

# Creating Intergenerational Connections: ANV and Campbell Elementary Penpal Project

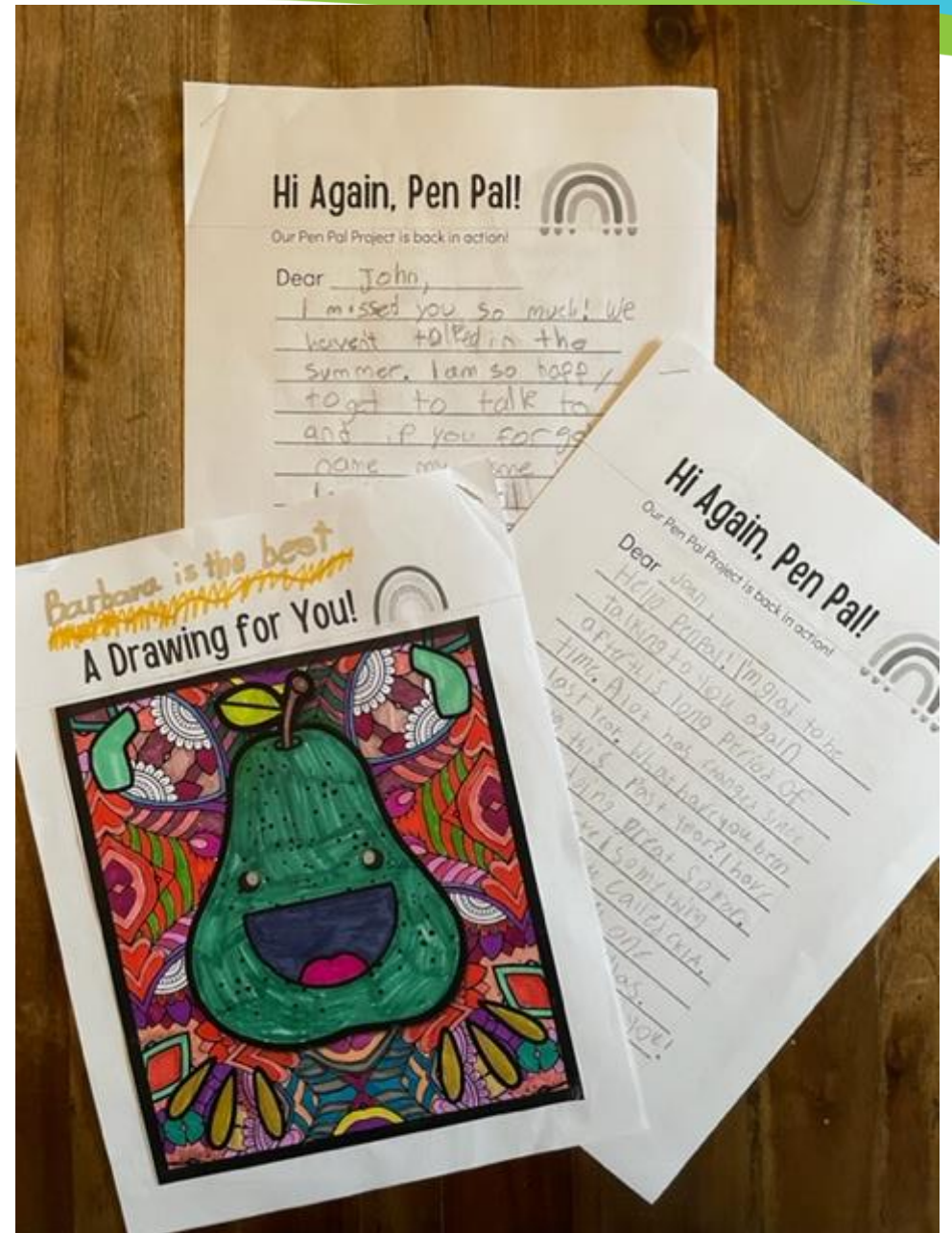


**Arlington Neighborhood Village**  
*Neighbors Helping Neighbors Age in Place*



# Why Penpals?

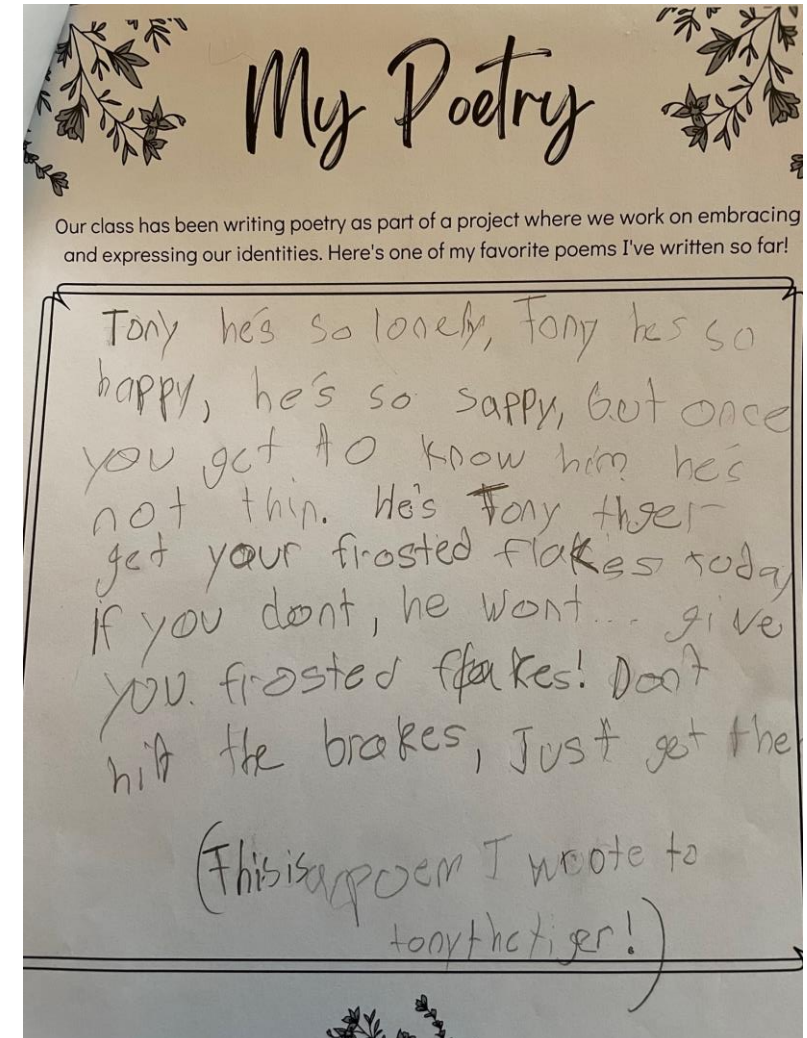
- Create community connections
- Have Fun!
- Mutually beneficial
  - Reduce isolation
  - Improve communication skills





# Launching the Pen Pal Project

- Reached out to school
- Laid out plan and ground rules
- Recruited ANV members
- Asked permission from the principal and parents
- Had seniors write bios, then teacher facilitated the matches
- Kids started it off with an intro “About Me” letter
- Letters exchanged throughout the school year, depending on the classroom schedule



# Costs

- Time and coordination
  - More during setup
  - Then approx. 2 hours per month
- Supplies: Envelopes, stamps, and party = \$300



# Results

## Year One:

- 240 letters exchanged
- Teacher asked to continue the pen pal program into the next year. Some pals continued to write on their own over the summer (with parents' permission.)
- Word spread and more teachers want pen pals for their classes.

## Now:

- Ms. Hogan's class is continuing with their same pen pals for the second year
- Two new teachers (4<sup>th</sup> grade) are participating
- We now have 41 kids paired with a pen pal
- 660 letters have been written so far!



# Testimonials

From a parent:

“This penpal program was a wonderful experience for our daughter. We believe the unique connection made through the program—the friendship and correspondences—will serve to make a lasting positive impact on her outlook and life.”

ANV member:

My pen pal is wonderful; her letters are filled with joy and enthusiasm and always bring a big smile to my face. She's extremely bright and talented and I love her refreshing youthful experiences. I'm grateful for this program. When I first joined ANV, I was able to enjoy all the social activities. Now that I'm approaching 86 and have physical limitations, it's rewarding to feel I can still participate and contribute in some way

