered in episodic roles. Combining newly recruited volunteers with existing boomer volunteers, a total of 10,280 hours were volunteered at funded organizations this past year. Sixty-three percent of those hours were with children in the classroom and 27% with children in literacy activities. These boomer volunteers impacted 1,411 children directly and 2,645 children indirectly. **Their volunteer service is valued at nearly \$199,000 and is equivalent to almost nine full-time positions.**

## **2. Boomer Engagement**

While a strong organizational infrastructure serves as the foundation for implementing a boomer-age volunteer initiative, successful organizations must also find a formula for engaging and retaining volunteers.

### **2.1 Integration of Boomer Volunteers into Organizations**

A key element necessary for strengthening early childhood programs through boomer volunteerism is the ability of the organization to successfully integrate the volunteers

into their program settings. Thus, administrative staff, teachers, and volunteers were asked to report on key aspects of integrating volunteers, including:

- valuing boomer volunteers
- staff attitudes toward volunteers
- staff training

### 2.1.1 Administrative Staff Perspectives on Integration

Overall, administrative staff positively rated the integration of volunteers into the organization, see Table 18. Response categories for administrators ranged from 1 = Completely Disagree to 6 = Completely Agree.

**Table 18: Integration of Boomer Volunteers, Administrative Staff Perception**

2013	Administrative Staff	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Integration of Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Organization/Staff view volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program	<b>5.58</b>	0.64
Organization trains staff to integrate volunteers into program	<b>5.08</b>	0.86
Staff integrates volunteers into program	<b>5.25</b>	0.83
Staff values volunteer's involvement and contribution to the program	<b>5.67</b>	0.47
Staff has positive attitude toward volunteers	<b>5.64</b>	0.48
Volunteers recognized for their contributions to the program	<b>5.75</b>	0.60
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization	<b>5.42</b>	0.64
Retain volunteers	<b>5.08</b>	1.38

Administrative Staff, N = 12

On the survey, 100% of administrative staff agreed that *volunteers were integrated into critical roles within the organizations*. Additionally, 100% of staff indicated the *staff and organizations view volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program*.

### 2.1.2 Boomer Volunteer Perspectives on Integration

Like the administrative staff and teachers, boomers also positively rated their integration into the organizations, see Table 19. Response categories for volunteers ranged from 1 = Completely Disagree to 6 = Completely Agree.

**Table 19: Integration of Boomer Volunteers, Boomer Volunteer Perception**

2013	Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Integration of Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Organization/Staff view volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program	<b>5.68</b>	0.74
Staff values volunteer's involvement and contribution to the program	<b>5.72</b>	0.64
Staff has positive attitude toward volunteers	<b>5.75</b>	0.66
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization	<b>5.47</b>	0.92
Volunteers have positive interactions with staff	<b>5.71</b>	0.69
Volunteers feel valued in their volunteer role	<b>5.68</b>	0.69
Volunteers feel treated as a team member by staff	<b>5.56</b>	0.72
Volunteers treated as a professional by program staff	<b>5.63</b>	0.73
Volunteers recognized for their contributions to the program	<b>5.65</b>	0.74

Boomer Volunteers, N = 99.

On the boomer volunteer survey, 99% of volunteers indicated the *staff and organizations view volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program* with all but one respondent ranking this in the agreement categories.

Boomer volunteers were positive about their integration within their organizations. Their comments in the survey suggested that they feel valued by the executive director, coordinators, and teachers. One volunteer specifically stated that her organization “*does an excellent job appreciating volunteers. That helps us want to stay involved.*” Another volunteer added, “*I feel I have learned so much from my experiences in the classrooms. I enjoy working with such committed and well-trained professionals.*”

### 2.1.3 Valuing Boomer Volunteerism

One hundred percent of the administrators indicated that the *staff valued volunteers*. On the volunteer survey, 99% indicated the *staff valued volunteers' involvement and contributions*, with all but one respondent in agreement with this item. One of the boomers expressed how they “*feel valued and appreciated as a volunteer in all and any activities I participate!*” Additionally, volunteer coordinators at the sites were noted for

their sustained communication and friendliness with the volunteers. One boomer volunteer described, *“I feel that volunteers are highly appreciated and respected. [The volunteer coordinator] has been an incredible volunteer recruiter/trainer and enthusiast.”* Another boomer volunteer shared how *“the volunteer coordinator is always friendly and expresses support.”* Finally, the general sentiment among boomers towards the volunteer coordinator position was hope that it could be sustained long-term. As one boomer volunteer stated:

*I hope that there will be continued funding for the position of Volunteer Coordinator, as it will be difficult to maintain such a positive program without it.*

While administrative staff indicated they valued boomers, some of the boomer volunteers specified the changes they had witnessed over time regarding their integration into their programs. Some mentioned in the survey how the organizations they volunteered for were just starting to appreciate the value of integrating boomers. As one boomer volunteer summarized, *“Since the program is relatively new I think the organization is just starting to recognize volunteers as integral to the sustainability of the program.”* However, many of the boomers indicated that they feel like a valuable part of their organization. As one volunteer stated:

*I feel very valued as a volunteer and all others I have talked to feel the same way. I am not provided performance feedback in any formal way, but whichever classroom I'm in I feel I am a valued team member. My efforts, interactions, and observations are respected and appreciated.*

All administrative staff and teachers indicated volunteers were *recognized for their contributions to the program*. Also, the majority of the boomer volunteers (98%) indicated that they were *recognized for their contributions to the program* with all but two respondents in agreement with this item. Appreciative of the ways that programs tangibly recognized them, boomer volunteers acknowledged how the organization and staff made them *“always feel valued.”*

Volunteers specifically were asked to indicate if they felt *treated as a team member by staff* for which 98% of volunteers responded that they were treated as a team member. All of the volunteers also felt that the program *staff treated them as a professional*. On the volunteer survey, 99% of volunteers indicated they had *positive interactions with staff members*. This was one of the highest rated items in this section along with *volunteers feel valued in their volunteer role*, which had all volunteers agreeing with this item as well. One volunteer expressed, *“It gives me a great sense of contributing in an important way to my community.”* Volunteers also *felt satisfied with their experiences volunteering*, with all but two volunteers agreeing that they felt satisfied. One volunteer said, *“I have nothing but positive feelings about my experience.”*

#### **2.1.4 Attitudes of Staff Towards Volunteers**

One hundred percent of administrative staff felt that *staff has positive attitudes toward volunteers*. In many cases, these observed positive attitudes were a shift as volunteer coordinators made concerted efforts to formalize programs, ensure smooth volunteer

transitions into classrooms, and to train/prepare staff for accepting volunteers within their programs. For instance, some administrators talked about the change of attitudes over time. One administrator explained:

*It was really just a challenge of unfamiliarity around the fact that there just hadn't been many boomer volunteers around before, much less in the classroom. Once we integrated some boomer volunteers into the program then their experience level and maturity was greatly appreciated. It just became a matter of how differently we deal with them when it comes to coaching and feedback. Figuring out how to provide constructive criticism and feedback to the boomer volunteers was probably the biggest challenge. Overall, I think that the staff has been very eager to integrate boomers into the program and have been very welcoming of their contributions.*

Intentional efforts by volunteer coordinators to help teachers and other staff members work effectively with boomer volunteers were evident during interviews. One volunteer coordinator explained how staff attitudes towards boomer volunteers were positively changed as a result of their training efforts:

*They have absolutely, unequivocally changed their attitudes towards the Boomers. I would say that a lot of the focus has been parent volunteerism and not so much community volunteers, and a lot of our boomers are parents and grandparents. So I think there has been a cultural mind shift. I really believe it starts with the training of staff. Three years ago we started a generational training, which included a boomer training and a Generation X training. We had a wonderful individual come in and talk about the different ages, culture, and how we view our life. I think that really got staff to think about how they view boomers and how to engage with them. We even had an additional training for staff about how to work with volunteers, particularly boomer volunteers. So I think that the staff have really come to understand why boomers are so important, and are a big part of the classrooms and being with the children.*

Another volunteer coordinator talked about a specific training they offered staff focusing on the benefit of integrating volunteers into the classrooms:

*One of the things that we've done with staff is provide training about the difference that volunteers make in our program. This was done in one way by bringing in some of the volunteers to the staff meeting so they could share with the staff what volunteering meant to them and the difference it made. And that really had an impact on staff. We also had someone tracking the volunteers in the classrooms and the outcomes with kids, which were shared with the staff to show the difference that volunteers were making.*

One other factor that influenced the attitudes of staff toward boomer volunteers concerned the amount of responsibility the teachers felt they had when working with the boomer volunteers in the classroom. As one administrator summarized:



*I think that the perception of the ongoing management of volunteers has changed a bit in that they feel more responsible. They feel a direct connection around whether the volunteer works in their classroom and then comes back or not, which dictates the amount of quality time they are willing to spend with that volunteer. The staff has realized that it is their responsibility to keep the volunteers in their classroom.*

The majority of the volunteers (99%) were also in agreement that *staff has positive attitudes toward volunteers* with all but one volunteer rating this item positively. One volunteer commented how *“the staff have been super supportive and respectful”*, while another volunteer expressed that *“the staff at the organization are exceptional and very loving people who really care about the families they serve, and it is a genuine pleasure volunteering for such a wonderful organization!”* Although one volunteer did point out some difficulty in working with the staff at their organization because *“the director and teaching staff are so very busy and they don’t always have enough time to involve volunteers as part of the team.”* Finally, another volunteer shared how their volunteer experience was a *“great place to share your time. You are made to feel so welcome and [they] thank you for what you do. The employees become your friends.”*

### **2.1.5 Staff Training**

Staff training played an important role in the integration of boomer volunteers into the programs. Five of the Boomer and Babies sites reported offering trainings for staff on volunteer management and/or working with volunteers. In total, 19 trainings were offered with a (duplicated) total of 359 staff attending the trainings.

Some topics for staff training included *Motivating Volunteers/Boomer Volunteers, Volunteer Supervision, Performance Issues, Why Do People Volunteer, Volunteer On-Boarding, Tune Up Your Trainings, and Annual Review & New Procedure Development for Volunteers.*

While most of the staff trainings appear to be held as stand-alone opportunities by the organizations, one organization has integrated volunteer management into their monthly all-staff meetings. During this time, staff discuss management strategies and brainstorm training topics for volunteers. In addition, the individual departments also use the time to discuss volunteer issues unique to their unit. For example, teachers discuss the roles of volunteers in the classroom during their teaching team meetings.

On the survey, 100% of administrative staff agreed with the item *organization trains staff to integrate volunteers into their program*. Some of the challenges regarding training of staff included comments from administrators who were concerned about resistance from staff to participate in the training sessions that involved boomer volunteers. One administrator shared:

*Initially some of the staff had a little resistance to more volunteers. They were concerned about preparation time required to get ready for volunteers with their already very busy schedules. Through open conversation and discussion at the*

*staff trainings/meetings the attitude changed from one of reluctance by some to “this will take some planning, but will make things easier and better.”*

## 2.2 Integration of Boomer Volunteers into the Classroom

In addition to the questions about how the organization is integrating volunteers, teachers were also asked some specific questions about integrating boomers into their classroom. On average, teachers felt positive about their abilities to provide a welcoming environment for volunteers and integrate them into their classroom, see Table 20. Response categories for teachers ranged from 1 = Completely Disagree to 6 = Completely Agree.

**Table 20: Integrating Boomer Volunteers into the Classroom, Teacher Perspective**

2013	Teachers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Assign volunteers to meaningful tasks and roles within your classroom	<b>5.38</b>	0.62
Match volunteers with their areas of interest and expertise	<b>5.22</b>	0.84
Maintain clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	<b>5.48*</b>	0.67
Provide flexibility in scheduling to meet the individual needs of the volunteers	<b>5.37</b>	0.82
Recognize volunteers for their contributions to the program or your classroom	<b>5.57*</b>	0.62
Provide a welcoming environment	<b>5.74</b>	0.44

Teachers, N = 42. \*Significantly increased from 2012 to 2013, see Appendix 4.

With the initiation of programs and the ongoing efforts made to integrate boomer volunteers into programs, teachers were asked on surveys if and how their perceptions of boomer volunteers had changed over the past year. Of the 25 teachers answering the question, most responded that their perceptions were positive and had changed to some extent. As one teacher asserted:

*It has shown me that there are older adults who do want to take the time to have a lasting impact on children’s lives. Sometimes there is such an age barrier that you think the older generation does not want to invest time to help shape the younger generations. I think that is needed and much appreciated.*

For others who also had experienced a change in perceptions, comments generally focused on further understandings as to how much boomer volunteers can contribute to their classrooms. One teacher shared, “There are many things that the teachers and home visitors would not be able to do or have the time to do if it wasn’t for the volunteers.” Another stated that “It has allowed me to better understand how involving

*our community, particularly this generation, can add such a level of strength that can provide a rich environment for our families and staff.”*

A few teachers expressed appreciation for the unique qualities of boomers particularly with the support and knowledge they brought to the classroom. One teacher explained, *“I feel more supported and I can take advantage of the volunteers’ expertise to lead specific projects.”* Bringing together the generations, older and younger, also was viewed as a positive outcome witnessed through the integration of boomers.

