

FLL RESEARCH PROJECT 2012

„Senior Solutions“ – Independent, Engaged, Connected

Find a senior partner

Your Project challenge this season is to solve a problem faced by seniors. To start, your team needs to find a senior partner. For the Senior Solutions Project, look for an adult who is 60 years of age or older.

Not sure how to find a senior partner? Consider these suggestions:

Begin by looking at your own family and friends. Consider grandparents, great grandparents, neighbors, assisted living residents, business owners, or babysitters. Make a list of the seniors you know. How do you know each one?

Think about the following:

- Do you volunteer with seniors?
- Is there a senior center in your community?
- Are there activities, classes, or social events for seniors in your neighborhood?

Next, take a look at each team member's list. Talk about how your team can connect with these people. Do they live near you? Can you talk with them in person? Over the phone? Using email or social media? By letter? Can you learn about what life was like when they were children? Teenagers? Young adults?

As a TeamChoose a senior and invite that senior to be your



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partner and help with your Project. Remember, not everyone who is asked will be able to help your team. If a senior says, “I’m sorry. I can’t help,” invite someone else. Your team may also choose to research a famous senior.

Identify a Problem

Get to know your team’s senior partner. Find out about his or her life, history, and the challenges seniors face today. You might want to ask your senior partner questions like: When were you born? How was life different then? Where did you go to school? What did you study? What do you (or did you) do for a living? What did you like to do when you were 10 years old, 25, 40, last year? Are any of those things more difficult now? Why? What would make your life easier today?

Keep in mind that everyone wants to be treated with respect—and seniors are no exception. Find out what your senior partner loves about being older, as well as what things might be a little harder now. Your senior partner might tell you about challenges faced by a senior friend or relative. Here are a few examples of tasks some seniors say they find challenging:

- Recovering from injuries
- Keeping up with new technology
- Remembering certain things (the date, when to take a particular medicine, or to turn off the stove after cooking)
- Staying fit
- Finding fun things to do, by themselves and with others
- Managing their finances



- Getting what they need—food, household goods, medicine, clothing
- Communicating with family, friends, doctors, and other helpers

Choose one problem that your senior partner identified and learn about it. What causes the problem? What is being done to solve the problem today? Are new solutions being developed by scientists or engineers? Some resources you may use to look for information are: reports, books, magazines, and websites. Check with professionals who work in and around your community. Use any research tools you have available. Be prepared to share your information sources.

While you are researching your senior's challenges, find out about a professional who is working to solve their problem. Is a scientist, physician, or engineer helping with research or developing new technology? Is a social worker, community activist, or health care worker developing new programs? Can your team connect with a professional to learn more?

Create an Innovative Solution

Now that your team has decided on a problem, your challenge is to create an innovative solution—one that makes life better by improving something that already exists, using something that exists in a new way, or inventing something totally new. Learning about current solutions is just the beginning. How can your solution help seniors feel respected and do the things they love? How will your solution help seniors stay independent, engaged, and connected within the society?

Think about it. Work together! Brainstorm! Share all your ideas. One team member's "crazy idea" just might inspire the perfect



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innovative solution. What could be done in a new way? What could be done better? What will it take to make your team's solution happen? A great solution might take all the imagination and ingenuity your team can muster. It might seem so obvious that you wonder why the problem even exists.

Share with Others

Now, tell others about the problem you researched and exactly how your solution can help. You choose how to share what you've learned. Give a talk. Create a website. Perform a skit. Make a comic book. Rap. Create a poster. Pass out flyers. Write a poem, song, or story.

Think about who is helped by your solution. How can you let them know? Can you present your research and solution to other seniors, lawmakers, doctors, engineers, or groups who already help with your problem? Who would your senior partner like to tell about your solution? What's the best way to teach your audience about the problem and solution? Your sharing can be simple or elaborate, serious or designed to make people laugh while they learn.

Present Your Solution at a Tournament

If your team chooses to attend a tournament, prepare a presentation to share your problem and solution with the judges. Your presentation can include posters, slide shows, models, multimedia clips and/or your research material. How can your team leave a lasting impression?



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To be eligible for Project Awards your team must:

1. Introduce your team's senior partner. (He/she is not required to attend the tournament.)
2. Identify the problem your team chose to research.
3. Describe your team's innovative solution.
4. Describe how your team shared your findings with others.
5. Meet the presentation requirements:
 - Give your presentation live; you may use media equipment (if available) but only to enhance the live presentation.
 - Include all team members; each team member must play some part in the presentation.
 - Set up and complete your presentation in 5 minutes or less with no adult help.



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