ANV member:

Thank you for this program! I've really enjoyed being a part of it, especially as it gives me a chance to be in touch with a young person. I have no grandchildren, so this is a wonderful opportunity for me to connect with the newer generation and to reinforce my hope for the future of this country. Having a 10-year old pen pal has been a delight for me. Anticipating a letter is like waiting for Christmas.



## From Ms. Hogan:

After years of teaching writing, I have found that students produce their best work when they have an authentic audience who they know will read it.

The Pen Pal Project has incorporated various Language Arts standards that have helped students to strengthen their writing skills, but it has also taught them much deeper lessons about communication and establishing connections with others.

Students and their families have had nothing but positive feedback to share throughout this project as they have been able to see the incredibly open communication between the pen pals and sense the excitement that comes with each new letter sent or received.



This is so much fun. Everyone I talk with is very impressed (and somewhat jealous). I look forward to getting the letters from my pen pal.  
-Marlene

I have to say, and I think other ANV folks feel the same way, I'm just as excited as the kids are.  
- Michaela

My penpal's letters bring me joy. They provide a fascinating insight to a ten year old today. -Mencit

I love the enthusiasm in each letter as well as the student's insights into her reading recommendations. A great project. -Sue

I absolutely loved the joyful exchanges with my penpal and was truly impressed by her improvement in writing style and vocabulary. It brought youth into my life and lots of smiles to my face! - Virginia

I have enjoyed [my penpal] so much...it's been fun sharing my experiences. -Faye

This is a wonderful opportunity for me to connect with the newer generation and to reinforce my hope for the future of this country. -Susan



