BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAP

Sixth-graders from Davie school visit
Pines senior center

By Scott Fishman
STAFF WRITER

A recent visit by 146 sixth-graders from the University School helped brighten the day for those at the Southwest Focal Point Senior Center in Pembroke Pines.

Joined by parents and staff from the Davie school, the students played games, worked on art projects, sang and danced with their new friends. They also got to hear stories of a time before computers, video games and television.

Judy Roberts, social studies teacher and organizer of the field trip, said the activity goes along with studies that show the benefits of intergenerational relationships for all involved.

“When people are raised in different time periods, their values and perceptions of the world can be quite different, and this can lead to difficulties in understanding one another,” she said. “It is therefore important for us to find ways to link the older and younger generations.”

A group of middle school children visited the center last year and based on the positive feedback received, they decided to do it again.

Sharon Sannino, recreation supervisor at the senior center, said the seniors got a lot out of the visit.

“A lot of them don’t have the opportunity to see their grandchildren, so their faces brighten up as soon as they come through the doors,” she said. “They just got so much in return.”

With the sounds of laughter and conversation filling the room, one could see that the children got just as much out of the experience.

“It’s really a lot of fun,” said Jake Wallack, who helped make Mexican art-style Valentine cards with the seniors. Danielle Sternthal, Cade Grady, Lindsay Wald and Alexander Pesad listened intently to Eda Blaha, 90, as she told them of her background.

“She was telling us how she came from Italy when she was really young and never

UNIVERSITY FROM PAGE 1

had the money to go back,” Sternthal said. “The rest of her family was gone. They really open up about their past.”

Blaha doesn’t have children and was happy to have the students around.

“I love it. I’m enjoying every minute of it. It makes me feel young again,” she said.

Frank Ferreira, 91, entertained the youngsters by singing and telling funny stories. The decorated World War II veteran said the visit was an opportunity to spread his knowledge to the next generation.

“These kids are our future,” he said. “I love them. I want to talk to their teacher because I want them to come back. They want more time with me. I have so many more things to tell them.”

Scott Fishman can be reached at scottfishman@tribune.com