

## 19. Reaching Across Generations

This badge and its activities were developed by Erica Nathan of the Coquina Kids of Florida after senior member John Withey of their host club, the Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society, passed away. Older members in your club may seem unapproachable, but if you get to know them, you'll find they are a wealth of knowledge, experience, and fun stories, just as Erica discovered. To earn this badge, strike up a friendship with a senior member in your club and get to know more about him or her by completing activities below.

**Erica dedicates this badge to the memory and honor of John Withey.**

Activity 19.1: \*Spending six hours with a senior member.\*

**Note: *This activity is required to earn this badge.***

Along with your parents, spend at least six hours with a senior member. You might talk about rocks or minerals. You might seek help identifying fossils in your collection. Perhaps you could go on a club field trip. Maybe, providing they hold an officer position, you could help do their position or ask them to tell you about it. For example, you can assist the editor with the next issue of the society newsletter or the membership chair in preparing and mailing a new member packet. As a conclusion to this activity, you should write a thank-you note or create a card for the time spent together.

Activity 19.2: Five things you learned from a senior member.

Make a list of the five most important things your senior member taught you. These might relate to mineral identification, lapidary arts, organizing your collection, etc., or they might not relate to rocks at all—for instance, patience or curiosity or responsibility.

Activity 19.3: The best time you spent with your senior member.

Write a paragraph about the best moment you had with your senior member. Share your paragraph with your senior member before turning it in to your junior leader. With your senior member's permission, see if your newsletter editor will publish it.

Activity 19.4: Finding, taking, or drawing a picture of your senior member.

A picture is a great way to remember special times. Take a picture of your senior member, or have your parents take a picture of the two of you together, or you might draw a picture and present it to your senior member at the next club meeting.

Activity 19.5: A specimen that is special to your senior member.

Find out about a specimen that is special to your senior member. Write a paragraph describing the specimen and tell why it is special, or give a presentation about it at one of your club meetings. You may want to take a picture of this specimen if you write about it, or have your senior member bring it to the meeting if you talk about it.

Activity 19.6: Making a memory box.

Find a box or frame and decorate it with things related to rocks and minerals. You can find logos for your club, regional federation, rockhounding, etc., online. Place anything from your previous activities (19.1-19.5) in the box. Show the memory box to your junior leader before gift-wrapping it to present to your senior member at a club meeting.

**19. Reaching Across Generations**

- 19.1 \*Spending six hours with a senior member\* (required to earn this badge)
- 19.2 Five things you learned from a senior member
- 19.3 The best time you spent with your senior member
- 19.4 Finding, taking, or drawing a picture of your senior member
- 19.5 A specimen that is special to your senior member
- 19.6 Making a memory box

To earn your Reaching Across Generations badge, you need to complete at least 3 of the 6 activities. (Please note that successfully completing Activity 19.1 is required to earn this badge.) Check off all the activities you've completed. When you have earned your badge, sign below and have your FRA leader sign and forward this sheet to the AFMS Juniors Program chair.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date completed

\_\_\_\_\_  
My signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth leader's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of my club

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leader's preferred mailing address for receiving badge:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

General Back-up Page for Badge 19: Reaching Across Generations.

The vast majority of adults are moral, reliable, responsible, and eager to help as best they can in efforts to educate and nurture our kids in a positive, wholesome environment.

Regrettably, though, as noted in the Introduction to this FRA Badge Program Manual, one very unfortunate aspect of the world in which we live is that, sadly, there are some adults who should not be left alone with kids. To repeat that section of the Introduction:

***Safeguard children.*** *Finally, I need to emphasize a point I wish we didn't have to go into, but it's absolutely vital to raise and to underscore, namely, having youth leaders who are well known by all in the club for sound moral values and having multiple adults on hand when working with kids. There are, unfortunately, some who would abuse the natural trust of children. My home state of California has Megan's Law, which requires registration of sex offenders on a public web site with photos and information about offenders. Some societies require background checks for any club members volunteering to work with juniors, and this is a good policy to explore with your own club board. Always have multiple adults working with the kids, and prevent any sort of abuse, whether physical, sexual, mental, emotional, or verbal. For further guidance on this issue, I recommend all youth leaders within AFMS-affiliated societies read the excellent and thorough materials entitled "Youth Protection" contained on the web site of the Boy Scouts of America: <http://scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx> **The safety of our youth is paramount, and any obvious or even suspected abuse should be reported and dealt with through proper legal authorities.***

Thus, as with all other activities recommended within this manual, kids should not be left alone, one-on-one, with an individual adult. Parents should accompany their kids in working on the activities for this and other badges.

