Genesis
Program Coordinator
Position Description

TITLE: Program Coordinator, Intergenerational Program, Genesis
ACCOUNTABILITY: Program Manager Position at Mi Casa, Inc.
SALARY AND BENEFITS: Up to $65,000 plus benefits
APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED: April 15, 2015 through May 6th
ANTICIPATED START DATE: June 1, 2015

OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATION/OPPORTUNITY: Scheduled to open in early September 2015, Genesis is an intentional, intergenerational community in Washington, DC, based on the Generations of Hope Community (GHC) model. Genesis will be comprised of 27 units of affordable housing for residents from three primary groups: (1) young mothers transitioning from the District of Columbia foster care system and their children, (2) active, service-minded seniors, and (3) other families that are not connected with the foster care system. At Genesis, residents of all ages will commit to mutually support one another and actively participate in events and activities designed to cultivate strong, interpersonal relationships and community capacity.

Genesis is being developed as a programmatic initiative of Mi Casa, Inc., a nonprofit housing developer that provides quality affordable housing to low and moderate-income households in the Washington, DC area. Mi Casa believes healthy, diverse and thriving neighborhoods occur when people are empowered to make decisions about their environment. For more than 20 years, Mi Casa has worked to advance equitable access to affordable housing and the availability of well-designed, quality places for individuals and families to call home.

Following a competitive selection process, a team led by Mi Casa was selected to adapt the GHC model and develop Genesis as the first intergenerational community of its kind in the nation’s capitol. With the support of the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), Mi Casa has spent the past year developing plans for Genesis in collaboration with key partners, including DC Office on Aging (DCOA) Generations of Hope Development Corporation (GHDC), Latin American Youth Center, and Vida Senior Centers. The DC Department of Housing and Community Development is providing major construction funding for Genesis. Initial operational funding has been committed by CFSA and DCOA.

Mi Casa is now seeking to hire a Program Coordinator, the senior of two positions that will together constitute the on-site staffing for Genesis. Position responsibilities and qualifications follow.

Accompanying this document are three attachments that provide further information about Genesis, the GHC model, and the unique attributes and qualities required for staffing a non-traditional, intergenerational community initiative. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to review this information when considering whether to apply. Additional information is available on the websites for Genesis (www.genesisdc.org), Mi Casa (www.mi-casa.org) and GHDC (www.ghdc.generationsofhope.org).
SUMMARY OF PROGRAM COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Provide strong administrative leadership to coordinate the intergenerational program
2. Provide strong leadership in working closely with residents to build community capacity and define strengths and needs
3. Provide strong leadership in representing the program with external audiences
4. Provide strong leadership in integrating conventional social services into the Genesis program as needed and reducing reliance on outside services

Administrative leadership

- Coordinating expenditures based on the approved program budget and report to Mi Casa senior staff on expenditures
- Supporting resource development to ensure community sustainability, including participating in fundraising and program reporting
- Co-supervising personnel in cooperation with Mi Casa senior staff
- Coordinating with the Mi Casa Rental Program to (and with property manager contact as needed) to resolve of any resident-related issues or concerns
- Collaborating with the community and relevant personnel to develop and implement community policies and guidelines
- Working effectively with Mi Casa senior staff
- Serving as primary liaison to DC Child and Family Services Agency on matters related to CFSA-referred residents and contracted services.

Representing the Program

- Serving as the “face” of the Genesis program
- articulating the intergenerational community paradigm—its purpose and how it is achieved
- Representing the community and the initiative at local, state, and national levels
- Collaborating with GHDC and similar initiatives in DC and around the country to advocate for the intergenerational model of community living

Leadership in building community capacity

Excellent leadership skills are needed to build community capacity where neighbors care about each other and work effectively together toward common goals or a shared vision. These skills include:

- Building and maintaining trusting and caring relationships with Genesis residents of all ages
- Bringing diverse people together to solve problems
- Facilitating the support that empowers Genesis members to take responsibility for one another
- Encouraging people to become and remain engaged in the life of the community
- Encouraging the community to look within itself to largely determine the shape of relationships, commitments, and obligations
• Viewing all residents, including young mothers and seniors, from a positive lens – recognizing that each has needs, but more importantly, that each has assets that can enrich the lives of others and of the community as a whole.