Some teachers found that having boomers in their classrooms had a significant impact over time. For instance, one teacher described the positive influence of having boomer volunteers in her classroom:

*I have learned a great deal about Boomers since this project began and have developed a huge amount of respect and appreciation for them within our agency. They are some of the very best volunteers and are a huge asset to every single program we have volunteers in. I have learned that they are extremely dedicated, responsive, caring, and intelligent—and they make excellent volunteers!*

A volunteer coordinator described the benefit of increasing the integration of boomer volunteers into the classrooms:

*I love having volunteers in the classroom. They create more learning opportunities for children, develop a strong classroom community, and provide children with additional opportunities to have positive, meaningful relationships.*

Finally, it was noted that volunteers in the boomer category made a significant difference in the classrooms and the lives of children. As one administrator explained:

*I understand that Boomers have the time, education, and passion to make a difference in the life of a child. They may not be teachers but they are calm, patient, and passionate about working with children. Boomer volunteers take their position in the classroom very seriously and are dedicated to their role and the children.*

### **2.3 Boomer Engagement Summary**

A primary element for the successful integration and engagement of boomer volunteers is attitude of the staff, particularly teachers, toward the volunteers. Almost all of the organizations provided trainings for their teachers in order for the staff to better understand and utilize the volunteers.

As boomer volunteers were integrated into the organizations, administrative staff and teachers viewed them as valuable assets. The programs engaged the boomers in meaningful work by matching the volunteers to defined roles, providing flexible work schedules, making their work environment welcoming, and recognizing them for their contributions. Boomer volunteers reported having positive interactions with the staff and felt valued by the staff.

### 3. Barriers and Challenges

In the 2008 Phase 1 study, several potential barriers to including boomer volunteers in early childhood settings were identified by both early childhood professionals and potential boomer volunteers. These potential barriers were included as items in the evaluation. Administrative staff, teachers, and boomer volunteers had varying views of the extent to which barriers influenced the project in Phase 3, see Table 21. Not all items were asked of each type of participant and the wording of items may differ depending on the role of the survey respondent. Response categories ranged from 1 = Not a Barrier to 5 = Significant Barrier.

**Table 21: Barriers and Challenges to Boomer Engagement**

2013	Administrative Staff		Teachers		Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Barriers and Challenges</b>						
Physical/health limitations of volunteers	<b>2.08</b>	0.86	<b>1.95</b>	0.97	<b>1.53</b>	1.00
Generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children	<b>2.42</b>	0.76	<b>2.10*</b>	1.11	<b>1.18</b>	0.48
Confidentiality issues <sup>a</sup>	<b>1.33</b>	0.47	<b>1.36*</b>	0.53	<b>1.23</b>	0.71
Liability issues associated with utilizing volunteers <sup>a</sup>	<b>1.17</b>	0.37	<b>1.49</b>	0.93	<b>1.28</b>	0.52
Volunteers' personal family caregiving limits their time to volunteer	<b>2.75</b>	0.83	<b>1.45*</b>	0.86	<b>2.02</b>	1.25
Staff is not supportive of integrating volunteers into the program	<b>1.50</b>	0.65	<b>1.10*</b>	0.38	----	----
Language barrier for recruitment of non-English speaking volunteers	<b>2.33</b>	1.43	<b>1.68</b>	1.15	----	----
Maintaining communication with volunteers <sup>a</sup>	<b>1.83</b>	0.69	<b>2.20*</b>	1.08	----	----
Securing volunteers for specific needs within your organization (i.e. clerical, fundraising, classroom, etc.)	<b>2.25</b>	0.72	<b>1.64*</b>	0.73	----	----
Supporting professionalism among volunteers <sup>a</sup>	<b>1.58</b>	0.64	<b>1.35*</b>	0.53	----	----
Accommodating volunteer scheduling preferences	<b>2.25</b>	1.16	<b>1.50*</b>	0.79		
<b>Administrative Staff Only Barriers</b>						
Secure funding for costs associated with utilizing volunteers	<b>3.17</b>	1.34	----	----	----	----
Recruitment strategies	<b>2.00</b>	0.71	----	----	----	----
Transition of key staff (within your own or a partner organization)	<b>2.25</b>	0.83	----	----	----	----
Timing of volunteer recruitment (i.e. program is seasonal)	<b>1.67</b>	0.75	----	----	----	----
Age limited to boomer volunteers for this funding	<b>2.08</b>	0.86	----	----	----	----
Scheduling group meetings with volunteers	<b>3.50</b>	0.96	----	----	----	----
Not enough time for volunteer coordinator to fulfill all of the needed duties	<b>2.45</b>	1.37	----	----	----	----

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**Table 21: Barriers and Challenges to Boomer Engagement (continued)**

2013	Administrative Staff		Teachers		Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Teacher Only Barriers</b>						
Including volunteers disrupts the schedule and flow of the classroom	----	----	<b>1.33*</b>	0.61	----	----
Not enough tasks to keep volunteers busy in my classroom	----	----	<b>1.33</b>	0.82	----	----
Volunteers do not have a rapport with the children	----	----	<b>1.28*</b>	0.59	----	----
Consistency in volunteer scheduling	----	----	<b>1.55*</b>	0.92	----	----
Too many volunteers scheduled at the same time	----	----	<b>1.20</b>	0.68	----	----
Volunteers do not have skills necessary to fulfill the role they have been assigned	----	----	<b>1.48*</b>	0.81	----	----
<b>Boomer Volunteer Only Barriers</b>						
It is difficult to set limits on my personal involvement when working with children and families	----	----	----	----	<b>1.17</b>	0.43
The challenges of working with children and families who have overwhelming needs keeps me from wanting to be a volunteer	----	----	----	----	<b>1.16</b>	0.49
Volunteering will limit the flexibility of my private time	----	----	----	----	<b>1.97</b>	1.01

Administrative Staff, N = 12; Teachers, N = 40, Boomer Volunteers, N = 94. <sup>a</sup>Wording of items varied depending on the role of the survey respondent. \*Significantly decreased from 2012 to 2013, see Appendix 4

### 3.1 Barriers Identified by Administrative Staff

In general, administrative staff and teachers viewed the listed barriers in the survey as slightly more likely to be hindrances to boomer engagement compared to volunteers' views of the same issues. The highest rated barriers by administrative staff were *securing funding for costs associated with utilizing volunteers* and *scheduling group meetings with volunteers* (66.7%).

The survey item, *Generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children*, was seen as a prevalent barrier with 58.3% of administrators rating this as "somewhat" of a barrier. The third highest ranked barriers were *physical and health limitations of volunteers*, *securing volunteers for specific needs within organizations*, and *the age limited to boomer volunteers for this funding*. Each of these were identified as "somewhat" of a barrier by 41.7% of the staff.

#### 3.1.1 Project Implementation Challenges

Key challenges to program implementation reported by the administrative staff included:

- Time and working with different schedules
- Emotional needs of volunteers
- Optimizing recruitment strategies
- Finding the best fit between the volunteer and the organization

Several administrators talked about difficulties to work with **deviating schedules of boomer volunteers, teachers, and program hours**. Boomer volunteers who are still in

the workforce may encounter time conflicts with program hours due to work obligations. Other volunteers may “*leave the area for a lengthy period of time in the winter months*”. Some administrators seemed to overcome the barrier of fluctuating schedules by integrating boomer volunteers into short-term project positions rather than relying on them for only long-term commitments. One administrator also expressed challenges concerning the flexibility of schedules in the following way:

*We may need a volunteer to work on something for a half hour but it seems like a waste of time to have a volunteer drive all the way out here to work for such a short amount of time. So finding a chunk of time for the volunteer to be here and really be useful has taken some tweaking to figure it out.*

Many administrators emphasized that a full-time dedicated coordinator position is necessary to maintain the current volume of volunteer programs. Another administrator added that the program staff needed to devote more time “*to process volunteer applications, answer questions, and create a valuable experience for them*” as a result of having many more boomer volunteers than anticipated. Thus, there seems to be an increased need to implement a **volunteer tracking system** and to sustain the **volunteer coordinator position**. For instance one administrator noted,

*I think funding the [coordinator] position to have one person in charge would've been beneficial in year one or at least early on. I think it was really difficult when bits and pieces were delegated to different administrators and coordinators. So having that one person take the lead on the project and getting the policies and procedures in place is really instrumental.*

Another administrator described the **personal and emotional challenges** of boomer volunteers:

*Volunteers become very attached to the children they are serving (which is good), however we are beginning to deal with boundaries and letting go as children move on.*

Finally, more than one administrator talked about efforts to **optimize recruitment strategies** and finding a good **fit between the volunteer and the organization**. Some organizations developed recruitment videos, whereas others found direct contact and the recruitment through the peer network of volunteers more effective. Another administrator added that “*finding the areas in the community that attracted a lot of interest from boomers was helpful (e.g., gardening)*”. However, some administrators expressed tensions between staff and volunteers with regard “*to getting the staff to embrace the idea of volunteers*” and “*giving more responsibility to the volunteers*”. This highlights the importance of training staff to work, supervise, and connect with volunteers.

### 3.1.2 Infrastructure Challenges

Infrastructure of programs continued to pose barriers to effective implementation of programs. The **funding of programs and resources** was a main concern that emerged in most interviews with the program administrators. One administrator stated,

*“At this point, we have not secured additional funding for the volunteer coordinator beyond the grant, and I am very concerned that it will be difficult to sustain the program.”*

**Frequent staff turnovers** seem to put additional strains on volunteer programs. One administrator explained,

*We have encountered an increased rate of staff turnover, which has affected the consistency of the relationships being built between volunteers and teachers, as well as between the program design and implementation.*

Some programs felt challenges concerning the **adjustment to the increased number of volunteers**. One administrator explained this issue by describing how *“Managing the increased number of volunteers and their duties has taken longer than originally anticipated. As stated before, more boomer volunteers chose to work in the classroom, one of our volunteer roles that require a significant amount of staff time to supervise.”* Another administrator stated,

*While the capacity to absorb the change and expansion accompanying program expansion, greater volunteer involvement, and the resulting increase in programming options and service delivery has greatly increased, program leadership has radically changed. The resulting change in program direction and priorities has created new opportunities along with inevitable delays.*

### **3.2 Barriers Identified by Teachers**

Overall, teachers rated the same set of barrier items as being greater challenges when compared to the ratings by the volunteers. The highest rated item was *lack of time to communicate with volunteers about their roles, tasks, etc.*, indicating teachers viewed this as more of a barrier compared to the other barriers (37.5%).

Teachers were also asked to rate potential barriers that were specific to utilizing volunteers in their classrooms. Among these were three items related to scheduling of volunteers. Overall, the majority of teachers indicated that none of these potential scheduling issues were key barriers. Only about twelve percent of teachers indicated that the *consistency in volunteer scheduling* was a “somewhat” to “significant” barrier. However, thirteen teachers (32.5%) rated *generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children* as a barrier and eleven teachers (27.5%) rated *volunteers’ personal family caregiving limits their time to volunteer* as a “somewhat” to “significant” barrier.

Eight teachers (20%) rated *language barrier to recruitment of non-English speaking volunteers* as a “somewhat” to “significant” barrier. A few teachers (10.3%) thought *securing volunteers for specific needs within the classroom (i.e. reading, art, music)* was a “somewhat” or “moderate” barrier. Four of the teachers (10%) reported that *not enough tasks to keep volunteers busy in my classroom* was a “somewhat” or “significant” barrier.

As reported earlier, most teachers expressed positive support for boomer volunteers and stated their appreciation for the work they did in their classrooms. One teacher stated,

*We very much appreciate the wisdom, kindness, and caring that these volunteers bring and share with the children at our center.*

There were, however, a few suggestions made by teachers to improve the integration of boomers into their classrooms. One teacher recommended scheduling visits and meetings with volunteers before they enter the classrooms for the first time. This would facilitate a discussion about expectations, duties, and responsibilities between staff and volunteers prior to their involvement. Another teacher stated that “*some volunteers don’t have the knowledge to lead activities or to be left alone with kids for groups.*” Thus, there seems to be a **heightened need for training and supervision of the boomer volunteers to integrate them more successfully into the programs.**

Statistical comparisons of mean scores between the annual assessments in 2012 and 2013 showed that teachers rated most barriers significantly lower in contrast to the previous year (see Table 21). Only the ratings for three items, namely *physical/health limitations of volunteers*, *liability issues associated with utilizing volunteers*, and *language barrier for recruitment of non-English speaking volunteers*, did not decrease significantly between 2012 and 2013. The ratings for four out of six teacher-specific barriers decreased significantly between the assessments in 2012 and 2013. Teachers perceived the items *including volunteers disrupts the schedule and flow of the classroom*, *volunteers do not have a rapport with the children*, *consistency in volunteer scheduling*, and *volunteers do not have skills necessary to fulfill the role they have been assigned*, as significantly less of a barrier compared to the previous year. This may be attributed to training provided for both teachers and boomer volunteers. In addition, teachers may have become more comfortable with having volunteers in their classroom after the first year.

### **3.3 Barriers Identified by Boomer Volunteers**

Overall, boomer volunteers viewed the listed barriers in the survey as slightly less likely to be hindrances compared to administrative staff and teachers. The highest rated item by volunteers, also asked of administrative staff and teachers, was *volunteers’ personal family caregiving limits their time to volunteer* with a mean score of 2.02. Administrative staff saw this as more of a barrier to volunteers with a mean of 2.75 than volunteers thought this to be a barrier for themselves with a mean of 1.53. Fourteen volunteers (15%) also reported *physical and health limitations affect my ability to work with young children* as a “somewhat” to “significant” barrier.

Boomer volunteers were also asked to report on several specific questions about the unique barriers related to being a volunteer. Within these items, *volunteering will limit the flexibility of my private time* was the highest rated barrier by volunteers with twenty-eight volunteers (31.8%) rating this as a “somewhat” to “significant” barrier.