Back-up page 19.1: \*Spending six hours with a senior member.\*

**Note:** *This activity is required to earn the Reaching Across Generations badge.*

One of the most memorable assignments I had in high school was when our American History teacher had us each find and interview someone who had been our age during the Great Depression of the 1930s. I remember very little else specifically about that class and its assignments—other than that Mr. Bernota always tossed back and chewed on two dry aspirins to kick off the daily lecture—but that one assignment has always stuck with me, when Dad drove me across town and our interviewee poured out stories of growing up and day-to-day incidents that mirrored some of my own. The dry textbook pages in our history book were coming alive in ways I could directly relate to, and this “old person” didn’t seem so very old and history didn’t seem so very remote anymore. (And when I do the math, that person who seemed so “old” probably wasn’t much older than I am today!)

**Along with their parents, kids should spend at least six hours with a senior member,** either visiting them for a whole day, or spread out in one-, two-, or three-hour segments. Try to **match kids and senior members with similar interests**, whether it be minerals, fossils, field trips, fluorescent rocks, lapidary arts, natural history museums, gem shows, or what have you.

Encourage kids to decide in advance what they would most like to talk about, but don’t be overly prescriptive. A lot of the best stories and advice arises naturally in the course of everyday conversation. But to kick off that conversation and to prime the well, so to speak, it helps to have topics prepared and at hand that might be of mutual interest to the kids and their “mentors.”

Or, even better, arrange for some specific activity, such as the junior member seeking the senior member’s help identifying rocks or classifying fossils in the junior’s collection, or help in cleaning and curating specimens, or a workshop and tips on crafting a cab or faceting a gemstone, or providing display tips for preparing an exhibit at the next club show or for a competitive exhibit at a federation show. Or turn the tables and have the junior member assist a club officer in his or her club duties. For example, the junior might assist the newsletter editor with the next issue of the society bulletin or the membership chair in preparing and sending a new member packet. Another possibility is for the junior and senior member to enjoy the next club field trip together, or for the junior to assist the senior member at the next club show at the kids’ booth, snack bar, admission and welcome table, raffle station, or silent auction.

Be sure that, as a conclusion to this activity, kids send a thank-you note or card for the time spent together. Karen Nathan (mother of Erica, the junior member who created this badge unit) has worked with the juniors of Coquina Kids to create hand-made cards related to our hobby, with messages like “You’re a Gem!” or “You Rock!” along with stick-on plastic rhinestones. Encourage your kids to craft similar handmade cards; they’ll mean a whole lot more to the person receiving them.

Back-up page 19.2: Five things you learned from a senior member.

So that you'll be sure kids really interact with their senior members, tell them in advance that you'll expect them to come back with a list of the five most important things their senior member taught them. In fact, you might even give kids a numbered sheet, with space for them to fill in, as shown on the next page.

And their list doesn't have to be restricted to just things about rocks, fossils, or lapidary arts. Perhaps the senior member taught patience, or a sense of responsibility, or caring for others, or a sense of fun, humor, and curiosity. It's hoped kids will come away from this experience having learned not just stone-cold facts, but values and interpersonal skills, as well.

**What I Learned from** \_\_\_\_\_  
*name of my senior member*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Back-up page 19.3: The best time you spent with your senior member.

Have kids write a paragraph about the best time they had with their senior members. This could be a laugh over a special memory the senior member shared from his or her own childhood or a special treat like cookies or cobbler that the senior member shared from an old family recipe. It might be a story from the “old days” of the club. Or it may be a special fossil or mineral discovery they made together on a club field trip.

Have junior members share their paragraphs with their senior members before turning it in to the junior leader. With the senior member’s permission, the junior member might see if the society newsletter editor will publish the paragraph to share the experience with all the society members.

***Note:** Kids whose paragraphs are published in the society newsletter can use this activity to satisfy requirements toward earning the Communication badge simultaneously (Activity 7.2).*

Back-up page 19.4: Finding, taking, or drawing a picture of your senior member.