Leadership in integrating conventional services into the Genesis program as needed

This responsibility involves ensuring appropriate linkages between Genesis residents and the broader social service and medical community:

• articulating the purpose of the intergenerational community—and how it can augment traditional services
• developing a climate of trust for shared/interdependent collaboration
• guiding the process of meaningful participation where all parties are involved in defining, planning, and the integration of professional services with the organizational capacity of the community residents; including working with established relationships and seeking out new partners for collaboration.
• overseeing and collaborating with the Community Support Specialist (CSP), as the CSP executes his/her role in service integration by directly facilitating connections between Genesis residents and external service providers
• providing leadership on development and execution of an appropriate strategy for Genesis program evaluation

Qualifications

The Program Coordinator should have at least at least five years of program coordination or management in an area of human development, social services, community organizing, or a related field. The ideal candidate will have most, if not all, of the following characteristics:

• Knowledge and experience with vulnerable children and youth, low-income families, and/or seniors: The candidate should have demonstrated knowledge about the particular challenges facing vulnerable children and youth, families, and/or seniors. Ideally, they would also possess several years of direct experience working with one or, preferably, all of these populations.

• Experience in managing and building a nontraditional program: The candidate should have experience in helping create, manage, and grow a social service or social change program. S/he should have the ability to think about long-established social issues in innovative, nontraditional ways.

• Master’s degree in field of social work or related field, or equivalent experience (minimum of five years in management role). Clinical experience or experience working with clinicians within the social service field is a plus.

• Skills in team and community building: The PC should have the skills, ideally gained through both professional and personal endeavors, needed to empower Genesis residents to build a strong and vibrant community with the capacity to meet ever-evolving needs.
• Strong cultural knowledge and sensitivity to diverse backgrounds and experience: The inherent diversity of age at Genesis is enhanced by the requisite diversity of race, ethnicity, education, income, life experiences, and perspective. The PC must be able to harness this diversity and balance various interests to draw the community together and make informed decisions.

• Excellent communicator: The PC should have strong verbal communication skills, including presentation skills, excellent written skills, and the “presence” of mind to communicate clearly and calmly and to effectively resolve conflict.

• Passion for the mission of Genesis: The PC is not a typical 9-to-5 job. He or she must have a passion for the core philosophy upon which Genesis is based and the willingness to implement the operating principles of this philosophy on a daily basis. The PC must model this philosophy and these principles in their everyday interactions with both community members and the public.

• Excellent development and administrative skills: The PC should have experience in effectively managing programmatic expenditures for a for-profit or non-profit organization and a proven record of successfully soliciting and obtaining grants and donations.

To apply:

Please electronically submit the following to Elin Zurbrigg, Deputy Director of Mi Casa, at pcposition@genesisdc.org:

• Cover letter
• Resume/CV
• Three professional references

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Genesis brochure (standard, non-population specific)

Attachment 2: GHC principles

Attachment 3: Leadership in a GHC
Genesis

A way of life that makes a difference in DC
Genesis, 6925 Georgia Avenue, NW, is a small, intergenerational community for active, service-minded seniors, young families transitioning out of foster care, and other families who want to live in a supportive neighborhood. At Genesis, neighbors commit to supporting the community and each other. Everyone has value and everyone contributes, whatever their talents.

A Different Kind of Community
At Genesis, residents of all ages participate in community events and activities designed to help them build a network of caring, supportive relationships. It’s a different kind of community, where everyone plays an active role.

An Opportunity to Serve
Genesis is for people who are interested in making a difference. Many of the families at Genesis will be transitioning from the foster care system. If you’re the kind of person who’d be willing use your talents and skills to help your neighbor, Genesis could be a good fit.

A Good Place to Live
You’ll find safe, affordable housing at Genesis, along with meeting space for neighbors to get together for community dinners and other events and activities. Genesis will be your place to call home.

Other intergenerational communities similar to Genesis already exist around the country. The first one, Hope Meadows in Illinois, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. Genesis will be the first community in DC to be based on the Generations of Hope Community model pioneered at Hope Meadows.

Mi Casa, Inc., a DC-based affordable housing developer, is developing Genesis with funding support from DC Department of Housing and Community Development. They’re partnering with DC Child and Family Services Agency, DC Office on Aging, and other groups including Generations of Hope Development Corporation, to launch and support this innovative project.

Resident recruitment is now underway. Applications will be received April 20 – May 4. Selections will be made by June 4 with occupancy in early September.
Responsibilities

Genesis residents will pay rent, utilities and cable. Rent will differ depending on income and apartment size.