Boomer volunteers reported mainly personal reasons as barriers to volunteering. These included:

- Health issues
- Caregiving arrangements
- Family commitments (e.g., informal care for grandchildren)
- Work obligations
- Limited geographical mobility

Although the majority of boomers expressed their joy and fulfillment through volunteering, some of them suggested improvements to the current implementation of volunteer programs. For instance,

*I think continued work is needed to involve volunteers as part of the “team” at the center and to provide regular feedback and appreciation to the volunteers.*

With regard to the physical limitations of boomer volunteers, one volunteer suggested to adjust the involvement to shorter time periods. The volunteer stated *“I think the full morning shift is too long for me. I would appreciate a two-hour shift instead.”*

Many volunteers also raised concerns related to unclear expectations with regard to their roles and tasks in the classroom. They expressed the need for more specific training, professional involvement, and advice from teachers in challenging classroom situations. Yet, establishing one-on-one time between teachers and volunteers to clarify tasks and debrief seemed to be problematic due to teachers’ time constraints. One volunteer explained,

*It would have been nice to have a little more debriefing by the teachers or volunteer coordinators after a tense situation with a child. They did well in being there for us ... I guess I could have asked more about how to cope with seeing so much pain. My move out of the classroom after 10 years was partly because of overload of emotion on my part.*

Some boomers also mentioned that they would find it helpful to learn more about early childhood in general or the *background history about children in their classroom*. One boomer expressed that need by stating,

*More training, classes, etc. I’d be happy to learn more about early childhood, and specifically, what volunteers can do for the young children.*

### **3.4 Barriers and Challenges Summary**

The most prevalent barriers from the administrative perspective were securing funding for a full-time volunteer coordinator position to fulfill all of the needed duties including, scheduling group meetings due to deviating time commitments of organizations, teachers, and boomers, and generational differences in approaches to interact with youth. Additional challenges identified by administrative staff during interviews included frequent staff turnovers, infrastructure changes to accommodate the increased numbers of volunteers, and optimizing recruitment strategies.

Overall, administrative staff and teachers rated barriers and challenges to boomer engagement slightly higher compared to boomer volunteers. The highest rated barrier on the teacher survey was lack of time to communicate with volunteers about their roles, tasks, etc. Other barriers and challenges identified by teachers were consistency in volunteer scheduling, volunteers' personal care giving commitments, and difficulties to recruit non-English speaking volunteers. However, statistical comparisons showed that teacher's ratings of most general and teacher-specific barriers decreased significantly between annual assessments in 2012 and 2013. Although teachers expressed their gratitude of boomer volunteers consistently, some of them suggested scheduling visits, meetings, and trainings with volunteers before they enter the classrooms to improve the efficiency of volunteers.

In general, boomer volunteers viewed the barriers as slightly less likely to be hindrances compared to administrative staff and teachers. The highest rated item by volunteers, also asked of administrative staff and teachers, was that volunteers' personal family caregiving limits their time to volunteer. Boomer volunteers were also asked to report on several specific questions about the unique barriers related to being a volunteer. Within these items, volunteering limits the flexibility of my private time was the highest rated barrier by volunteers. Boomers also expressed the need for more one-on-one time with teachers and specific training in the area of early childhood. In addition, volunteers mentioned consistent communication of expectations and role-related challenges such as debriefing after emotional situations.

By identifying the challenges, organizations can likely address many of the barriers through more concerted efforts in the training of volunteers and facilitating better communication between teachers and volunteers. Organizations may also consider more frequent check-ins with the volunteers to ascertain their comfort level with the complexity of tasks they are assigned.

#### **4. Impact of Boomer Volunteerism in Early Childhood Settings**

The integration of boomer volunteers into early childhood settings has led to many positive outcomes for the children they serve as well as the organization, and the boomer volunteers themselves.

##### ***4.1 Impact on Children***

A primary goal of this initiative was to positively impact children's growth and development by integrating boomer volunteers into the early childhood organizations and making meaningful connections to the children served by the program.

##### **4.1.1 Administrative Staff and Teacher Perspective of Impact on Children**

Administrative staff and teachers were asked about their perception of volunteers' impact on children in their program. Strong agreement among the administrative staff indicated that they viewed volunteers as positively impacting children. Teachers,

however, in general rated these items slightly lower compared to the administrative staff, see Table 22. Response categories for administrators ranged from 1 = Completely Disagree to 6 = Completely Agree.

**Table 22: Volunteers' Impact on Children in Program, Administrative Staff and Teacher Perception**

2013	Administrative Staff		Teachers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Volunteers' Impact</b>				
Classrooms have a lower adult-to-child ratio	<b>5.42</b>	0.64	<b>4.97</b>	1.49
Children can be divided into smaller groups for activities	<b>5.58</b>	0.64	<b>5.31</b>	.88
Children spend more time in literacy activities	<b>5.50</b>	0.65	<b>5.10</b>	.92
Children have more one-on-one time with an adult to work on learning objectives	<b>5.58</b>	0.49	<b>5.50*</b>	.71
Children have increased language development	<b>5.42</b>	0.76	<b>5.30</b>	.71
Children have increased school readiness skills	<b>5.25</b>	0.83	<b>5.33*</b>	.73
Children have more opportunities for enrichment activities (i.e. field trips, music, etc.)	<b>5.17</b>	0.80	<b>5.08</b>	1.31

Administrative Staff, N = 12; Teachers, N = 40. \*Significantly increased from 2012 to 2013, see Appendix 4.

Organizations engaged boomer volunteers in best practices that are known to contribute to improved child outcomes, positive development, and school readiness. The results were overwhelming and included lower adult-child ratios in classrooms, smaller group sizes, and increased time spent by children in literacy activities. One-hundred percent of the staff mostly or completely agreed that *children have more one-on-one time with an adult to work on specific skills*. All of the other items related to boomer impact were rated in the top three categories (slightly, mostly or completely agree) by the staff. However, all of these same items were rated significantly lower by the teachers except for the item *children have increased school readiness skills*. Only 75% of staff mostly or completely agreed that boomer volunteers had a direct impact on *children's increased school readiness skills*, compared to 85% of teachers.

#### *Being Positive Role Models*

During interviews, administrators detailed the varied ways that boomer volunteers have benefitted the children in their programs. Foremost, administrators typically shared how boomer volunteers had **helped the children in their programs to feel safe, loved, and secure**. One administrator shared this story about Bob, a compassionate Baby Boomer, and Colin, a young child (both pseudonyms):

*Two-year old Colin had never spoken a word in class. He didn't even make a sound. Bob, a devoted therapeutic classroom volunteer and baby boomer, was determined to connect with him. Though Bob worked closely with Colin and*

*always made sure to tell him goodbye at the end of each day, Colin's silence persisted as months passed. One day, toward the end of the school year, Colin's mother came to pick him up. Bob, as always, said, "Bye, Colin". Colin, holding his mother's hand, looked up at Bob and said, "Bye". This one word was a turning-point for Colin who had been suffering from the extreme stress of living in poverty and family mental illness. Finally, he was feeling safe and secure enough to connect with others in his classroom.*

In an open-ended survey item, many teachers reported a similar interaction between boomer volunteers and children in the classroom. They acknowledged how boomer volunteers **strengthened children's self-esteem and trust in adults**. Teachers had several examples of this relationship:

*Volunteers have helped the children in my room learn to trust adults that aren't their primary caregiver in a safe way.*

*It gives the children another person they can trust and turn for comfort.*

*Certain volunteers and children have developed relationships that you can see are special. The children smile and run to 'their' volunteer that they have developed this relationship with.*

According to administrators, many of the children in their programs lack consistent adult presence in their lives. Boomer volunteers **modeled positive adult behavior to children and also provided stability over time**. This example was offered by one program administrator:

*Recently, we expanded our program by locating a preschool classroom in a facility in [another neighborhood]. The first volunteer recruited was a retired and partially disabled boomer... we'll call him Ken. Ken connected almost immediately with several children who have few positive male role models. By playing, reading, and telling stories he held the children's attention but none more meaningful than by the class's youngest, which made it hard for him to resist. She sat with him at group time, she held his hand during transitions, and held deep conversations with him outside. She speaks mostly Spanish while Ken speaks only English, but she doesn't care. The time she spends with Ken is filled with purpose, laughter, and play.*

An administrator also shared this short summary about the positive role modeling provided by boomer volunteers:

*Through this project, a child with a history of broken attachments due to childhood trauma was able to interact with a volunteer consistently from infancy. This helped maintain a positive and stable figure in this young child's life, as she transitioned from different primary caregivers.*

Those boomer volunteers who worked directly with children were recognized by administrators and teachers for providing **quality interaction and special attention to individual children**. One teacher described how boomer volunteers are making an impact with children in programs:

*Having a volunteer in the classroom ensures that there is always an adult (teacher, instructional assistant, or boomer volunteer) to work with the students who are struggling the most. This keeps them on task and provides them the assistance they need. In addition, the boomer volunteers build relationships with the students they work with. If they are here on a consistent basis they are able to get to know the children better, which enables them to be more accommodating to their individual needs. Also, the children respond better to the adults they see on a regular basis.*

Several additional teachers describe the excitement the children feel for the volunteers in their classrooms:

*The children get excited when our volunteer comes in, they just love her.*

*The children are excited to see our volunteer weekly. Having a man to help set examples and give guidance has been important.*

*The children look forward to the volunteers in our classroom so much they ask about them when they are not there and they talk about them in a positive light. Volunteers bring so much joy to the children's lives and they are given a different, fresh, perspective on different subjects.*

#### **Providing Enrichment Opportunities**

Several administrators described how boomer volunteers have **engaged in literacy activities with children**. The opportunity to read with children, take part in activities that promote letters and words, and share the love of reading were all viewed as important features of volunteer activities. One administrator explained:

*I have seen boomer volunteers patiently working with kids who are struggling to recognize their A, B, C's or simple word recognition. I have watched as over a little time they start to smile and feel some success. I have seen the work samples of children last fall who could not write anything more than a squiggly line and by spring break they are writing little stories about what they did over the weekend. This is of course, mostly due to the work of good teachers, but absolutely they would say that the volunteers helping with literacy has had a definite impact on this kind of progress.*

One teacher also described how boomer volunteers provide rich facilitation of literacy in the classroom:

*I have boomer volunteers read with a group of six students each day during our literacy stations. They introduce the book, guide the students through a picture walk and they look for high frequency words. Then they listen in as kids read on*

*their own and read the book again as a group. At the end, they ask comprehension questions and ask students to make connections. Without the boomer volunteers, that group would be doing an independent worksheet.*

Teachers often remarked on how boomer volunteers increased children's **language development** through individual interactions and group activities in order to **promote positive social interactions with peers**. For instance, one teacher said:

*During playgroups, the children really respond well with the volunteers and get more social interaction with adults. These volunteers are setting amazing examples of positive language and interaction with these children. This shows to the child that this respectful interaction is normal and needed to successfully have relationships later on in life.*

Another teacher described the importance of the activities facilitated by volunteers:

*Outside when our volunteers run with the children and engage with them it helps the children make social peer connections. The children laugh and release stress, exercise and grow in gross motor skills, and are able to gain healthy attachments.*

#### ***Supporting Teachers and Lowering Adult-Child Ratios***

During interviews, both administrators and volunteer coordinators pointed out how the boomer volunteers helped teachers in the classroom by freeing up staff time to work with specific children, reducing adult-child ratios, provide ongoing support for classroom projects and needs, and “*supporting teachers during transitions*”. To sum up the impact of boomers involvement in the classroom, one administrator noted:

*We have spent more quality time reading, nurturing, singing, teaching, mentoring, hugging, listening and supporting children and families than ever before- we know this based on a recent study published by Portland State University indicating that out of ALL the other Relief Nurseries in Oregon, [our organization] served the MOST children this last year. And we did this with a part-time Executive Director and one less full-time teacher. That is the power of boomer volunteerism.*

Overall, teachers recognized the importance of having additional “*consistent staff in the classroom*”. Teachers also identified many ways in which the integration of boomer volunteers into their programs had increased their capacity to serve children. Foremost, teachers felt that they could better meet the needs of children by allowing them to “*work directly with the children who are most in need.*” With boomer volunteer help, teachers felt that children had more opportunities “*to communicate with loving, nurturing adults.*” When describing the ways volunteers in her classroom had enhanced program capacity in serving children, one teacher underscored how:

*We are able to run reading groups with the help of the volunteers. This was not possible before.*

Boomer volunteers also helped children and families in other contexts outside of the classroom. Administrators offered many examples of how boomer volunteers make a difference for their students outside of the early childhood setting. As one teacher described:

*We have volunteers that purchase needed items, such as clothing, for children whose families cannot afford it. So their impact goes beyond the classroom walls and into the home. We don't ask them to do this but this unselfish attitude carries over in their direct contact with the children as well.*

An administrator shared this story of how a boomer volunteer went above-and-beyond for a little girl and saw remarkable results:

*One of our long-time boomer volunteers recently began transporting a preschool-age child to and from school each day. This little girl had been attending the classroom since she was a toddler, but her family had recently moved outside of [the program area] and our buses were unable to pick her up. Fearing that she would be unable to continue to go to school, the volunteer agreed to pick her up at home each morning, drive her to school, and take her back home at the end of the day. When the volunteer first began driving her, the little girl was very shy and refused to say a word on the long drive to and from school. The volunteer noticed that she would open up and interact with others once she arrived at school, as she was comfortable with her friends and teachers in her classroom. The volunteer began to spend time in the little girl's classroom each day and interacted with her on the playground and at meal times. The volunteer also talked with her teachers and began to practice using the language and approaches they recommend during the drive to and from school each day. Within a few weeks, the little girl began to smile and say a few words during the car ride and would initiate interactions with the volunteer at school. With more time, she began to speak more and tell the volunteer about her family, her pets, and what she saw outside the car window. Without the dedication and commitment of this boomer volunteer, this young girl would have been isolated until she started school, nearly a year from now. Instead, she is developing the social and life skills necessary to be successful.*