A picture is a great way to remember special times, so accompanying parents should be sure to have a camera handy when junior members and senior members get together. Encourage junior members to take pictures of their senior members, or have parents take photographs of the juniors and seniors together. Or encourage junior members to draw pictures of their senior members and present the drawings (framed, if possible) to the senior members at the next club meeting.

Kids who complete activity 19.3 and submit their paragraph to the society newsletter should also submit their picture to go along with the paragraph. If you do this, though, be sure to get the senior's signed permission to publish the picture. If the picture includes the junior, as well, you should have signed permission from the junior's parents before publishing in a newsletter.



Back-up page 19.5: A specimen that is special to your senior member.

In every senior's collection is a specimen (or two or three or four) that is extra special to him or her. It could be a specimen that a parent or grandparent gave to them when they were kids, the very first rock or mineral they ever collected, a spectacular fossil they discovered during a field trip, the first cabochon they crafted or the first pendant they wire-wrapped themselves, a stone they found on a trip to another country, or perhaps a ring or necklace containing a precious gemstone that their spouse gave to them on a special occasion.

For instance, I have an inkwell that's kind of beat up. It's adorned with different minerals from Colorado (amazonite, pyrite, galena, etc.) that have been glued to the inkwell. It's perpetually dusty, most of the minerals are dinged, and some are even missing, but I keep it proudly out on display. Why? Well, it was a gift from my grandfather, who received it from his grandfather, who participated in the Colorado Gold Rush of the late 1850s. I always saw it on display in my grandparents' home, and it's always on display now in my home.

Have junior members find out what specimens are extra special to their assigned senior members. Then have them write a paragraph describing the specimen and telling why it's special. Or have them give presentations about it at a club meeting. If the junior members write about it, have them accompany their paragraphs with photos or drawings of the specimens. If the junior members give oral presentations at one of your club meetings, have the senior members bring those specimens to the meeting to accompany the talks.

***Note:** Kids who give an oral presentation to the club or whose paragraphs and/or pictures are published in the society newsletter can use this activity to satisfy requirements toward earning the Communication badge simultaneously (Activities 7.1 and 7.2).*

### Back-up page 19.6: Making a memory box.

A memory box contains objects of special significance and sentimental value to serve as private reminders of treasured moments. Memory is fickle, and while we may think we'll remember a particular moment forever, it's surprising how quickly our frail brains forget details. Memory boxes store things neurons might someday lose, so encourage juniors to get a box and decorate it with things related to rocks and minerals and the moments spent with their senior member from any of the previous activities in this badge unit.

Memory boxes can be as simple or complex as imagination and budget allow. At the simplest level, it may consist of a shoe box containing pictures, letters, cards, and other precious objects. Or you can progress all the way to fancy oak shadow boxes with cubbies, shelves, and a glass front to hang on a wall. From shoebox to shadow box, here are a few ideas:

- A simple, unadorned shoe box storing pictures, letters, cards, or objects.
- That same shoebox, but with the outside painted or covered with wrapping paper that's been glued on and decorated with ornaments like stickers or plastic stick-on rhinestones. The top might be held shut with colored shoelaces, yarn, or ribbons.
- A top-hinged box available from stores like Target. Some of these have little compartments on the lid to slide in a photo or a label.
- Top-hinged wooden boxes available from craft stores like Michaels or Ben Franklin. The exterior might be painted with bright and colorful scenes or stained and lacquered, and the interior might be lined with felt.
- A printer's tray from an antique store. However, these usually have very small and shallow compartments, limiting what they can hold.
- A shadow box with cubbies and a glass top. These can be mounted on a wall or placed atop a shelf.

Here are a few ideas for materials to decorate the memory box:

- Colorful markers and crayons.
- Gift-wrapping paper.
- Ribbons, yarn, and/or string.
- Materials from the scrapbooking section of a crafts store.
- Rubber stamps and ink.
- Rock, mineral, and/or fossil pictures cut from rock and gem magazines.
- Logos downloaded from your club and federation websites.
- Most importantly, items from time spent with the senior member, including photos, any letters or notes exchanged, perhaps a mineral, crystal, or fossil the senior member gave the junior member, etc.

Once the memory box is complete, kids should share it with their senior member and junior leader, explaining why they've chosen to include what they have.