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Altenheim Resource Services

Empowering older adults and caregivers through information, education, and support
Contact us with questions about aging or caregiving issues

Akoegleri995@gmail.com
www.altenheimcommunity.com

It's Older Americans Month! "Powered by Connection", the 2024 theme, "emphasizes the impact that meaningful relationships and social connections have on our health. Connectedness plays a vital role in supporting independence and aging in place by combatting isolation, loneliness, and other challenges."

May 8, 2024

What do the dates January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2029 have in common? In [2011](#) the oldest Baby Boomers began to turn age 65 at a rate of about 7,000 per day. In 2029 the youngest baby boomers turn age 65. They represent the largest section of the population in the United States. They grew up in an era of social change and significant scientific and cultural change. As the largest population group, they are still influencing our world – and scratching their heads trying to figure out the younger generations just like their parents and grandparents did.

Those younger generations – are they [Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z or Alpha Generation](#)? With every generation key events in their lives have shaped their values. Learning to work with other generations requires an understanding of what makes them tick. That's not always easy to do with attitudes developed by those Baby Boomers. Of course, those attitudes towards a younger generation are not much different from the attitudes of the Greatest Generation (born 1901 – 1924) towards the Baby Boomers. The Greatest Generation "valued financial security, patriotism, belief in the power of institutions, respect for authority and selflessness." The Baby Boomers (children of the Greatest Generation) "had a sense of entitlement, optimism, cynicism about institutions, and competition. They were focused on their careers and seeking endless youth." (Brinckerhoff, Peter C., *Generations: The Challenge of a Lifetime for Your Nonprofit*) It's no wonder there were [parent/child conflicts](#)!

Now add those Millennials into the mix. "While Boomers may accuse Millennials of being self-centered and impatient due to their excessive use of technology, this generation has proven to actually be incredibly community-oriented and environmentally conscious, which are traits that are being picked up by their children." (Cotrell, Sarah, [A Year By Year Guide to the Different Generations](#)) Millennials like to have a work-life balance. This pandemic concept of working from home fits them well. They are confident. They are completely comfortable with technology. They are good at networking and time management. It makes one wonder how they will interact with the Alpha Generation in a few years.

It's no secret that [America is getting older](#). The median age is almost 40 years old. Learning to get along with other generations and to work together to build a respectful world takes time and patience. The [Pew Research Center](#) offers us some tips for building relationships with other generations. They warn us not to focus on stereotypes but to focus on similarities instead. Learning from other generations and taking some of what works for them can help us build a more rewarding life that is rich in human relationship. It gives us a chance to share what has made us the people we are today and to pass the good qualities and values on to another generation.

All information presented is for educational purposes only.

Thank you to our guest editor, Jeanette Wojcik!