"YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE RELATED TO BE FAMILY": AN INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM IN METRO VANCOUVER

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Explore how **long-term community-based, nonfamilial intergenerational opportunities**, like the Family Match, impact the lives of **participants of all ages** as well as gain a deeper understanding of the **organizational attributes of intergenerational programming.**

PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

5 younger adults
- 60% male
- 40% female
- 60% Caucasian
- 40% Asian
- 16-22 years old

4 older adults
- 100% female
- 75% Caucasian
- 25% Asian
- 75-84 years old

1 program provider

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Flexible** and **participant-led** programming creates **choice**, **control**, and **agency** among participants
2. Participants **use boundaries** to keep unsupportive biological relationships and friendships "separate" from the volunteer grandparent-grandchild relationship to protect all relations
3. **Volunteer kinships transcend** beyond volunteer grandparent-grandchild relationships as multigenerational relationships are cultivated **expanding participants' social support networks** and family
4. **Parents act as a gatekeeper** to the volunteer grandparent-grandchild relationship and contribute to **relationship maintenance and longevity** by keeping communication channels active with the volunteer grandparents
5. **Volunteer grandparents'** expression of **generativity** contributes to their volunteer grandchildren's **personal growth, skill** and **character development**, and **decision-making.**
6. **Parental separation, family dynamics, physical distance,** and the COVID-19 pandemic **actively strained** the volunteer grandparent-grandchild relationship
7. **Technology** creates a **bi-directional communication** channel between volunteer grandchildren and grandchild during periods of time/or distance apart.
8. **Participants gained exposure and purposeful contact** with **different generations** where they **shared cultures** and **perspectives** enhancing their **acceptance of diversity** while creating and maintaining a long-term volunteer kinship.