### **Gains in Child Skills**

For most directors and volunteer coordinators, success of the program was observed, and in some cases, measured through the gains that the children were making in their programs. They noted that boomer volunteers increased the ability to serve children and provide a caring and skilled adult population who could focus on child development and well-being. This story offered by one administrator sums up the powerful impact that boomer volunteerism has had on a variety of important child outcomes:

*I watched a boomer volunteer, a retired teacher work one-on-one with a little boy. His language was very delayed and he was really struggling with literacy skills. With the volunteer's patience and care, I saw a light come to his face. It was very heartwarming after seeing him struggle so much. The impact for him is that he feels better about himself and he will learn better with that boost to self-esteem. It*

*is a wonderful win-win. Our little student is encouraged and supported and our volunteer feels positive about her time here and the difference she can make. There are many stories like this.*

To illustrate how boomer volunteers have impacted children in their programs, many teachers offered examples from their own classrooms. The following two examples highlight the work of boomer volunteers and their role in the lives of the young children. One teacher shared how a boomer volunteer was able to facilitate learning with one child in her classroom:

*I have a little student who is fairly low with most subjects and has a hard time staying focused [and] on task. I have a volunteer who works with her every time she comes to volunteer. They work together for around 10-15 minutes in the hall. When the volunteer walks in, the little girl automatically knows she is working with her and is excited! By working in the hall, she is able to feel successful and create a bond with this volunteer. Also, having a consistent volunteer working with this particular student is very helpful to keep me updated on growth that she is seeing.*

Another teacher reported about the impact a volunteer made regarding school readiness skills in her classroom:

*One boomer volunteer has had the opportunity to work one-on-one with some of our highest need children and provide much needed additional learning and social emotional development. She has also used the kits to work with children at their level, to leverage them in much needed school readiness skills.*

One of the grantees tracked their students' progress across several developmental domains and compared the outcomes based on the number of hours volunteers were engaged in the classrooms. The effects of volunteer engagement appeared significant based on their analysis. The administrator shared:

*According to our baseline year data, classrooms that provided more volunteer hours per month per child on average scored significantly higher on child outcome indicators across all developmental domains than did children from classrooms where volunteers hours were minimal. This data appears to support the idea that children who enjoy more quality adult interactions in smaller child ratios or on a one-on-one basis are more likely to develop skills necessary for Kindergarten readiness than are children who receive little to no individualized or small group interactions with peers and adults.*

#### **4.1.2 Boomer Volunteer Perspective of Impact on Children**

Boomer volunteers were asked about their view of their own impact on children in their program. Out of the 99 volunteers participating in the survey, only 66 completed this section. Some boomer volunteers indicated that they do not have direct contact with children, but rather serve the organization in other ways such as working with parents, contributing as donors, or providing assistance with organization, recruitment, and coordination of the programs. Volunteers responded to these items on a 6-point scale



with 1 = Completely Disagree and 6 = Completely Agree. The scale also offered a Don't Know option for each item. It is important to note that this is volunteers' perception of their impact and they may not have the same level of knowledge in these areas as the administrative staff and teachers.

**Table 23: Impact on Children in Program, Boomer Volunteer Perception**

2013	Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
Classrooms have a lower adult-to-child ratio	4.76	1.91
Children can be divided into smaller groups for activities	5.28	1.26
Children spend more time in literacy activities	4.82	1.43
Children have more one-on-one time with an adult to work on specific skills	5.17	1.31
Children have increased language development	5.17	1.22
Children have increased school readiness skills	5.18	1.19
Children have more opportunities for enrichment activities (i.e. field trips, music, etc.)	5.08	1.33

Boomer Volunteers, N = 66.

Volunteers moderately to strongly agreed that they had an impact on the children, see Table 23. The highest rated item was *children can be divided into small groups for activities*, with 72% of volunteers agreeing with this statement. Seventy percent of the volunteers agreed that *children have increased language development* and *children have increased school readiness skills*. The lowest rated item by volunteers was *classrooms have a lower adult-to-child ratio*. Many boomers did not rate this item, with nearly 28% selecting Don't Know. The 14% that rated this item as completely disagree may have taken the perspective that there is still much more work to be done in this area.

Boomer volunteers described a variety of ways that they felt their participation as volunteers made a difference in the lives of the children they touched. First, boomer volunteers explained how overall, ***children positively changed through contact with volunteers***. One boomer volunteer noted,

*Through the school year I observe them go from insecure, untrusting, angry little ones to confident trusting and pretty well adjusted kids that can follow instructions and interact well with others.*

Many boomer volunteers felt they were able to give children **kind and consistent guidance**. Boomers also commented on their role as a **safe, trusting, and caring adult**. One volunteer remarked: *“I have been able to connect with several of the young children and gained their trust so they are comfortable interacting with me and feel safe with me.”* Other boomer volunteers also shared their perspectives on how they believe they have had a positive impact on children in the program:

*I feel I’ve been able to be caring and nurturing, allowing them to trust me. When children trust you, they can relax and grow without fear.*

*They know someone else cares about them, wants to help them, and they feel valued in a safe and secure environment.*

*The children develop trust and confidence when interacting with attentive adults. This builds self-esteem and assists in their physical development, speech, and social skills.*

Finally, boomer volunteers identified how they provided a different perspective on topics and **helped the children learn new skills**. One boomer volunteer explained:

*The children are exposed to a different age, culture and personality by working with me. Many of the children come from single parent, poverty, non-English speaking homes. The acceptance and love I give them makes them feel ready to be part of the larger community at a younger age.*

Other volunteers shared their experiences with activities outside of the classroom, such as teaching children *“about plants and healthy eating habits”*, to *“become active outdoors”*, and to *“play with dogs.”* One boomer shared with enthusiasm:

*I believe that teaching children about the benefits of healthy eating [is] an important part of growing up that will be a skill they can take through life.*

Lastly, boomer volunteers felt optimistic about their special contributions to the program:

*Because of my background in early education I’ve been able to bring my knowledge of stories and songs to the children in the program. I have also worked one-on-one with children and believe that has helped them in many ways.*

## **4.2 Impact on Organizations**

While the outcomes for children with whom the boomer volunteers work directly are substantial, it is also important to recognize that organizations benefitted greatly from the initiative.

### **4.2.1 Administrative Staff and Teacher Perspective of Impact on Organization**

Administrators identified how boomer volunteerism directly contributed to program success, which translated into quantifiable results. With the advent of Boomers and

Babies programs, administrators reported that the influx of boomer volunteers increased staff capacity and the professionalism of programs. An administrator summarized how their program has been strengthened:

*We have been able to have boomers take on leadership roles that would normally be held by staff---this allowed us to provide a greater level of service to children and families AND save staffing money that could instead support the families we serve.*

#### ***Increasing Program and Staff Capacity***

Many administrators shared that their program capacity had expanded through the integration of additional skilled boomer volunteers. One site administrator commented that they “had our first-ever organization-wide orientation” and that they were “training staff to help us create the processes and materials that will make our volunteer program more organized and efficient.” The addition of skilled volunteers in a wide variety of areas increased capacity, improved facilities, and enhanced the program infrastructure. These improvements were cited as major indicators of program success during the year. As one administrator highlighted:

*Anytime a project incorporates the ability to broaden resources, engage skilled, committed followers, heighten community awareness, strengthen internal strategies, skills and relationships while at the same time positively effecting change in high-risk children and their families---it is a success!*

For instance, one administrator talked about the change over time as the program was developed:

*This project has significantly increased our ability to serve young children and families by utilizing our cadre of volunteers. Before we began this project, we did not have the materials or the knowledge necessary to effectively engage volunteers. We were lucky to have a significant number of dedicated individuals who were willing to volunteer, but lacked the policies and procedures to help them be successful and receive the training they needed to feel confident in their volunteer roles. Our staff also lacked confidence in their duties supervising volunteers. As we complete this project, our volunteer toolkit of materials, including the handbook, the position description binder, and our training components, will all continue to be used and updated. We are confident that this project has served as a foundation that we will continue to build upon in our work with volunteers who work directly with young children. Although funding is gone, this project will be sustained.*

One administrator outlined how boomer volunteers have made impacts on children directly and indirectly through many other domains of the program:

*Having such amazingly skilled and dedicated individuals working with children who need a bit of extra support has increased outcomes and school readiness for those children. Many of these volunteers are so skilled that they really do decrease the adult-to-child ratio in a meaningful way. Teachers love having*

*boomer volunteers in their classroom and they love the support they get from the volunteer coordinator in orienting, communicating [with], and recognizing volunteers. Boomer volunteers have taken on leadership roles in volunteer recruitment, volunteer training, and in championing the importance of utilizing boomer volunteers to support and expand the agency's work.*

Administrators also identified the increase in time that teachers could spend with individual children and the drive to create a strong infrastructure for the volunteers as all contributing to an increase in the professionalism of sites. As one administrator summarized:

*We are serving more children every week because of the boomer volunteers. They are filling roles that other volunteers have not been able to do in the past and they are as reliable as staff members in most instances. They are even working alone with children for the first time in our agency's history.*

Administrative staff indicated the boomer volunteers helped teachers deal with large class sizes and improved the school readiness skills of the children in the classroom. One administrator beamed:

*Our reading scores have improved and our Coordinator and teachers feel that the volunteer's help with literacy has definitely contributed to that success. Committed boomers have been our best volunteers.*

Additionally, programs reported increased program capacity as a result of boomer volunteers. Boomers have helped to complete projects, develop new partnerships, and identify needed resources. One administrator described how boomer volunteers facilitated and provided the labor, materials, and maintenance for their program that has built 23 new raised garden beds, yielded over 400 pounds of produce, and engaged over 60 children and their parents. Another administrator summarized how boomers *"have added significant value through projects that have enhanced and expanded the program capacity to provide resources and services to our families and children."*

Teachers also identified how boomer volunteers have increased program and staff capacity. Teachers reported that they were able to **connect more efficiently with the children and that children had more individual attention** because of the integration of boomer volunteers. For example, one teacher explains the impact boomer volunteers have had on the program:

*Volunteers make a HUGE difference in the child/adult ratio in the classroom and increase the amount of learning that happens. The Boomer project has increased volunteer involvement in all ways. It has improved the way we train and work with volunteers, so that volunteers are providing quality, targeted work with children. The kits have been a wonderful tool in volunteer/child interaction.*

### ***Raising Financial Resources***

Boomers helped develop programs by soliciting donations, identifying community sources for funding, and making contact with private sources for financial contributions.

For instance, one director, talking about the contributions of boomers to program capacity, elaborated:

*...many of these boomers are still very involved in civic aspects of our communities and they promote our mission and the work we do to other community members. That has resulted in increased donations.*

A few program administrators attributed the enhanced awareness of these programs into the community to boomer volunteers. One administrator detailed this phenomenon:

*I am constantly surprised by how important “word of mouth” is to awareness, recruitment, and impact. Nothing seems to have a greater influence--- no matter how many times you make them cry from your presentations.*

#### ***Contributing to Positive Work Climate***

Boomer volunteers' support of staff efforts also created more positive attitudes between the staff and volunteers. Simply summarized, “[The program] has added to our climate of promoting a family center.” Another administrator shared:

*The staff has come to highly value volunteers and have integrated them as a part of the team which is a huge success because previously classroom teachers often were hesitant to bring volunteers into the classroom.*

A volunteer coordinator added that boomer volunteers have really contributed to the work climate in positive ways. She shared that “they are more excited about utilizing boomers” and “the whole experience has enhanced our whole volunteer program.”

#### ***Promoting Community Awareness and Development of Partnerships***

Multiple administrators noted how some boomer volunteers have influenced community awareness of their early childhood programs through spreading the word about program outcomes, recruiting others to volunteer, and sharing information with other community agencies and organizations. One administrator mentioned specific partnerships that have grown from word spread about this program:

*We continue to have strong support and collaboration with local agencies. As a result of these continued ties we have been able to expand our SMART program to three more classrooms, serving 60 more children with literacy based activities. Moreover, due to the focus of boomers in our program, more community partners are beginning to recognize the incredible benefits of having boomers engaged in their program. Our program also had the chance to share the Boomer Volunteer Initiative at the Head Start state meeting this spring and as a result a large number of them applied for the Boomer Volunteer Audit grant! In short the Boomer Volunteer Program has been quite receptive to local community members as well as state community partners.*

Another administrator noted the longitudinal effects of the program:

*During the past six months, we have continued to see an increase in the number of individuals requesting information about [organization name] and that have*

*signed up to attend our community tours and fundraising events. Many of the attendees at our annual fundraising luncheon were boomers and many of these individuals then expressed interest in volunteering and/or supporting us as well.*

Lastly, an administrator explains how the boomer volunteer program has had implications for their site, the community, and the state:

*The grant has actually been very timely in our community for several reasons--- one in particular is that it has coincided with the Governor's Initiative on Early Education which has infused the legislature's level of knowledge and support for Early Education Investment and Support. This level of awareness has opened up dialog for our community partners and has helped to encourage support of programs such as ours. We have found that boomer- age volunteers tend to be more connected to what is happening in the state and local government and that has led to higher boomer- age volunteerism within our programs.*

#### **4.2.2 Boomer Volunteer Perspective of Impact on Organization**

Boomer volunteers detailed the ways that they felt their volunteerism had impacted organizational capacity and effectiveness. Some boomer volunteers described their roles in raising money for programs **through fundraising activities** so that **more classrooms can serve more children**. They felt positive about the ways they could directly help children and families through these fundraising efforts:

*By telling others we have increased the number of people who financially support the programs of this organization, which in turn makes outcomes better.*

Boomer volunteers also shared how they helped families directly through providing opportunities for skill development. For instance, in one program volunteers act as a liaison between families and their children's schools. A boomer volunteer shared her experience of working with some of the children's mothers:

*The women are becoming more comfortable with the English language and they often ask me questions about their children's experiences in the local public schools. I feel I am using my expertise as a retired teacher helping the mothers understand the local school district.*

### **4.3 Impact on Boomers**

The influx of boomer volunteers served as the catalyst for numerous positive outcomes for children and the early childhood settings in which they were served. Furthermore, the boomers themselves reaped rewards through their volunteerism.

