

AGING MATTERS: BG TIME



McConnell

Can you recount how many times you have started telling a story to a child or grandchild, beginning with, “Back when I was your age...?” We tend to reminisce often about our lives as younger adults and how they compare to growing up today. Now, you have a chance to share your stories with others through BG TIME.

BG TIME (which stands for Bridging Generations through Technology, Information, Media, and Engagement) is an online community specially designed for senior citizens in South Carolina. BG TIME began in 2008 when The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation issued a national challenge grant to community foundations to find creative uses of media and technology to help keep communities informed and their citizens engaged. Though the program has expanded from its original roots and is now administered through the Lieutenant Governor’s Office, the mission of BG TIME remains the same: to bridge ethnic, economic, and generational lines in order to raise digital literacy among seniors, enhancing their participation in civic dialogue.

Seniors in our state have much to contribute, but since many of them lack the skills necessary to use all of the modern technology available to communicate their stories, www.BGTIME.org was developed to

make the transition easier. It features a forum for senior discussions and also sponsors two separate contests for students who wish to relay a story about a senior's life.

BG TIME encourages involvement between older and younger generations in several different ways:

- Seniors are invited to share their favorite stories, pictures, recipes, or memories with others on BG TIME's online forum. Simply e-mail what's on your mind to bgtime@scstatehouse.gov, and we will post it for others to read and enjoy.
- Eighth grade students across the state are eligible to enter an essay contest for the Lieutenant Governor's Bridging Generations Award. Students are prompted to compare and contrast their life with a senior's experiences at a similar age. A winner will be selected in every county that participates, and one state winner will be chosen. More information and guidelines can be found at www.BGTIME.org. The deadline for submitting an essay is March 15, 2013.
- A scholarship contest is offered to high school journalism students for their creative use of technology while documenting an event from a senior citizen's life. Students are also tasked with including a social media component with their stories. We encourage advisers to make BG TIME a class assignment or perhaps even a class project. This is an excellent way to give students experience interviewing someone from a different age group. More information on the scholarship contest can be found at www.BGTIME.org. The deadline for submitting your entry is April 1, 2013.

Question of the Week:

Q): I would like to contribute a story to BG TIME, but I don't have access to a computer or the internet. What should I do?

A): The South Carolina State Library has a complete directory of libraries across South Carolina. If you need help locating a library in your area, call 803-734-8666. You may also mail materials directly to the Lieutenant Governor's Office. Our address is Post Office Box 142, Columbia, South Carolina 29202.

For more information, contact the SC Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging (803-734-9900 or 800-868-9095) or visit www.aging.sc.gov.