Each resident will be expected to support their neighbors by committing to a set number of hours of *community participation*. This time can be spent helping a neighbor with a task or errand, participating in community events or doing other things to benefit the community.

Seniors are the foundation for Genesis. They’ll commit to 100 hours every three months, or 7-8 hours a week. Families will commit to 50 hours every three months.

Amenities

- 27 newly constructed one, two and three bedroom units
- Elevator building with spacious, light-filled apartments
- Fully equipped kitchens with all major appliances
- Laundry room with oversized washers and dryers
- Large and small meeting spaces for community meetings and activities.
- On a major bus line and in proximity to grocery stores, day care, and other amenities

Benefits

Everyone’s different. As a result, the benefits from living at Genesis will differ from one neighbor to the next. Some may like having a neighbor next door who can take them to a doctor’s appointment or help out with the kids. Others will simply appreciate having someone to talk with and get advice from.

No matter their age, everyone who lives at Genesis will benefit from the same opportunity: the chance to give support as well as to receive it.
Genesis isn’t for everyone. Whether you’re single or part of a larger household, take time to consider whether it’d be a good fit.

Some questions to think about:

- Do you value your independence but like the idea of living alongside neighbors who actively support one another?
- Are you comfortable being around people of all ages, including families who have been through tough times?
- Are you willing to commit to sharing your time and talents to support your neighbors, just as they’ll be supporting you?

For more information about Genesis, visit www.genesisdc.org, where you can download applications, view sample floorplans, and find out other details about life in this unique community.

Still have questions? Visit the website to request a personal conversation with a Genesis representative before you submit your application. We’d be happy to speak with you.
GHC Core Principles

A Generations of Hope Community (GHC) is an intentionally created, geographically contiguous intergenerational neighborhood where some of the residents are facing specific challenges around which the entire community organizes. Years of study and experience have led us to recognize some core principles that are essential if a GHC is to become an effective caring neighborhood.

The first two principles are philosophical in nature; the others are intended more as implementation guidelines. Each reflects a critical difference between conventional practices and what is needed for a GHC to be successful.

Philosophical Principles

**Embracing the power of relationships**

In a GHC, all adults strive to provide for each other and for the children consistent, predictable, nurturing relationships, fostering well-being even in times of change, crisis, or suffering.

*Critical difference:* In a GHC there is a core belief that everyone has the capacity to form caring relationships. Unlike conventional social service interventions, strategies for action in a GHC grow out of relationships rather than the other way around, and there are no artificially imposed limits on the relationships that form.

**Seeing vulnerability through a positive lens**

A GHC neighborhood becomes a place where those who are vulnerable come to be viewed as friends, neighbors, and family – as individuals who help us and whom we help.

*Critical difference:* In a GHC, the neighborhood becomes a place where those who are vulnerable are not regarded as problems to be managed, but as caring and contributing community members.
Operational Principles

Addressing a vulnerable population:
GHCs address specific challenges and issues faced by vulnerable families and vulnerable individuals. These social challenges provide the organizing focus of the community.

Critical difference: In a GHC, the fundamental focus of the community is on helping a vulnerable group through neighboring. This provides a source of identity and community cohesion and encourages residents to become problem-solvers rather than recipients of services.

Transformational leadership
A transformational leader empowers the residents of a GHC, including those who often are stigmatized because of their challenges, to become active partners in working to accomplish the neighborhood’s mission.

Critical difference: Unlike most social service professionals, GHC leaders are expected to work within an empowered community to rely on the strengths of that community, and to support rather than direct community initiatives.

Physical design facilitates relationships
The purposeful integration of the physical dimensions of a GHC provides the context for the formation and development of the social dimensions of a caring community.

Critical difference: The physical dimensions of a GHC provide the context for the formation and development of the social dimensions of a caring community; housing does not become an end in itself.

Funding aligns with the mission
When aligning funding strategies with the requirements and mission of a GHC, new layers of complexity must be addressed.

Critical difference: There are some well-established ways to create affordable housing and coordinated services, but the GHC model adds complexity as well as opportunities for creative funding strategies.

Presence of three or more generations
GHCs are designed to include, and foster relationships among, residents spanning at least three generations.