#### **4.3.1 Boomer Volunteer Perspective of Impact on Themselves**

Boomer volunteers felt very satisfied about the different ways they were personally impacted through their involvement in programs. Out of 99 boomer volunteers, 93 offered responses. Response categories for perceived level of impact were: 1 = Not at All, 2 = A Small Amount, 3 = A Moderate Amount and 4 = A Great Amount.

**Table 24: Impact on Volunteers, Boomer Volunteer Perspective**

2013	Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Volunteers feel that their skills and experience are valued	<b>3.62</b>	0.55
Volunteers were given the chance to share what they know	<b>3.37</b>	0.68
Volunteers learned new skills	<b>3.04</b>	0.88
Volunteers feel they are helping their community	<b>3.74</b>	0.48
Volunteers feel they are helping to solve or address early childhood issues	<b>3.48</b>	0.69
Volunteers want to do other activities that help their community	<b>3.21</b>	0.74
Volunteers feel more connected to the community	<b>3.44</b>	0.72
Volunteers feel better physically	<b>2.68</b>	0.99
Volunteers feel better inside (emotionally)	<b>3.37</b>	0.80
Volunteers were given more confidence as a leader in their community	<b>2.79</b>	0.93
Volunteers got to know and connect with other people	<b>3.41</b>	0.77
Volunteers got the experience they could put on a resume	<b>2.27</b>	1.17
Volunteers found out about new kinds of work they could do	<b>2.28</b>	1.09

Boomer volunteers, N = 93.

Boomer volunteers agreed that they felt the Boomers and Babies program had a positive impact on them in several ways. The highest rated item was *volunteers feel they are helping the community*, with 98% rating the program as having either a moderate or great amount of impact. Moreover, 97% of boomer volunteers felt that their *skills and experience are valued* in the program, and 91% felt that they are *helping to solve or address early childhood issues*.

On the contrary, over half of boomer volunteers indicated that the program did not have a significant impact on them in two of the categories. About 56% of boomer volunteers rated not at all or a small amount for the extent to which the program *helped them to get experience that they could put on a resume* and *helped them to find out about new kinds of work they could do*. This is likely due to the fact that many of the boomers are retired or already working full- or part-time and have little need for increased resume building skills. In addition, many of the boomers indicated they had prior experience in early childhood.

Boomers were asked a few general questions on a 6-item scale, 1 = Completely Disagree to 6 = Completely Agree in regards to the overall impact of volunteering in the program. Volunteers were more positive in their responses:

**Table 25: Impact on Volunteers, Boomer Volunteer Perspective**

2013	Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>		
Volunteers feel satisfied with their overall experience	<b>5.58</b>	0.80
Volunteers are making a difference in the lives of the children and families with whom they work	<b>5.54</b>	0.79
Volunteers are more knowledgeable about child development as a result of volunteering with the organization	<b>5.35</b>	1.07
Volunteers feel confident in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds	<b>5.52</b>	0.72

Boomer volunteers, N = 97.

Volunteers were very positive about their experiences with the program with 95% mostly or completely agreeing that they were satisfied with their overall experience. Over 90% agreed that they were *making a difference in the lives of the children and families with whom they work* and they *feel confident in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds*.

In summary, boomer volunteers felt that the program had an impact on themselves emotionally, on their connections with others, and in their involvement with the community. Boomer volunteers also offered their perspectives on how they have been personally impacted by their work as a volunteer with young children. Some key themes in the open-ended survey question emerged.

#### *Making a Difference for Children*

Volunteers valued the opportunity to be a part of the **growth and development of children** and stated that they knew they were a contributing factor to this process. Many reported feeling **satisfied and rewarded** by their volunteer experiences. One volunteer described her passion and shared, *“I have the opportunity to make a positive impact on children and their mothers. Isn’t that the most important thing a retired person can do?”*

Boomer volunteers also identified ways in which their **personal attitudes and awareness about the needs of children and teachers had shifted** due to their volunteer involvement. For instance, one volunteer shared, *“I have really come to appreciate how hard it is to be an early childhood educator.”* Another volunteer talked about a newfound perspective and what it meant to her, *“I have a greater sensitivity to the needs and a greater appreciation for solutions that really work.”*

#### *Meeting Personal Needs*

Boomers also shared how volunteering met their personal needs. Many volunteers described feeling **enriched** by their experiences. Volunteers discussed feeling impacted



and full of pride knowing the difference they are making, *“Overall I have been blessed to work with these innocent souls. They teach me every day what love is. And how important it is to be there not matter what.”*

Finally, boomer volunteers often remarked on **the enjoyment they experienced**: *“I am rewarded week after week from my volunteer experience by hugs and smiles. It brings me joy.”*

Direct contact with the children also gave volunteers a sense of **contribution** by watching children grow and develop in the classroom. One volunteer shared, *“It is most gratifying to watch the growth and enthusiasm to learn amongst the children. It makes us smile.”*

#### *Increasing Knowledge of Child Development*

Boomer volunteers shared that as a consequence of their volunteer experiences, their **knowledge of early childhood development had increased**. Learning occurred when working directly with children and through guidance and examples from teachers. Volunteers cited understanding more about *“techniques that are research-based to work with very young children”*. More specifically, one volunteer explained how she *“gained new knowledge of early childhood development that has helped me with my own grandchildren, as well as how to work positively with other children, such as at my church.”* Another volunteer added that she had learned, *“by watching teachers talk and teach problem solving.”* Similarly, one volunteer reported, *“I have appreciated the approach used in engaging the children and find it beneficial to use as an example in many life situations.”* Other comments from volunteers included learning *the importance of patience, how to play and be more flexible, and having a better understanding of the preparation and learning process for young children.*

#### *Increasing Advocacy and Involvement*

About half of the boomer volunteers reported that they were already working or volunteering their time to solve and address a variety of early childhood issues before the Boomers and Babies project. Volunteers were active in addressing early childhood needs, care, and education in previous positions as:

**Table 26: Boomer Volunteers Previous Volunteer Work**

<b>2013</b>	
<b>Boomer Volunteers Previous Initiatives</b>	
Speech Pathologist	Social Worker for Low-Income Families
CASA Volunteer	Head Start Teacher
DHS Child Welfare Volunteer	SMART Reading Volunteer
Family Development Center Volunteer	Tutor
Preschool Teacher	Advocate in Shelter for Domestic Violence Victims

continued on next page

**Table 26: Boomer Volunteers Previous Volunteer Work (continued)**

<b>2013</b>	
<b>Boomer Volunteers Previous Initiatives</b>	
Kindergarten Teacher	Child Care Worker in Emergency Shelter
Office Manager at Child Counseling Agency	Teacher for Children with Disabilities
Substitute Instructional Aide	Community Outreach about Early Literacy
Principle	Supervised Visitation Coordinator
Foster Parent	Pastor
Pediatrician	Librarian in Early Childhood Services Department
Family Homeless Shelter Volunteer	RN in Maternal/Child Health

Boomer Volunteers, N = 94.

**Thirty-five percent of boomer volunteers reported additional involvement in community activities after engaging with the Boomers and Babies project.** It is important to note that many of the volunteers were already involved in community affairs before the program, so this does not reflect the total percentage of participants who were currently involved in community initiatives. Volunteers described their involvement within the community after the Boomers and Babies Program.

**Table 27: Boomer Volunteerism In Addition to Boomer and Babies Initiative**

<b>2013</b>	
<b>Boomer Volunteers Community Activity</b>	
Lions	Knights of Columbus
Community Playground Build	40-40-20 Project
Oregon Crusader	PTO Member
Fostering Hope Initiative	Salem Leadership Foundation
Speech Camp Fundraising	Neighborhood Watch Program
Kindergarten Classroom Volunteer	Sunday School Teacher
Kindergarten Readiness Committee	Schneider Child Care at SOU
WiLL Council of United Way	Advisory Council for Project Dove
Children's Vision Program	Food Pantry
Women's Crisis Center	County Commission
Town Hall Meetings	Local Foodshare
Scholarship Committee	Senior Center Advisory Board
Meals on Wheels	Public Library

Boomer Volunteers, N = 89.

In addition, several boomer volunteers reported increased awareness in the community for the Boomers and Babies program. One boomer volunteer proclaimed, *“I have been telling everyone I can about this project and how important it is.”*

#### 4.3.2 Administrative Staff Perspective of Impact on Boomers

Complementing what boomers had to say about themselves, administrators cited several ways that they felt boomer volunteers were impacted by their participation in programs. Administrators talked about how they frequently heard that volunteer participation among boomers was motivated by a desire to make a difference in the life of a child and to engage in meaningful work. As one director outlined:

*I think it is exactly what they are looking for in terms of meeting their desires, having an impact, building a legacy, and doing something that is significant in their lives. The boomers see that they are having a tremendous impact. They have always walked away from here with a big smile on their face. While I don't think it has been life changing, it has been a big enhancement in their lives.*

Administrators also noted that some boomers shared how their volunteer experiences were instrumental in showing them the importance of quality care in early childhood for a child's future outcomes. One director shared this example:

*I have several volunteers come in and tell me stories about some amazing things that have happened with this experience and how it has had an impact on them. It has made them more aware of the issues that surround the culture of poverty. It has made them more aware of how the events that happen at home shape that child's life. It has made them aware that being there is going to be paid forward through their investment in the children to become responsible adults.*

Boomer volunteers appeared not only enthusiastic about their meaningful role in children's lives, but they also shared how their work with children **added value to them personally**. One volunteer coordinator commented on how boomer volunteers had shared with her that volunteering was *“the best part of their week and they love coming.”* Another administrator noted that *“It makes them feel they are doing more for the community and the center.”* Finally, administrators relayed how this program has helped volunteers **form social relationships**:

*It has been fulfillment and enjoyment of working with children for the boomer volunteers. Having a social relationship. Many of the boomer volunteers are retired and want something to be involved in... It gives them the opportunity to form connections and social relationships with other volunteers. They have a passion to help needy families and foster care children. They don't get paid financially but they get paid in other ways by helping the families better their lives.*

In addition, administrators mentioned volunteering offered boomers an avenue to interact with young children. One administrator expressed, *“I think a lot of them haven't been exposed to early childhood and so that connection they have helps how much*

*they now enjoy working with young children.” Another volunteer coordinator shared, “They feel like they are getting some really great experiences with young children that they may not otherwise have with children that age.”*

One administrator detailed how a boomer became so inspired through her volunteer experience that she expressed a desire to continue her service to the children in more comprehensive ways. She explained:

*They see what happens with the children and they see the relationships. For instance, we have a boomer volunteer who works in the learning zones. She’s not a very wealthy woman but she came into a small inheritance, and she feels so strongly about the boomer program that she wants to make a small donation so that we can buy art supplies for the art teacher or books or whatever is needed for our children. We find that they want to give back in other ways. They are very, very committed.*

#### **4.4 Overall Impact Summary**

Administrative staff and teachers from all of the funded organizations indicated that boomer volunteers have had significant impacts on their organizations and the children they serve since the initiative began. Organizations engaged boomer volunteers in best practices that are known to contribute to improved child outcomes, positive development, and school readiness. The integration of boomer volunteers had a positive effect on the learning environments. Impacts included more one-on-one time with children and an increase in language, literacy, and child development skills. Administrative staff and teachers said that the boomer volunteers provided the children with positive and caring adult role models.

The inclusion of boomer volunteers in the early childhood settings increased both the programming and staff capacity of the organizations. The organizations benefited as boomer volunteers helped to raise financial resources, contributed to a positive work environment, and promoted community awareness about the programs.

The impact of boomer volunteerism was best illustrated during administrative interviews. Many felt that it helped them re-focus on recruitment of volunteers and provided them with a sturdy framework that they planned to continue to use. For example, when asked about her thoughts on whether or not the initiative was successful, one administrator explained:

*Yes, I would describe this initiative as being successful. Other than the sheer number of volunteers that we have been able to recruit, this initiative has also been successful because of the better understanding of staff and boomer volunteers, the culture of volunteerism, revising our handbook, implementing volunteer incentives, different volunteer trainings, and the volunteer coordinator handbook position as well.*

The boomer volunteers also benefitted from their involvement with the organizations. Boomers felt a sense of personal fulfillment and valued the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children. They also acknowledged a new perspective toward higher risk families. Many volunteers were so impacted by the program that they explored additional ways to provide for the children, such as supplying clothing and driving children to-and-from school. Furthermore, boomer volunteers reported an increased advocacy and involvement in the community after their experiences with the Boomers and Babies program.

## **5. Looking to the Future**

Through surveys and interviews, administrative staff and boomer volunteers provided their perspectives on future participation in Boomers and Babies initiative related components as well as feedback on their experiences. Their viewpoints can be helpful in informing other organizations who may seek to implement similar initiatives.

