


Uniting Lindsay Gardens residents and Hamilton Community Pre-School students participate in Connecting Generations

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 STUDENTS: Uniting Lindsay Gardens resident Betty Agnew and Remy Williams participate in Connecting Generations. Picture: Jonathan Carroll

Betty Agnew, 90, said she was "almost in tears" upon the arrival of a dozen pre-schoolers at her aged care home for a new program teaming children up with "grand-buddies" to learn about safety.

"They were just so beautiful and so well behaved," Ms Agnew said of the three to five-year-olds. "I hope we can see them again."

Wednesday was the first time KIDS Foundation's Connecting Generations program has been held in NSW, after being delivered in some pre-schools in Victoria.

It was also the first time residents of Uniting Lindsay Gardens and students of Hamilton Community Pre-School had met, despite only being a few blocks away from each other.

KIDS Foundation founder and chief executive officer Dr Susie O'Neill said young children and elderly people faced similar risks in their everyday lives, including that they were two of the demographics most prone to injury through accidents, particularly falls. Her not-for-profit organisation seeks to educate children about safety and provides support to children and adults living with serious injuries and burns.

"Connecting Generations focuses on a range of topics including safety in the home, in the car, at the beach and with a friend and aims to redress the injury statistics amongst our most vulnerable community members," Dr O'Neill said. "The program is about knowing what they are capable of and what makes them happy."

The students will meet fortnightly to complete the program's lessons as well as other activities. Tathra Witherow leisure and wellness coordinator at Lindsay Gardens said children had treated its residents to a choir performance on Wednesday, and joined the residents making craft.

"We're hoping to do some interactive music and movement too," she said.

The inter-generational program is the second installment of KIDS Foundation's SeeMore Safety lessons, which were launched in 650 pre-schools in NSW by a \$98,000 grant from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation.

Hamilton Community Pre-School educator Jackie Mulholland said it was "amazing" to seeing her students empathise and socialise with their new friends.

"They got a lot out of it," she said.