Senior-Friendly Alternatives to *"Dressing Like a 100-Year-Old"* on the 100th Day of School

This February, not only is it Chatham County's "We Love Seniors Month," but it's also time to get ready to celebrate the 100th day of the school year!

Now is a great time to reflect on how our schools and communities can make sure that celebrations of reaching the milestone of 100 days of school are done in a way that reflects the positive diversity of what it means to be a member of our community at any age, from the youngest member to the oldest.

According to Fran Pratt of the *Center for Understanding Aging*, "All too often, what children learn about aging is based on myths about the aging process and on stereotypes of older people that are deeply entrenched in our culture. These myths and stereotypes are transmitted from one generation to another in our language, humor and literature, and through all the media by which we perpetuate the knowledge, values, and attitudes of our society… Children should begin at the earliest possible age to develop a healthy and realistic view of aging."[1]

In order to help schools and classrooms shift away from the "Dress Like a 100-Year-Old" trend, which relies on stereotypes about age and aging, we would like to suggest a few senior-friendly, aging-positive and/or non-age-dependent alternatives that celebrate hitting 100 days of school without perpetuating age-based stigma.

1. Create a "100 Reasons We Love Seniors" poster.
2. Dress like someone famous (of any age) from 100 years ago.
3. Learn about famous centenarians around the world.
4. Have a local centenarian visit your classroom.
5. Make 100 cards for local seniors.
6. Wear 100 by decorating shirts with 100 items (e.g. buttons, bows, stickers, etc.)
7. Have students wear shirts in the colors of the Base 10 blocks in your classroom. Do a living Base 10 block activity where the students try to find different ways of counting to 100 based on groupings of children with corresponding shirt colors.
8. Listen to recordings of songs that came out 100 years ago.
9. Help students create a chart comparing prices of everyday items today and 100 years ago.

10. As a variation on #9, have students play "The Price is Right," where they have to guess the 100-years-ago price on various everyday items.
11. Look at predictions about current times from 100 years ago (i.e.. look up predictions from 1920 about 2020) and discuss their accuracy with students. What are they surprised about? What do they wish had come true?
12. Have students bring in items/or pictures of items they would want to add to a 100 year time capsule.
13. As a variation on #11, have students make a 100 days time capsule for students in next year's class. Have them include names of popular books, styles, TV shows, artists, etc., as well as predictions for the class for next year. Have next year's class open the time capsule at the 100 day mark. (This could also be done as a school-wide project, with each class contributing to the 100 days time capsule project for the next year.)
14. Have classes choose from various decades over the past 100 years and dress in styles iconic to each decade. Have the classes put on a 100 year fashion show at a school-wide assembly.
15. Have students think about and imagine what Chatham will look like 100 years from now.

We hope this list has inspired you to think beyond stereotypes when it comes to celebrating the 100th Day of School.

Have additional ideas for a senior-friendly 100 days you'd like to share with other teachers and school administrators? Let us know! We hope you will join us as we show the broader community how much #ChathamLovesSeniors.

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If you have any questions about the #ChathamLovesSeniors project, including activities, reading lists, and upcoming art and essay contests for elementary, middle and high school students, please visit the Chatham County Council on Aging website www.chathamcouncilonaging.org or contact Krista Westervelt: 919-542-4512 or krista.westervelt@chathamcouncilonaging.org

1 - as cited in McGuire, S.L. (2016). Early Children's Literature and Aging. *Creative Education*, 7, 2604-2612.
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