Information gathered included

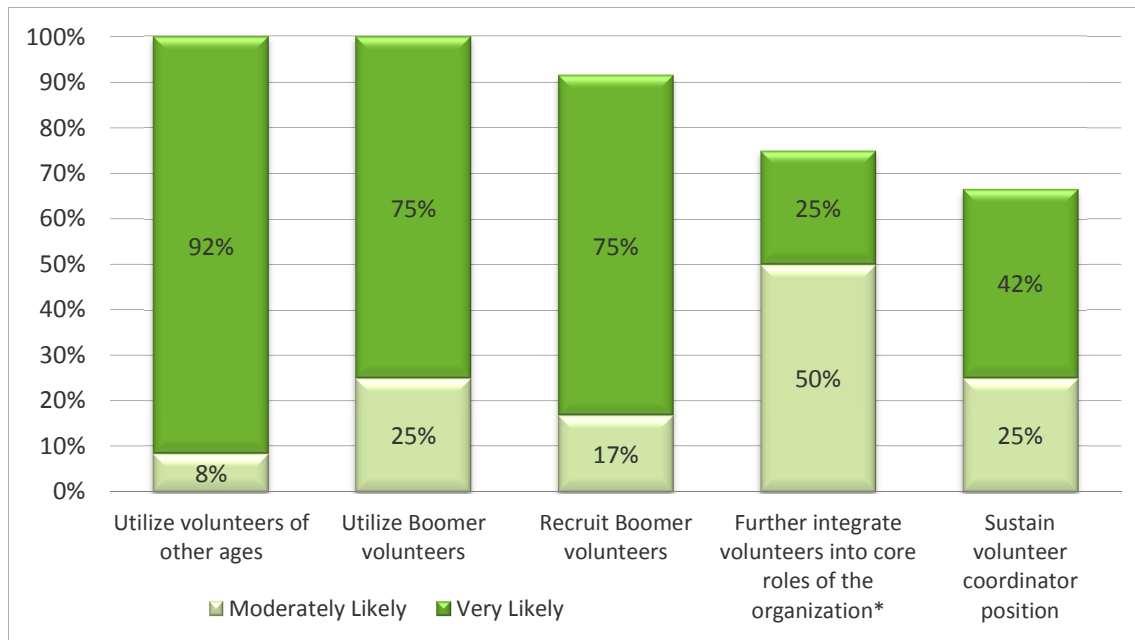
- likelihood of future involvement
- level of involvement
- advice for other programs
- feedback on the Learning Community
- additional words for the funders

### ***5.1 Likelihood of Future Involvement***

Administrative staff and boomer volunteers were asked to evaluate their likelihood of continued involvement with aspects of the Boomers and Babies initiative once funding ends.

#### **5.1.1 Administrative Staff Perspective on the Future**

Administrative staff were asked to project into the future and assessed how likely they were to continue several components of their project. Items were rated on a 5-point scale with 1 = Not at All Likely to 5 = Very Likely. Figure 2 (on next page) displays the percentage of administrative staff that reported they were moderately or very likely to continue an action in the future.

**Figure 2: Organization's Likelihood of Future Initiatives with Volunteers**

\*Significantly decreased from 2012 to 2013, see Appendix 4

Overall, administrative staff expects to continue to involve boomer volunteers once project funding has ended. All administrative staff indicated they were very or moderately likely to *utilize boomer volunteers* and *utilize volunteers of other ages*. In addition, ninety-two percent of staff members stated they were very or moderately likely to *recruit boomer volunteers* in the future and 75% were very or moderately likely to *further integrate volunteers into core roles of the organization*. Eight of twelve are moderately or very likely to continue to *sustain the volunteer coordinator position* once project funding has ended. **In all, 100% of the staff plan in some capacity to continue to recruit, utilize, sustain, and integrate volunteers in their organization after funding ends.**

#### *Sustaining Volunteer Coordinator Positions*

Directors specifically were asked about their commitment and ability to sustain the volunteer coordinator position after grant funding had ended. As noted above, a large majority are moderately or very likely to sustain the coordinator position. An additional 34% indicated they are slightly and somewhat likely to continue to the position, while no director indicated they were likely to discontinue it. Responses varied as to the level of full-time equivalency (FTE) available for the coordinator position once funding ends. Some organizations were unsure if the position could be sustained; although they had no plans of intentionally discontinuing it, while others projected the position would continue at a range of .35 to 1.0 FTE. Some organizations were able to integrate the position into the programs budget.

The directors all recognized the importance of having a distinct volunteer coordinator and the benefits it brings, and are committed in some capacity to coordinate volunteerism. One staff member advocated for the position during a board meeting

when she was given time to speak on any need their center had. She felt the position was so important to continue she spoke about the need to fund the coordinator position over other pressing needs of her organization. Others shared similar views on the importance of the position:

*To continue to have the types of outcomes and level of volunteer program that we have, we need a full-time dedicated position. We will continue to do the work, but on a more limited scale unless or until sustainable funding can be developed.*

The challenge in securing financial resources to fund the position once the grant ends was seen as a key concern. Some directors worried the position may be eliminated or reduced.

*At this point, we have not secured additional funding for the volunteer coordinator beyond the grant, and I am very concerned that it will be difficult to sustain the program.*

One director noted the volunteer position may be reduced or wrapped into another job at the organization:

*Our biggest challenge is sustainable funding for a full-time volunteer coordinator position. At this point it is unclear if we will be able to have a position fully dedicated to managing volunteers. It looks now as if we will have to cut this position to half-time or less and/or blend it with another position.*

One organization is using a mix of Head Start funds and private donations to continue the position at .35 FTE with the hopes of moving it up to .75 FTE. Others also plan to continue the position in a reduced or similar capacity:

*We just presented our budget for the next fiscal year and I was not responsible for the relief nursery budget but I believe that we have been and will be committed to the volunteer coordinator position. So I know that we will still keep the volunteer coordinator position but I am not sure what the hours will be for that position.*

*As far as I know right now we plan to have a volunteer coordinator support position. So right now the plan is to continue at this current level. The organization is absorbing it into their budget.*

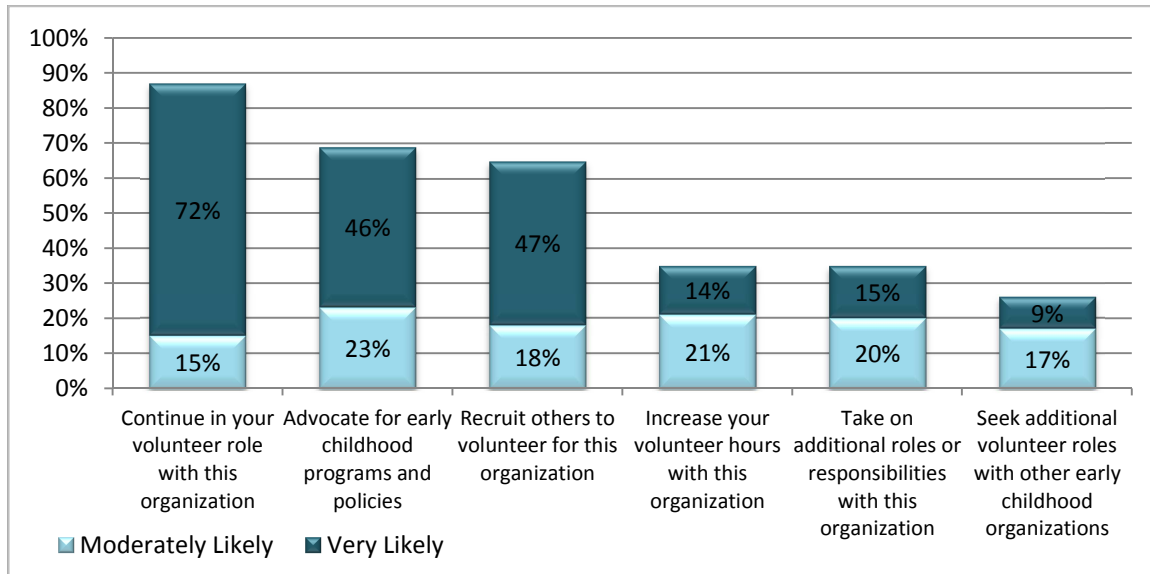
**Overall, all directors are invested in maintaining the volunteer coordinator position once project funding ends.** However, the form and level of the position in the future is uncertain given financial constraints.

### **5.1.2 Boomer Volunteer Perspective on the Future**

Boomer volunteers were also asked about their likelihood of continuing and deepening their involvement with the organizations, as well as other aspects of investment with early childhood programs. Items were arranged on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = Not

at All Likely to 5 = Very Likely. Figure 3 displays the percentage of volunteers that reported they were moderately or very likely to continue an action in the future.

**Figure 3: Boomer's Likelihood of Future Volunteerism**



Nearly all of the boomers indicated they are planning to *continue in their volunteer role with the organization*. Eighty-seven percent stated they are very or moderately likely to *continue their volunteer role in the organization*. One volunteer shared, “*I now have the time and resources to give back to our community, state, and country.*” In addition, 69% are moderately or very likely to *advocate for early childhood programs and policies* and 65% plans to *recruit others to volunteer for this organization* in the future.

Most volunteers are not likely to increase their involvement from what they currently contribute. Thirty-five percent indicated they are moderately or very likely to *increase their volunteer hours* and *take on additional roles or responsibilities*, while 50% are slightly likely or not at all likely to *seek additional volunteer roles with other early childhood organizations*. Some commented they were already involved in other organizations. Many volunteers indicated their current level involvement, coupled with other life obligations, had reached maximum capacity.

*I currently volunteer 200-400 hours each year. With the impending birth of my first local grandchild I do not feel I have more time to give at this time.*

Many volunteers plan to continue to invest their time in the organizations despite other competing demands. One boomer is attempting to continue to contribute even after moving out of the area:

*I have moved to another town in Oregon but have offered to volunteer to help the organization as a virtual volunteer. We have yet to work this out.*



Overall Boomer volunteers plan to remain invested in the organizations and plan to advocate and recruitment new volunteers, but are largely content with their existing level of involvement.

## 5.2 Lessons Learned

Through surveys and interviews, administrative staff were asked about recommendations for other programs that might be considering integrating boomers as volunteers.

### 5.2.1 Administrative Staff Offer Advice to Other Programs

Administrators and volunteer coordinators were asked what lessons they had learned during the last year of their funding about integrating boomer volunteers into their programs that would be helpful to other early childhood organizations who were considering such an endeavor. Below are other suggestions offered by directors and volunteer coordinators that generally represented the advice from across programs:

**Build a solid foundation.** Having a system in place for engagement is critical prior to volunteer recruitment. This system includes a volunteer coordinator position along with training opportunities as well as policies and procedures for screening, placing, and managing the volunteers. An executive director emphasized the importance of the volunteer coordinator position, *“For us, having a volunteer coordinator position has been very important in the success of getting as many volunteers as we have in the program.”*

Administrators indicated that boomer volunteers often expect to be immediately placed in a classroom. The longer it takes to process their application the less likely they are to volunteer. Having job descriptions, screening, and placement procedures in place is critical. As one volunteer coordinator summarized,

*All of that should be well thought out before the beginning of the program because once you have the volunteers and you don't train them well or you don't have a place for them, or no one knows what they are supposed to do, you can end up losing volunteers or volunteers could be easily frustrated.*

**Understand the need to invest time in the initiative.** In addition to the time needed to design the policies and procedures, administrators said that organizations should also be prepared to invest sufficient time for recruitment, training, and debriefing with volunteers and teachers. One volunteer coordinator advised, *“...any new project is going to take a good deal of time. [You] really need to set aside the time that you are willing to make to that commitment.”*

**Nurture administrative and teacher buy-in.** Many of the organizations indicated that prior to this initiative there was not a lot of involvement with the staff in placing new volunteers into classrooms. Through their experience they have learned that *“staff buy-in is huge.”* As summed up by a volunteer coordinator, *“The buy-in from staff and upper management is a key piece in the implementation because everyone has to be on the same page when trying to successfully put boomers to work in the programs.”*

**Engage boomer volunteers in meaningful ways.** Engaging boomer-age volunteers requires that organizations be thoughtful in their approaches to matching volunteers to meaningful roles and responsibilities that fit their skill set and are reinforced as being important to the goals of the organization. Administrators stressed the importance of *“developing relationships with the volunteers”* to better understand their goals. An executive director offered this advice, *“Find out what skills they have, what’s going to feed their souls, what it is they want to do, and then build roles for them.”* Administrators also recommended that organizations maintain communication, provide feedback, and show appreciation to their volunteers.

**Remain flexible.** Administrators cautioned organizations to not *“build boxes and try to put boomers in them.”* Boomer volunteers’ availability may not always mesh with the classroom schedules, or in some cases, they may only be available on days when not as many children are on site. Organizations learned to be more flexible in their assignments and created additional jobs and activities that volunteers could do in those situations. As one administrator explained, *“If the boomers come in and feel like they are wasting their time, then they are not going to come back.”* Administrative staff also recommended being open to transitioning boomer volunteers into roles for which they had not originally sought. For example, one organization had a volunteer who started in the classroom but is now helping with volunteer recruitment. An administrator shared her organization’s experience:

*I think sometimes we assumed we had them in the right place, they’re doing the right thing so just let them be, but what we’re finding is that if we stay in communication with them that as their skills and their comfort grows, they can do more in different ways.*

The administrators indicated that the tools introduced through the technical assistance and Learning Community for the initiative would be helpful resources to other early childhood programs. Specifically, the administrators mentioned the Ready4Volunteers website that was developed as part of the initiative. The website (<http://www.ready4volunteers.org/>) has resources for early childhood programs to prepare for effective volunteer engagement. The administrators also referenced the *Volunteer Management Audit* by Susan Ellis at Energize, Inc. as a recommended tool for programs to assess their readiness to implement a volunteer program. More information about the audit can be accessed at <http://www.energizeinc.com/store/5-206-E-1>.

