

# the JOY MAKER CHALLENGE



generationOn  
A POINTS OF LIGHT ENTERPRISE



## Be a Joy Maker!

*The holidays are a wonderful time when people celebrate with their family and friends. But for some people, the joyful holiday season can feel lonely. By completing acts of joy through meaningful service, you can bring holiday cheer into the lives of people in your community and across the country.*

**Issue Area:** Senior Citizens

### Project Name: **Festive Communities**

**What You're Doing:** Making festive decorations to donate to a senior center, retirement or nursing home.

**Why it Matters:** For many of us, the holiday season is a time filled with joy and cheer. Unfortunately for some senior citizens, the holidays can also be an isolating and lonely time. A simple visit can make all the difference in their day. Help bring holiday cheer to a senior center near you!

#### Ideas to Chat About:

- Why is it important to care about seniors?
- What are some ways to help senior citizens combat feelings of anxiety and loneliness?

#### What You Need:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Glitter
- Yarn
- Felt
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- A playlist
- A stereo or computer
- Holiday decorations
- Your dancin' shoes!

#### Project Instructions:

- **Grades K-2:** Keep it simple! Follow the instructions.
- **Grades 3-5:** Make it more of a hands on group activity. Organize a "holiday decorating" event and invite your whole class to do it!
- **Grades 6-8:** Take this project one step further by organizing a holiday dance at local senior center! All you need is people, a playlist, and a place to party!
- **Grades 8-12:** Create more of a challenge! Include a short but concise presentation or handout on easy and quick ways the seniors can incorporate exercise into their daily routine!

**Project Instructions:**

1. Contact a senior center/ retirement home and ask if they will accept homemade decorations. For older grades, ask if it is possible to host a holiday decorating event/dance party with the seniors. Remember to ask the center if they have rules or restrictions against materials or specific types of decorations.
2. Decide what decorations you will make. Snowflakes, snowmen, bows, and candy canes are all festive items that can be made out of paper or felt. See some of our Resources below for instructions.
3. Test making one of your decorations prior to the project to work out any problems. Estimate how many you will be making so you know how much materials to bring/buy.
4. Make your festive decorations, and don't worry if they aren't perfect! It might take a few tries before you get the hang of making things.
5. Arrange how you will deliver the decorations: by mail or by dropping them off. For older grades, schedule a date and time for a holiday social.
6. Deliver your decorations or organize a group to decorate the senior center/ retirement home.
7. Don't forget to take pictures and share your service with generationOn!

**Reflections:**

1. How do you think your project made a difference for senior citizens feeling isolated or lonely over the holidays?
2. What other unmet needs might seniors citizens in your community have?
3. How else can you and your friends encourage more interaction between youth and senior citizens in your community?

**Additional Resources and Suggestions:****Suggested Readings**

- Read *Angelina's Christmas* by Katharine Holabird: Inspire youth with the story of Angelina's determination to make sure that no one spends the holidays alone.
- Check out this [fact sheet](#) on Senior Citizens and other ways you can help.
- 12 days of Christmas crafts: Instructions on how to make numerous holiday crafts <http://bit.ly/1RPBSJL> Set up a visiting schedule and try to visit the seniors at least once a month!

