The Village of Shorewood, Wisconsin continues to work hard to ensure that it’s a vibrant place for its 13,192 residents of all ages.

Under the guidance of the Milwaukee County Department on Aging, Shorewood has benefited from initiatives such as the Intergenerational Council formed by the Milwaukee County Department on Aging in 1999 to nurture the development of intergenerational programming, and the Connecting Caring Communities Partnership to develop neighborhood-based partnerships in seven targeted neighborhoods including Shorewood. The County also sponsored a 2013 Intergenerational Symposium attended by more than 360 people including students from 13 area schools, older adult leaders and elected officials and staff working in community agencies such as Shorewood Connects.

“Shorewood may be small, but its wide variety of activities aimed at fostering intergenerational community connections are large, making it a wonderful place to grow up, raise a family, and retire.”

Martin Lexmond, superintendent of Shorewood School District, and the Village of Shorewood’s President Guy Johnson

Those efforts build off of intergenerational activities going back to when Shorewood was incorporated as a Village in 1900. Both the Shorewood School District and the Village of Shorewood historically have taken responsibility for ensuring that Shorewood is an intergenerational community. Today, the Shorewood Connects Intergenerational Work Group is the “intergenerational glue” that unites Village Government, the School District, the Business Improvement District, youth and older adults.

It’s not uncommon to see an 80-year-old sharing a music stand with 22-year-old in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s (UWM) Community Orchestra program. You’re also likely to see older people taking classes with 20-somethings as part of the UWM’s Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning that allows older adults to audit classes for free.

Young and old take fitness classes together and enjoy special community programming provided by the Shorewood Recreation and Community Service Department, which the School District administers. This department also coordinates volunteer opportunities throughout the School District, for teens, parents, older adults, and other community members.

When the Shorewood School District recently evaluated its facilities, it formed a community advisory committee that included older adult residents. Plans are already in the works to connect the new senior housing development, scheduled for groundbreaking in 2014, to the Shorewood Schools and Shorewood Senior Resource Center.

An annual “Neighborhood of the Year” competition is held to identify the many positive things neighbors are doing on their block, with special attention to intergenerational activities and neighborhood service projects.

Upon retirement, Lynn Sager knew she’d need three things: a friendly and supportive community, volunteer opportunities and easy access to goods and services. Of those priorities, she explained, “Shorewood has exceeded all my expectation for senior living and enjoyment.”