### **5.3 Feedback on Learning Community**

The Boomers and Babies Learning Community was established to provide support and share resources with early childhood programs seeking to integrate boomer volunteers. During interviews, administrative staff were asked specifically about their participation in the Learning Community. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. One of the volunteer coordinators summed it up this way, *“I don’t think we could have been as successful as we have been without the learning community.”* Another shared, *“It has just been nice to have a community where [we] have shared experiences, different*

*levels of expertise, and with the common goal being how do we enhance the experience of the boomer volunteers.”*

Administrative staff indicated that the Learning Community provided needed support for the cohort as their organizations adopted a unique initiative within their early childhood world. One administrator shared her opinion, *“Going to the meetings and hearing other people’s stories helped us realize that we’re not the only ones out there because no matter how big the program is they all experience some of the same struggles we do.”* A volunteer coordinator offered,

*Being able to talk about what works and doesn’t work and how to make it better is very helpful. It was really nice to see that a lot of us were on the same path with the volunteer program and we were all pushing through it together.*

Some of the organizations experienced turnover in their volunteer coordinator positions during the grant. Executive directors appreciated the support the Learning Community gave to their new staff.

Administrative staff were particularly excited about the opportunities to hear from their colleagues about recruitment strategies and the sharing of policies and procedures. A volunteer coordinator shared, *“Getting ideas and descriptions of how other people have been able to get volunteers is great. Those connections really helped to put together all of the materials I have.”* Another administrator commented that her organization had, *“incorporated some great ideas into our own volunteer program.”*

The connections made through the Learning Community extended beyond the gatherings and scheduled phone conferences. Volunteer coordinators noted visiting other Boomers and Babies sites as well as connecting through private calls. A volunteer coordinator noted, *“It has felt like there has been a real generous spirit among all of the people to see everyone succeed.”* Participants were optimistic that those connections would continue after the grant ended. An executive director said, *“I wouldn’t be surprised if people continue to communicate and really reach out for support.”*

Clearly the grantees benefitted from the Learning Community. However, administrative staff did offer some insight regarding participation challenges they encountered. Barriers for administrators to attend gatherings typically centered on lack of time and ability to get away from the grant site. As one administrator shared, *“Because I was managing so many programs at the time I only went to two of the gatherings, but each time I thought they were wonderful.”* One of the grantees with a well-established volunteer program found the Learning Community to be valuable, but felt they were in more of an advisory role than a learning role. They shared:

*Because a lot of the other Learning Community members were so much smaller with their volunteer programs, we wished that we had another seasoned group to learn from and compare our experiences with instead of really advising the other groups so much...sometimes it felt a little unbalanced.*

#### 5.4 Words for Funders

When asked if there was feedback that they would like to give the funders, administrators first expressed their appreciation for the financial resources and support they had received to implement the Boomers and Babies project. One administrator summarized,

*I think this was a good investment for The Oregon Community Foundation. I think we are taking assets into the future and we are taking systems into the future. We would just like to say 'thank you' to OCF for having the foresight and willingness to let us go down this road.*

Another commented, *"With so many resources and support, it has been awesome!"* Administrators shared also how their individual needs and challenges were acknowledged and supported. As one director reported:

*Their involvement and coaching and cheerleading us throughout when there were times when it felt like it was too overwhelming or we were completely off track...they really helped us get through it. Let OCF know how much we thank them for being with us every step of the way and bringing so many people on board with the project.*

The grantees emphasized how important the grant had been in strengthening their infrastructure for engaging all volunteers. One executive director described this experience for her organization:

*It really helped our agency in connecting not only with boomers but also with all of our volunteers because we get volunteers from the schools and through the parents and many other places. We are better at engaging volunteers because of this project.*

Administrators also wanted the funder to know that they credit the Boomers and Babies initiative with deepening their staff's appreciation for volunteers. An administrator commented, *"Our staff is becoming more aware of how important volunteers are in the classroom."* A volunteer coordinator shared:

*It's just huge for me to see the change in the attitudes and perspectives of the staff. It has just been wonderful how they've been integrated into the program and with the families and the children.*

Administrative staff reiterated their opinion that the initiative had a direct and significant impact on their organizations and clients. One site said that boomer volunteers *"are a critical piece of providing the care for our families and children."* Another stated, *"The main thing is that we benefitted tremendously from it. We feel like the children and families we serve in our programs have all benefitted."*

## REFERENCES

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1:** Volunteers by Site

**Appendix 2:** Volunteer Hours and Children Served by Site

**Appendix 3:** Volunteer Roles by Site

**Appendix 4:** Comparison of Responses from 2012 to 2013

**Appendix 5:** Boomers and Babies Volunteer Survey Results

**Appendix 6:** Boomers and Babies Administrative Staff Survey Results

**Appendix 7:** Boomers and Babies Teacher Survey Results

## Appendix 1: Volunteers by Site

### Number of Volunteers

	Family Building Blocks	Family Development Center	Gladstone School District 115	Neighbor-Impact	Umatilla-Morrow Co. Head Start	Volunteers of America Oregon	Total
<b>Number of Volunteers</b>							
<b>Boomer Volunteers</b>							
Number of NEW Boomer volunteers recruited	24	316	46	27	14	37	<b>464</b>
<i>in RECURRING volunteer roles</i>	50%	7%	70%	59%	100%	51%	<b>25%</b>
<i>in EPISODIC volunteer roles</i>	50%	93%	35%	33%	0%	49%	<b>75%</b>
Total number of ALL Boomer volunteers	118	385	51	38	74	58	<b>724</b>
<i>in RECURRING volunteer roles</i>	53%	8%	80%	71%	93%	50%	<b>36%</b>
<i>in EPISODIC volunteer roles</i>	47%	92%	20%	29%	7%	47%	<b>64%</b>
<b>Non-Boomer Volunteers</b>							
Number of NEW Non-Boomer volunteers recruited	115	160	51	255	495	115	<b>1,191</b>
Total number of Non-Boomer volunteers	418	217	51	255	569	247	<b>1,757</b>
<b>All Volunteers</b>							
Total number of volunteers recruited this year	139	476	97	282	509	152	<b>1,655</b>
<b>Total number of volunteers</b>	536	602	102	293	643	305	<b>2,481</b>

Results from June 1, 2012 – May 30, 2013.

## Appendix 2: Volunteer Hours and Children Served by Site

### Volunteer Hours

	Family Building Blocks	Family Development Center	Gladstone School District 115	Neighbor-Impact	Umatilla-Morrow Co. Head Start	Volunteers of America Oregon	Total
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>							
<b>Newly Recruited Boomer Volunteers</b>							
Hours volunteered by NEW recruited Boomers	370	1,064	408	383	407	554	3,186
Hours spent with children in the classroom	168	381	231	254	97	445	1,576
Hours spent with children in literacy activities	55	117	407	119	83	29	810
<b>All Boomer Volunteers</b>							
Hours volunteered by ALL Boomer volunteers	3,958	1,593	1,043	1,017	2,115	554	9,751
Hours spent with children in the classroom	2,891	381	692	1,017	1,050	445	6,476
Hours spent with children in literacy activities	964	119	589	0	1,050	32	2,754
<b>All Volunteers</b>							
Hours volunteered by Non-Boomer volunteers	12,902	936	1,621	6,604	7,542	2,342	31,947
Hours volunteered by ALL Boomer volunteers*	3,958	1,593	1,043	1,017	2,115	554	9,751
<b>Total Hours by all volunteers</b>	<b>16,860</b>	<b>2,529</b>	<b>2,664</b>	<b>7,621</b>	<b>9,657</b>	<b>2,896</b>	<b>41,698</b>

Results from June 1, 2012 – May 30, 2013; \*row repeated in table for clarity of presentation

### Children Served by Volunteers

	Family Building Blocks	Family Development Center	Gladstone School District 115	Neighbor-Impact	Umatilla-Morrow Co. Head Start	Volunteers of America Oregon	Total
<b>Children Served by Volunteers</b>							
<b>Newly Recruited Boomer Volunteers</b>							
Children served by NEW Boomer volunteers <i>directly</i>	37	102	306	180	208	124	957
Children served by NEW Boomer volunteers <i>indirectly</i>	552	102	263	517	22	152	1,608
<b>Total Children Served by New Boomer volunteers*</b>	<b>589*</b>	<b>204*</b>	<b>569*</b>	<b>697*</b>	<b>230*</b>	<b>276*</b>	<b>2,565*</b>
<b>All Boomer Volunteers</b>							
Children served by ALL Boomer volunteers <i>directly</i>	76	102	302	517	218	196	1,411
Children served by ALL Boomer volunteers <i>indirectly</i>	901	102	544	600	258	240	2,645
<b>Total Children Served by ALL Boomer volunteers*</b>	<b>977*</b>	<b>204*</b>	<b>846*</b>	<b>1,117*</b>	<b>476*</b>	<b>436*</b>	<b>4,056*</b>

Results from June 1, 2012 – May 30, 2013; \*number is duplicated because one child could be served both directly and indirectly



### Appendix 3: Volunteer Roles by Site

#### Volunteers Roles

	Family Building Blocks	Family Development Center	Gladstone School District 115	Neighbor-Impact	Umatilla-Morrow Co. Head Start	Volunteers of America Oregon	Total
<b>Volunteer Roles</b>							
Read to children	20	45	42	30	10	2	<b>149</b>
Assist in classrooms	25	71	36	38	9	2	<b>181</b>
Lead enrichment activities with the children	10	3	42	38	3	4	<b>100</b>
Facility maintenance (painting, yard work, etc.)	10	15	0	15	2	0	<b>42</b>
Prepare learning activities for classrooms	2	3	0	0	4	2	<b>11</b>
Serve on organization's Board	10	3	1	0	0	0	<b>14</b>
Organize volunteer activities	8	15	6	3	13	4	<b>49</b>
Work in office	2	2	0	5	1	0	<b>10</b>
Mentor other volunteers	4	5	0	2	1	4	<b>16</b>
Provide training for program staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Drive bus	11	22	0	0	5	5	<b>43</b>
Other	20	265	4	0	41	2	<b>332</b>

## Appendix 4: Comparison of Responses from 2012 to 2013

Quantitative data from online surveys were analyzed using dependent t-tests to assess whether administrative staff and teachers reported statistically significant changes in mean scores between the assessments in 2012 and 2013. Results are significant when there is a statistical difference in the rating between assessments ( $p < .05$ ). Only significant results are reported below.

	N	2012		2013		Difference
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<b>Administrative Staff</b>						
<b>Coordinating Boomer Volunteers<sup>1</sup></b>						
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies for keeping volunteers informed	28	4.69	.60	5.17	.58	.48*
<b>Likelihood of Future Involvement<sup>3</sup></b>						
Further integrate volunteers into core roles of the organization	28	4.75	.45	3.92	.90	-.83**
<b>Teachers</b>						
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers<sup>1</sup></b>						
Maintain clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	116	5.03	1.03	5.47	.67	.45**
Recognize volunteers for their contributions to the program or your classroom	119	5.20	1.08	5.57	.63	.37*
<b>Barriers and Challenges<sup>2</sup></b>						
Generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children	115	2.74	1.22	2.10	1.12	-.64**
Confidentiality issues	113	2.03	1.04	1.36	.53	-.67***
Volunteers' personal family caregiving limits their time to volunteer	115	1.94	1.26	1.45	.87	-.49*
Staff is not supportive of integrating volunteers into the program	113	1.63	1.06	1.10	.38	-.53***
Maintaining communication with volunteers/ Lack of time to communicate with volunteers about their roles, tasks, etc.	115	3.03	1.34	2.20	1.08	-.83***
Securing volunteers for specific needs within your organization (i.e. clerical, fundraising, classroom, etc.)	112	2.41	1.30	1.64	.74	-.77***
Supporting professionalism among volunteers/ Lack of professionalism among volunteers	115	1.80	1.02	1.35	.53	-.45**
Accommodating volunteer scheduling preferences	110	2.03	1.06	1.50	.79	-.53**
Including volunteers disrupts the schedule and flow of the classroom	113	2.06	1.27	1.32	.61	-.73***
Volunteers do not have a rapport with the children	113	1.76	.90	1.27	.59	-.48**
Consistency in volunteer scheduling	113	2.00	1.22	1.55	.93	-.45*
Volunteers do not have skills necessary to fulfill the role they have been assigned	113	2.12	1.43	1.47	.81	-.65**
<b>Volunteers' Impact<sup>1</sup></b>						
Children have more one-on-one time with an adult to work on learning objectives	115	4.97	1.27	5.50	.71	.53**
Children have increased school readiness skills	112	4.79	1.41	5.33	.73	.54**

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . <sup>1</sup>On 6-point scale with 1 "Completely Disagree" and 6 "Completely Agree" <sup>2</sup>On 5-point scale with 1 "Not a Barrier" and 6 "Significant Barrier" <sup>3</sup>On 5-point scale with 1 "Not at All Likely" and 6 "Very Likely"

## Appendix 5: Boomers and Babies Volunteer Survey Results 2013

### Participant Information

Length Volunteered	
Less than 3 months	9
3-6 months	17
7-12 months	12
1-2 years	18
3-4 years	23
More than 5 Years	20

Volunteer Work Status	
Employed full-time	15
Employed part-time	18
Retired	41
Unemployed, seeking	2
Unemployed, not seeking	7

Volunteer Highest Level of Education	
9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1
High school graduate	3
Some college	24
Associate's degree	12
Bachelor's degree	30
Graduate/ professional degree	26

