With nearly 110,000 residents, City of Miami Gardens is the third largest community in Miami Dade County. With its unique diversity, Miami Gardens is the largest predominantly African-American municipality in Florida and boasts many Caribbean and Hispanic residents. Even still, the community is like one big extended family that understands communities thrive when they are age-optimized.

“My grandfather...helps me with my homework and my science projects. Sometimes he forgets where he puts his glasses so I have to go and find them for him...I feel very special living with my grandparents because they make me feel special...I think all kids should have the opportunity to live with their grandparents to spend quality time with them.”

Shyanna Jackson, 5th grader

The Elders Affairs Advisory Committee is responsible for the community’s intergenerational activities. Through its partnerships with local businesses, charitable organizations, local schools and faith-based organizations, the Committee reaches out to younger generations, which resulted in their 2010 launch of the Annual Intergenerational Fashion Show.

Those same partnerships make it possible for the Committee to host a yearlong Intergenerational Health Empowerment Series to promote physical activity, help individuals make healthy choices and provide access to healthy and affordable food.

This series, a work in progress, pairs adult- and older adult-volunteer mentors with under-resourced youth to help develop them into healthy, high-achieving critically-minded young people dedicated to self, service and community.

Funding is provided through businesses and faith-based organizations such as the local Wal-Mart, Brides of America-Miami, Perfect Images Photography, Trinity Church Liturgical Group and the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Association to name a few.

As chair of the Elderly Affairs Advisory Committee, Tanya James is motivated by the community’s testimonies of lifestyle changes. “Our desire is to continue to bring awareness to services like these and the long-term benefits they have in the City of Miami Gardens,” James explains. “Healthy intergenerational families produce healthy intergenerational communities.”

“Through our senior program, we have partnered with a local college that comes with a mobile vehicle to provide blood pressure and cholesterol screenings for the seniors. Simultaneously, the college provides a fun, interactive healthy cooking demonstration for their grandchildren and other children attending the session with their grandparents.”

Tanya James, chair of the Elderly Affairs Advisory