

PRESS RELEASE

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**Lawmakers, Pennsylvanians 50+ Celebrate Older Americans Month,
Highlight Importance of Early Childhood Education**

Pennsylvania Seniors4Kids Rally to Show Support for Investments in Quality Pre-K

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Pennsylvanians age 50+ gathered with legislators Tuesday afternoon at the East Wing Rotunda to celebrate Older Americans Month, volunteer service and to stress the importance of voluntary, quality early childhood education.

As members of Pennsylvania Seniors4Kids, older adults from across the state rallied to support pre-K and to recognize the contributions older adults make as advocates and supporters of early childhood education, which benefits all generations.

Leading lawmakers – including the Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Aging and Youth, the House Committee on Aging and Older Adult Services, and the House Committee on Children and Youth- were present to recognize seniors from across Pennsylvania for their volunteer work to increase the availability and quality of pre-K.

“Throughout its laudable history, Seniors4Kids has made inestimable contributions to the welfare of society,” read the citation by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, sponsored by Representatives Louise Williams Bishop (D-192nd District), Dennis M. O’Brien (R-169th District), Phyllis Mundy (D-120th District), and Tim Hennessey (R-26th District).

“By steady adherence to the principles of fairness, reliability and integrity, [Seniors4Kids] has become a leader in the community and a model that is worthy of emulation,” read the citation by the Pennsylvania Senate, sponsored by Senators LeAnna M. Washington (D-4th District) and Kim L. Ward (R-39th District).

Children from the Capitol Area Head Start, a program of Keystone Children and Family Services in Perry County also attended the event, conducting a puppet show performance and participating in intergenerational activities with members of Seniors4Kids.

“Research has shown that investing in pre-K improves school readiness, boosts graduation rates, cuts crime and produces a more capable workforce over time,” said Joan L. Benso, president and CEO, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children. “Older Americans Month is a great time to stress the connections between old and young, and to let voters know that pre-K has short- and long-term returns that benefit all ages.”

Older adults were honored for their volunteer service as members of Pennsylvania Seniors4Kids. “We are encouraged by the fact that our legislators are concerned with early childhood education,” said Yvonne Thompson-Friend, Pennsylvania State Coordinator for Seniors4Kids. “Together, we can work to create a Pennsylvania that values all generations.”

Seniors4Kids is an initiative by Generations United, the national nonprofit that works to improve the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational collaboration, public policies, and programs for the enduring benefit of all. In Pennsylvania, we work in collaboration with Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children and the Intergenerational Center at Temple University to create a statewide network of community leaders and grassroots volunteers that work to increase the availability and quality of pre-k. For more information about Generations United and Seniors4Kids, please visit www.gu.org and www.seniors4kids.org.