SCHLEGEL VILLAGES & THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR AGING

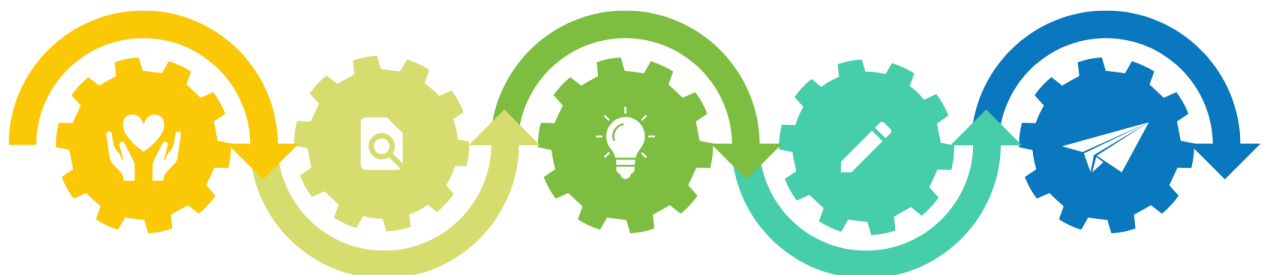## CHALLENGE OVERVIEW

The Problem	How might we increase human connection with older adults living in a long-term care/retirement setting through intergenerational programming between youth and residents?
Why it mattered	While aging can present physical, social, emotional, and mental challenges, the team at Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA), sees an opportunity to innovate. The Schlegel Family's central belief is that elders should be kept at the centre of our communities, not relegated to the periphery. The Villages we create are places where elders can live a life of meaning and purpose while continuing to stay connected and contributing to the broader community.
What they needed	Practical programming plans that would engage both youth and residents, increasing human connection.

THE ICE CHALLENGE PROCESS

1) EMPATHIZING

3) IDEATING

5) TESTING

2) DEFINING

4) PROTOTYPING

Empathize

To understand the complexities of this problem presented by both the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA) and Schlegel Villages, students were given a tour through both the long-term care and retirement residences and common spaces, listened to presentations by RIA and Schlegel Villages staff, and were provided with activity schedules for the month.

During the presentations, students learned about future careers such as; nursing, occupational therapy, social work, kinesiology, food services, administration, volunteer coordination, and more!

From there, students had the opportunity to interview residents from bot the retirement and LTC homes. The students asked questions such as;

- Are you involved in programs through your residence? If you are, can you tell us about them?
- What was your experience like moving into the residence?

During the tour, presentation, and interviews, students wrote down what they heard, saw, and experienced.

Define

Back in the classroom setting, students broke into groups of 5-6 and began sharing the key points they picked up. As patterns and themes began to emerge they were instructed on forming an insight statement;

- Residents are tired by the time students are available to visit after school hours.
- Residents with mobility considerations don't want to join active programs.

Students were then assisted in defining new, more specific, and targeted challenge statements which makes finding a solution more manageable;

- How might we design a program that aligns school hours with schedules of residents?
- How might we include residents with mobility considerations in programming?
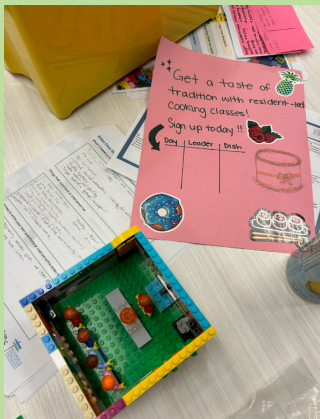
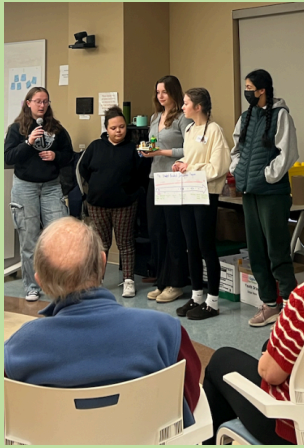|	
Ideate *This is a great opportunity for staff to be available to answer questions and offer feedback on ideas.*	To start coming up with solutions, students first spent time brainstorming on their own. When they began to share their ideas with the group they would see similar pathways emerge or find ways to build on each other's ideas. This would help guide them as to which idea to follow. Examples of ideas from this challenge: - Have residents fill out interest forms and provide that to surrounding high schools so that they can organize clubs together. Ex. The Chess Club at KCI could come and practice with residents who expressed interest in chess. - Starting a pen pal program between students and residents. Pairs could be matched based on interests shared and students could even come to teach residents how to use email or text to communicate with both them and their loved ones. - A cooking class program where residents can pass down recipes to students while teaching valuable skills. The group would then get to build more community while enjoying the meal they prepare together.
Prototype 	Materials offered to the students for this phase included; Lego, pipe cleaners, tin foil, skewer sticks, popsicle sticks, tape, glue, scissors, paper, and markers. In their groups, students assembled their prototypes and prepared presentations to give to the staff and returning volunteer residents. During this time, Schlegel Village staff were on hand for students to ask questions to help refine their ideas.

Testing
This is where businesses get to hear student's ideas and offer feedback.

At the end of the challenge, each group presented their prototype to the rest of the room while more representatives from RIA and Schelegel Village, as well as two residents involved in the interviews earlier, gave their feedback.

This particular group of student delivered their ideas clearly and concisely, leaving the audience with few questions and lots of praise and enthusiasm. The residents especially liked the ideas of getting to learn email and passing down skills.

REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Their Recreation Coordinator was very enthusiastic about each of the ideas and collected all of their work and non-lego prototypes to take back to his team. They also had a number of students visit with their Volunteer & Student Coordinator to discuss volunteering and coming back to participate in programs with the residents.

Student Feedback:

"I was able to gain first-hand knowledge about the long term care/retirement home experience and the factors impacting their residents. This experience will help fuel my future in healthcare, as I will continue to seek this first-hand knowledge and perspectives to better support my patients. I realized there were many other careers available in this industry. The presentations by Schlegel Village staff introduced my to the multitude of different opportunities in the sector including recreation and nursing."

"It helped me understand how many career optioned there are in this industry and that there are many different things you can do to help people in your community. It impacted me seeing how many people it takes to keep places like this running and how all these people are special to the residents."

"I learned that there are many different job titles in this industry it's not necessarily just nurses or doctors. I got to learn more about long term care and retirement homes and how things really work."

CONCLUSION

Project Outcomes	This ICE Challenge was a successful collaboration that addressed a problem while allowing students to apply design thinking principles in a hands-on workshop. By working directly with industry leaders like Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging and Schlegel Village, students were able to engage in meaningful problem-solving while learning about the complexities of approaching such a large problem.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Ready to inspire the next generation while solving real challenges?

ICE Challenge workshops offer your organization:

- **Fresh perspectives** on persistent problems
- **Cost-effective** innovation research
- **Workforce development** pipeline
- **Community engagement** opportunities
- **Tangible solutions** that can be implemented

Contact us to explore how an ICE Challenge can benefit your organization:

✉ info@bepwr.ca
🌐 www.bepwr.ca/initiatives/ice-challenges

This case study demonstrates how ICE Challenge workshops create win-win partnerships between organizations and students, driving meaningful change while inspiring future leaders.