Critical difference: Complex interactions and relationships developing among multiple generations in a GHC give rise to a more robust culture of effective care and mutual concern than is typical in conventional single or two-generation program models.
Older residents are engaged in the community

Older residents are obligated to engage regularly in a variety of supportive activities (mentoring, tutoring, gardening, etc.) while also being a caring friend, neighbor, and surrogate grandparent.

Critical difference: While everyone in a GHC is expected to be engaged in the community, it is the older residents (55+) who constitute the majority of households and who have the time, wisdom, and desire to be engaged, to “make a difference” in the lives of others. This “way of life” contrasts with typical life-style retirement communities where such engagement is optional.

Embracing diversity

GHCs are intentionally designed to incorporate diversity, helping to generate creative solutions to complex problems while reducing stigmas, stereotypes, and intolerance.

Critical difference: Diversity is typically limited in most neighborhoods and programs. GHCs deliberately cultivate diversity of age, race, income, and life experiences – becoming stronger as a result.

Balancing cohesion and openness

Like conventional service programs, a GHC must buffer its vulnerable residents from adverse external influences, yet its effectiveness depends on its ability to function as a normal neighborhood, fully integrated with the surrounding community.

Critical difference: A GHC is not an enclave or a campus, and functions best when it is integrated with its surroundings, both architecturally and socially.

Grounded in theory and research

Theory and research on what is needed for people, communities, and organizations to flourish guide all aspects of a GHC as both a place (a neighborhood) and an organization with a specific purpose and an emphasis on caring relationships among neighbors of all ages.

Critical difference: Practices and policies in a GHC are guided by theory and research on what fosters caring relationships among neighbors of all ages, and when necessary take precedence over conflicting conventional social service practices.

Evolving policies, practices and programs

A GHC must be allowed to adapt over time. Its policies, practices, and programs are not static but change as residents learn from what is and what is not working, and as the community responds to the changing needs of its people and of society.

Critical difference: An initial plan is necessary for a GHC to be successful, but to be most effective it must remain flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the people in the community.
The genius of this neighborhood approach is that it shows serious social challenges can be overcome if people live differently. It has elements of a social program, but its essence is more fundamental. In a social program, you focus on the benefits to people whom the program was designed to help. In these neighborhoods, everyone is supposed to benefit and in a significant way. That is why it works. That is why people are drawn to the idea.

- David Racine, PhD, National leader on program replication

Background

A Generations of Hope Community (GHC) is a hybrid, combining a new model of social service with community living. It is designed to shift the initiative for care and support from professional service providers back to the neighborhood, creating a way of life where everyone, including vulnerable people, can contribute and succeed. The outline of this model emerged in 1994 with Hope Meadows, an intentional, geographically contiguous, intergenerational neighborhood where older adults volunteer to support families adopting children from foster care. It puts into action the belief that ordinary people of all ages and abilities can be assets in addressing the difficult challenges facing various vulnerable groups.

This model challenges how we think about retirement, community development, and social service delivery. It offers older people the opportunity for a meaningful, productive culmination of their lives; it offers community developers and builders a way of weaving true social concern into the fabric of the communities where people live; and it augments conventional social service by providing extraordinary levels of care and support for many different populations of need. Ultimately this model holds the promise of a paradigm shift in the way social services and supports are imagined and provided, by introducing a new kind of community leadership and organizational capacity.

Key philosophical principles

All practices and policies in a Generations of Hope Community are grounded in two key philosophical principles:

1. **A Focus on the Positive Assets of Everyone.** GHC residents, including those whose social challenge provides the organizing focus of the community, are not viewed as problems-to-be managed, but as ordinary people, all with positive assets and all requiring the same embeddedness in family and community that we would want for ourselves. All residents – children, adults, and older adults – are viewed as if they were members of our own family and decisions are made accordingly.
2. **Recognize the transformative power of care and kindness.** In a GHC there is a strong belief in everyone’s capacity to care. Given the opportunity, ordinary people of all ages and vulnerabilities care for one another in ways, and to a degree, that go beyond the scope of traditional interventions. It is these caring relationships that shift the focus of problem-solving from professional service providers to the members of the community.

**Implications for GHC Leadership**

> Leaders who can build community capacity ... recognize and mobilize all of a community’s assets, they connect across cultures, they facilitate collaborative action, they continuously learn and improve, and they are accountable to those they work with and those they serve.