Volunteer Gender	
Female	74
Male	21

Volunteer Race/Ethnicity	
White	85
Hispanic/Latino	7
Biracial/Mixed	2

### Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers</b>					
Organization has paid staff position/time for coordinating volunteers	92	5.37	1.23	1	6
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	92	5.61	0.87	1	6
Organization has system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	95	5.66	0.72	1	6
Organization provides adequate supervision for volunteers	94	5.57	0.76	1	6
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies to keep volunteers informed	96	5.42	0.87	2	6
Organization utilizes effective recruitment strategies	84	5.29	0.92	2	6
Organization provides performance feedback to volunteers	87	5.20	0.96	2	6
Organization is connected with community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	84	5.39	0.91	2	6
Organization views volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program	96	5.68	0.74	1	6
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization	91	5.47	0.92	1	6
The organization's staff value volunteers' involvement and contributions to program	97	5.72	0.64	2	6
The organization's has positive attitude toward volunteers	97	5.75	0.66	1	6

**Engaging Boomer Volunteers**

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>					
I am assigned meaningful tasks and roles within the organization	97	5.53	0.76	1	6
My volunteer role is matched with my areas of interest and expertise	98	5.45	0.81	1	6
I have clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	95	5.40	0.90	1	6
My volunteer hours are scheduled based on my availability	98	5.69	0.80	1	6
I receive recognition for my contributions to the program	96	5.65	0.74	1	6
I have been trained by the organization to meet the needs of their program	96	5.47	0.76	2	6
I have received feedback about my performance as a volunteer	95	5.32	0.90	1	6
I am treated as a team member by the organization's staff	97	5.56	0.72	2	6
My interactions with the organization's staff have been positive	98	5.71	0.69	1	6
I am treated as a professional by the program staff	98	5.63	0.73	1	6
I feel valued in my volunteer role	98	5.68	0.69	1	6
I receive regular communication from the organization's staff	98	5.46	0.87	2	6
I am more knowledgeable about child development as a result of volunteering with this organization	94	5.35	1.07	2	6
I feel confident in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds	91	5.52	0.72	2	6
I am making a difference in the lives of the children and families with whom I work	92	5.54	0.79	2	6
I feel satisfied with my volunteer experience	97	5.58	0.80	1	6

### Perception of Volunteers' Impact on Children in Program

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Volunteers' Impact</b>					
Classrooms have a lower adult-to-child ratio	63	4.76	1.91	1	6
Children can be divided into smaller groups for activities	65	5.28	1.26	1	6
Children spend more time in literacy activities	62	4.82	1.43	1	6
Children have more one-on-one time with an adult to work on specific skills	65	5.17	1.31	1	6
Children have increased language development	65	5.17	1.22	1	6
Children have increased school readiness skills	66	5.18	1.19	1	6
Children have more opportunities for enrichment activities (i.e. field trips, music, etc.)	59	5.08	1.33	1	6

### How likely are you to do the following?

Not at all Likely	Somewhat Likely		Very Likely	
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>How likely are you to do the following?</b>					
Continue in your volunteer role with this organization	97	4.57	0.80	1	5
Increase your volunteer hours with this organization	97	3.00	1.23	1	5
Take on additional roles or responsibilities with this organization	94	2.97	1.27	1	5
Seek additional volunteer roles with other early childhood organizations	95	2.62	1.27	1	5
Advocate for early childhood programs and policies	93	3.96	1.21	1	5
Recruit others to volunteer for this organization	96	3.98	1.13	1	5

### Perceptions of Volunteering in an Early Childhood Setting

Not True at All		Somewhat True		Very True
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Perceptions of Volunteering in an Early Childhood Setting</b>					
Physical/health limitations affect my ability to work with young children	94	1.53	1.00	1	5
Generational differences in approaches to working with young children makes my work with this organization difficult	91	1.18	0.48	1	3
It is difficult not to share information about the children that may be confidential	91	1.23	0.71	1	5
Liability issues of working with young children concern me	89	1.28	0.52	1	3
It is difficult to set limits on my personal involvement when working with the children and their families	88	1.17	0.43	1	3
The challenges of working with children and families who have overwhelming needs keeps me from wanting to be a volunteer	90	1.16	0.49	1	4
Working with young children is fun	90	4.63	0.86	1	5
Volunteering will limit the flexibility of my private time	89	1.97	1.01	1	5
My personal family caregiving limits my time for volunteering	90	2.02	1.25	1	5

### Motivation for Volunteering

	Obs	Count	Percent
<b>Motivation for Volunteering</b>			
To share what I know: my skills, knowledge, and experience	96	76	79%
To learn new skills myself	96	48	50%
To help my community	96	92	96%
To help early childhood programs	96	39	41%
To make me healthier and feel better (by being active and giving back)	96	55	57%
To be a leader in my community	96	20	21%
To feel connected to my community	96	70	73%
To feel more connected to other people	96	58	60%
To learn about other kinds of work	96	26	27%

**Personal Impact of Volunteering**

Not at All	A Small Amount	Moderate Amount	A Great Amount
1	2	3	4

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>To what extent has the program...</b>					
...made you feel that your skills and experience are valued?	92	3.62	0.55	2	4
...given you the chance to share what you know?	93	3.37	0.68	2	4
...helped you learn new skills?	90	3.04	0.88	1	4
...made you feel like you are helping your community?	93	3.74	0.48	2	4
...made you feel like you are helping to solve or address early childhood issues?	89	3.48	0.69	1	4
...made you want to do other activities that help your community?	89	3.21	0.74	1	4
...made you feel more connected to your community?	90	3.44	0.72	1	4
...helped you feel better physically?	88	2.68	0.99	1	4
...helped you feel better inside (emotionally)?	89	3.37	0.80	1	4
...given you more confidence as a leader in your community?	85	2.79	0.93	1	4
...helped you get to know and connect with other people?	86	3.41	0.77	1	4
...helped you get experience that you can put on a résumé?	84	2.27	1.17	1	4
...helped you find out about new kinds of work you could do?	87	2.28	1.09	1	4

## Appendix 6: Boomers and Babies Administrative Staff Survey Results 2013

### Participant Information

Staff Gender	
Female	10
Male	2

Years Worked at Organization	
Less than 5 years	4
5-10 years	4
11-15 years	3
Over 20 years	1

Highest Level of Education	
Some college	2
Bachelor's degree	6
Graduate or professional degree	4

Volunteer Race/Ethnicity	
White	11
Bi-racial/Mixed	1

### Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers</b>					
Organization has paid position/staff time for coordinating volunteers	12	6.00	0.00	6	6
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	12	5.92	0.28	5	6
Organization has a system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	12	5.67	0.47	5	6
Organization provides adequate supervision for volunteers	12	5.08	0.49	4	6
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies for keeping volunteers informed	12	5.17	0.55	4	6
Organization provides performance feedback to volunteers	12	4.50	0.87	3	6
Organization works with other community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	12	4.67	1.03	2	6
Organization views volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program	12	5.58	0.64	4	6
Organization trains staff to integrate volunteers into program	12	5.08	0.86	4	6
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization	12	5.42	0.64	4	6
The organization's staff integrate volunteers into program	12	5.25	0.83	4	6
The organization's staff value volunteers' involvement and contributions to the program	12	5.67	0.47	5	6
The organization's staff have positive attitude toward volunteers	11	5.64	0.48	5	6



**Engaging Boomer Volunteers**

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>					
Assign volunteers to meaningful tasks and roles within the organization	12	5.58	0.49	5	6
Match volunteers with their areas of interest and expertise	12	5.50	0.50	5	6
Maintain clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	11	5.18	0.39	5	6
Provide flexibility in scheduling to meet the individual needs of the volunteers	12	5.50	0.65	4	6
Recognize volunteers for their contributions to the program	12	5.75	0.60	4	6
Train volunteers to meet needs of program	12	5.17	0.69	4	6
Provide performance feedback to volunteers	12	4.42	0.49	4	5
Utilize effective recruitment strategies	12	5.08	0.64	4	6
Retain volunteers	12	5.08	1.38	1	6

**Barriers to Project Implementation**

Not a Barrier		Somewhat		Significant Barrier
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Barriers to Project Implementation</b>					
Physical/health limitations of volunteers	12	2.08	0.86	1	3
Generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children	12	2.42	0.76	1	3
Confidentiality issues	12	1.33	0.47	1	2
Liability issues associated with utilizing volunteers	12	1.17	0.37	1	2
Staff is not supportive of integrating volunteers into the program	12	1.50	0.65	1	3
Language barrier for recruitment of non-English speaking volunteers	12	2.33	1.43	1	5
Maintaining communication with volunteers	12	1.83	0.69	1	3
Securing volunteers for specific needs within your organization (i.e. clerical, fundraising, classroom, etc.)	12	2.25	0.72	1	3
Supporting professionalism among volunteers	12	1.58	0.64	1	3
Accommodating volunteer scheduling preferences	12	2.25	1.16	1	4
Securing funding for costs associated with utilizing volunteers	12	3.17	1.34	1	5
Recruitment strategies	12	2.00	0.71	1	3
Transition of key staff (within your own or a partner organization)	12	2.25	0.83	1	3
Timing of volunteer recruitment (i.e. program is seasonal)	12	1.67	0.75	1	3
Age limited to Boomer volunteers for this funding	12	2.08	0.86	1	3
Scheduling group meetings with volunteers	12	3.50	0.96	2	5
Not enough time for volunteer coordinator to fulfill all of the needed duties	11	2.45	1.37	1	5
Volunteers' personal family caregiving limits their time for volunteering	12	2.75	0.83	2	4

### Perception of Volunteers' Impact on Children in Program

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Volunteers' Impact</b>					
Classrooms have a lower adult-to-child ratio	12	5.42	0.64	4	6
Children can be divided into smaller groups for activities	12	5.58	0.64	4	6
Children spend more time in literacy activities	12	5.50	0.65	4	6
Children have more one-on-one time with an adult to work on specific skills	12	5.58	0.49	5	6
Children have increased language development	12	5.42	0.76	4	6
Children have increased school readiness skills	12	5.25	0.83	4	6
Children have more opportunities for enrichment activities (i.e. field trips, music, etc.)	12	5.17	0.80	4	6

### How likely are you to do the following?

Not at all Likely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>How likely are you to do the following?</b>					
Recruit Boomer volunteers	12	4.67	0.62	3	5
Utilize Boomer volunteers	12	4.75	0.43	4	5
Utilize volunteers of other ages	12	4.92	0.28	4	5
Sustain volunteer coordinator position	12	3.92	1.11	2	5
Further integrate volunteers into core roles of the organization	12	3.92	0.86	2	5

## Appendix 7: Boomers and Babies Teacher Survey Results 2013

### Participant Information

Staff Gender	
Female	35
Male	5

Volunteer Race/Ethnicity	
White	31
Hispanic/Latino	5
Native American	1
Black/African American	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	1
Biracial/Mixed	1

Highest Level of Education	
High School/GED	3
Some college	5
Associate's degree	11
Bachelor's degree	12
Graduate or professional degree	8

Years Worked at Org	
2 years or less	16
3-7 years	13
8-10 years	4
Over 10 years	5

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

### Engaging Boomer Volunteers

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>					
Assign volunteers to meaningful tasks and roles within your classroom	42	5.38	0.62	4	6
Match volunteers with their areas of interest and expertise	41	5.22	0.84	3	6
Maintain clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	40	5.48	0.67	4	6
Provide flexibility in scheduling to meet the individual needs of the volunteers	41	5.37	0.82	3	6
Recognize volunteers for their contributions to the program or your classroom	42	5.57	0.62	4	6
Provide a welcoming environment	42	5.74	0.44	5	6

### Perception of Volunteers' Impact on Children in Program

Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Volunteers' Impact</b>					
Classrooms have a lower adult-to-child ratio	39	4.97	1.49	1	6
Children can be divided into smaller groups for activities	39	5.31	0.88	3	6
Children spend more time in literacy activities	40	5.10	0.92	3	6
Children have more one-on-one time with an adult to work on specific skills	40	5.50	0.71	4	6
Children have increased language development	40	5.30	0.71	4	6
Children have increased school readiness skills	39	5.33	0.73	4	6
Children have more opportunities for enrichment activities (i.e. field trips, music, etc.)	40	5.08	1.31	1	6

### Barriers to Successful Integration of Boomers Into Classrooms

Not a Barrier		Somewhat		Significant Barrier
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Barriers to Project Implementation</b>					
Physical/health limitations of volunteers	40	1.95	0.97	1	5
Generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children	40	2.10	1.11	1	4
Confidentiality issues	39	1.36	0.53	1	3
Liability issues associated with utilizing volunteers	39	1.49	0.93	1	5
Staff is not supportive of integrating volunteers into the program	39	1.10	0.38	1	3
Language barrier for recruitment of non-English speaking volunteers	40	1.68	1.15	1	5
Lack of time to communicate with volunteers about their role, tasks, etc.	40	2.20	1.08	1	5
Securing volunteers for specific needs within your classroom (i.e. reading pal, art, music etc.)	39	1.64	0.73	1	4
Lack of professionalism among volunteers	40	1.35	0.53	1	3
Accommodating volunteer scheduling preferences	38	1.50	0.79	1	4
Including volunteers disrupts the schedule and flow of the classroom	40	1.33	0.61	1	4
Not enough tasks to keep volunteers busy in my classroom	40	1.33	0.82	1	5
Volunteers do not have a rapport with the children	40	1.28	0.59	1	4
Consistency in volunteer scheduling	40	1.55	0.92	1	5
Too many volunteers scheduled at the same time	40	1.20	0.68	1	5
Volunteers do not have skills necessary to fulfill the role they have been assigned	40	1.48	0.81	1	5
Volunteers' personal family caregiving limits their time to volunteer	40	1.45	0.86	1	4