- Paul Schmitz
  *Everyone Leads: Building Leadership from the Community Up, 2012*

Central in thinking about GHC leadership is how it relates to a GHC’s purpose -- that is to tap the transformative power of positive intergenerational community living where the gifts and talents of ordinary people of all ages and vulnerabilities become available in new ways, resulting in creative solutions to a multitude of social challenges. This requires a new way of looking at leadership roles and responsibilities.

In a GHC, leadership involves going against traditional management teachings. While there may always be a need for traditional support services such as therapy, in a GHC these services are augmented by a small GHC staff whose main responsibility is to inspire community members—the young, the old, and all in between—in a shared vision for their neighborhood. This vision is based on the philosophical principles above and includes a place where neighbors become and remain engaged in the life of the community and largely determine the shape of relationships, commitments, and obligations.

To inspire this shared vision, an executive director must guide his or her staff to encourage residents to focus both on the positive assets of everyone and to take responsibility for making their neighborhood a place where a constant supply of kindness is in circulation. Staff must balance “taking charge” with providing the support that empowers community members to take responsibility for one another. They must enable others to act by giving power away and by playing a supportive background role.

All of this is different from familiar service delivery paradigms and can be difficult to master. GHC leaders have to walk a fine line between taking charge and standing back, and recognize that they can be most successful when their work is characterized by consent rather than control. Consent requires building relationships that are collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, and friendly. Leaders are most effective in building these relationships when they listen, help, respond, and show respect rather than tell and direct.

This does not mean, however, that the residents of the neighborhood are left completely to their own devices. As both Paul Schmitz in his very insightful book, *Everyone Leads: Building Leadership from the Community Up*, and Kouzes and Posner in their inspiring book, *The Leadership Challenge* write:
A leader builds relationships: without constituents, a prospective leader is all alone, taking no one anywhere. Without leaders, constituents have no energizer to ignite their passions, no example to follow, no compass by which to be guided.

Responsibilities, skills, and qualifications

Given this new perspective on leadership, perhaps nothing is as important as the development of common understandings of local leadership responsibilities, skill sets needed, and qualifications. In thinking about leadership, obviously one would expect an executive director to have excellent traditional administrative skills such as managing a budget, working effectively with a board, etc. But equally and critically important are skills in building community capacity where, through caring relationships and engagement, key components of well-being are met, i.e., one’s need for supportive family and friends, security, belonging, and purpose. It is having skills in fostering these key components of well-being that is the cornerstone of local leadership responsibilities. These responsibilities include:

- building and maintaining trusting and caring relationships with community residents of all ages,
- bringing diverse people together to solve problems,
- providing the support that empowers community members to take responsibility for one another,
- encouraging people to become and remain engaged in the life of the community,
- encouraging the community to look within itself to largely determine the shape of relationships, commitments, and obligations.

The skills necessary to carry out these responsibilities and to lead an organization that differs from familiar social delivery paradigms requires specific qualifications. These include, as outlined by Paul Schmitz, “being an innovative thinker who searches out opportunities to change, grow, and improve.” The importance of this qualification is underscored by the work of Daniel Burris, a leading authority on leadership and management, who found that companies that are the most successful over time are “those who are the most creative and innovative.”

Other qualifications identified by Schmitz include:

- assuming personal responsibility to mobilize people and resources toward a common goal and own the consequences of that choice,
- experimenting, taking risks, and learning from accompanying mistakes,
- providing purpose, direction, and motivation to others (to help build a strong and vibrant neighborhood able to meet the ever changing needs of community members),
- being competent and inspiring.

In addition, GHC leaders must:

- genuinely enjoy, respect, and have the ability to earn the trust of people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities,
- introduce, apply, and advocate for new creative ideas that go against common assumptions or practices.
Conclusion

Leadership of a GHC differs from leadership in familiar service delivery paradigms where service is done to community not with community. In working with community, GHC leaders see friends, neighbors, and partners where others see clients, and they see assets and resources where others see problems. In viewing community residents (including those who often are stigmatized because of their challenges) as friends, partners, and assets, responsibilities and power become shared and the community becomes empowered. The result is relationships based on trust and respect between the residents and GHC leaders. Residents develop a sense of security, belonging, and purpose.

The community develops a real sense of pride, ownership of its mission, and a powerful sense of connectedness and neighborliness. Ultimately a culture of kindness and caring develops as a way of life – and as a way to address a multitude of social problems.