



A FLAGSHIP PROJECT OF RIVIC FOUNDATION

The Intergenerational Confluence

A closed middle school in Fruita, Colorado,
reimagined as one campus — home for elders, and
a second home for children, students, and families.

Cultivating care, connection, capability, and contribution across generations.

Four problems, or one?

Across the Grand Valley, older adults are aging in isolation. Students who don't fit a traditional classroom are falling through. Foster and kinship families carry enormous weight with thin support. Adults ready to work need training that starts sooner than a two-year degree.

These are treated as four separate problems — addressed by four sets of professionals, in four different buildings, on four different funding streams. That structure is efficient on a spreadsheet and quietly wasteful in practice, because a great deal of what each group needs, another group already has.

An eighty-year-old with time and a lifetime of skill. A teenager who needs an adult who isn't their parent. A young family who needs three hours and a safe place for a toddler. A foster parent who needs a meal and someone who understands. Put them in separate buildings and each one is a case to be managed. Put them in the same building and they become resources to each other.

Proximity is the intervention.

The Intergenerational Confluence exists to build that proximity on purpose — and to prove it can be measured, sustained, and repeated.

7

PROGRAM AREAS

1

SHARED CAMPUS

0-100+

AGES SERVED



THE SITE

Fruita Middle School

A middle school is built for gathering. Wide corridors, a commercial kitchen, a gym, a library, an auditorium, and rooms sized for twenty-five people to work on something together.

When it closed, the valley lost one of the few buildings designed from the ground up to hold a crowd — sitting on acreage, inside a neighborhood, minutes from downtown Fruita. Putting seven programs back inside it is not a cost-saving measure. The shared walls are the program.

Top left: Fruita Middle School, Fruita, Colorado. Photo by Richard A. Walker. Site plan and grounds imagery are conceptual renderings.

Site status: Identified. RIVIC Foundation has identified Fruita Middle School as the intended campus. Acquisition terms and site control are part of the current discovery work.

Independent programs, one community

RIVIC Foundation owns and stewards the campus. Most programs are operated by independent, mission-aligned partners who lease space and agree to shared standards — so each is run by people who do that work for a living, while the campus holds them together.





PROGRAM · PLANNING & FEASIBILITY

Confluence Elder Living

More than a place to receive care. A place to live fully, belong deeply, and contribute meaningfully.

Life at the heart of community

- Private living with personalized support
- Gardens, shared meals, wellness, art and movement
- Purposeful mentorship and intergenerational connection
- Coffee shop, store, performances and community events
- Choice, dignity, independence and meaningful roles
- Professional care integrated with vibrant daily life

Why it works here

Residents live where children arrive each morning, where students come to learn a trade from someone who practiced it for forty years, and where the coffee shop draws the whole valley.

Daily life includes other generations by default — not by visiting schedule.

Every generation teaching. Every generation learning.

Operated by an independent, mission-aligned partner leasing space on the campus. Operator selection, licensing, and staffing are in development.



PROGRAM · FIRST PHASE · PROPOSED OPENING FALL 2027

Confluence Academy

Learners will not simply prepare for life. They will practice meaningful life now.

Ages 8–18 · Entrepreneurial learning

- Learner-driven, mastery-based academics
- Socratic dialogue and metacognition-based learning
- Real-world problem-solving, capability projects, mentorship
- Nature, movement, cooking, art and practical life
- Mixed-age and intergenerational mentorship

What students create can create change

Student-led enterprises — bake sales, handmade goods, community projects and events — give young people real opportunities to create, collaborate, and experience the value of contributing to something larger than themselves.

100% of net proceeds from student-led projects support children in foster care and the caregivers who support them.

Real work. Real responsibility. Real contribution.

A nonprofit program operating tuition-free. Families contribute basic supplies and food costs, as in public school. "Net proceeds" means funds remaining after reimbursement of direct project costs; no portion is retained by the Academy as profit. Education model in development with a prospective partner.



PROGRAM · PLANNING & FEASIBILITY

Confluence Preschool

A nature-rich preschool. Most of the day outside, with a beautiful indoor environment when needed.

Children grow, create, and contribute through

- Mud kitchen and sensory play
- Gardens, greenhouse, and seasonal food
- Nature exploration and outdoor classrooms
- Art, storytelling, practical work, and imaginative play
- Montessori-informed, Waldorf-inspired learning

Supported by the campus

Shared land, gardens, and outdoor space — plus the community connections and intergenerational experience that come with the address.

Trained and background-checked **elder and teen volunteers** enrich the children's days alongside the professional preschool team.

Most of the day outside.

Operated by an independent, mission-aligned partner leasing space on the campus. Structure, enrollment, staffing and schedule are in development.



PROGRAM · PLANNING & FEASIBILITY

Infant, Toddler & Caregiver Classes

A proactive beginning for children, caregivers, and community.

For caregivers & little ones

- Practical caregiver learning
- Positive behavior and respectful-caregiving skills
- Developmental play, movement and exploration
- Nature-rich experiences
- Community for new and seasoned caregivers

The Confluence difference

Professionally supervised sibling time on the Confluence Field — removing a major barrier to caregiver participation.

Trained and background-checked **teen and elder volunteers** available to support the Lead Guide as needed.

Learn together. Grow in confidence. Belong in community.

Led by a qualified, RIE®-certified professional. Operated by an independent, mission-aligned partner leasing space on the campus. Structure, enrollment, staffing and schedule are in development.

A model worth studying

Shared-site intergenerational programs are an established model in the United States, and a small one — a national survey identified 95, most pairing adult day services with a preschool. The research consistently reports benefits on both sides, and just as consistently notes that the evidence base is thin.

The Confluence would be unusual in its span: infancy through elder care, plus adolescents, foster families, and working adults on one campus. And it can be designed for measurement from the start rather than evaluated after the fact.

Questions worth answering

FOR OLDER ADULTS

What happens to memory, mood, and daily functioning when children are part of the ordinary day rather than a visiting schedule.

FOR CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

What happens to literacy, empathy, and attitudes toward aging when an eighty-year-old is a fixture rather than a guest.

FOR DESIGN

Which choices — schedules, sightlines, shared spaces — actually produce contact rather than mere proximity.

FOR THE FIELD

Whether a wider-span model is more durable than the two-program pairings that dominate the existing shared-site landscape.

We intend to pursue a research partnership to answer them properly.

Conversations with regional academic partners are part of the discovery work ahead. Measurement design would be built into the campus from opening, not added afterward.

Discovery phase

We are early, and we are saying so plainly. What follows is the sequence we are working toward.

NOW · DISCOVERY

Feasibility, partners, and site

Confirming the site, engaging operating partners for each program area, testing assumptions with professional feasibility work, and building the board and advisory bench.

FIRST PHASE · PROPOSED FALL 2027

Confluence Academy opens

The Academy is the first program to roll out, establishing the campus, the model, and the intergenerational practice that everything after it builds on.

FOLLOWING PHASES

Elder Living, early childhood, and shared campus life

Confluence Elder Living, Confluence Preschool, Infant & Toddler classes, the coffee shop and store, and community programming — sequenced as partners, licensing, and capital allow.

BEYOND

A model built to repeat

RIVIC was structured as a foundation on purpose. Once the model works in one building, it should be repeatable — in another town, at another scale, with another set of partners.

Can you help — or do you know someone who can?

This campus gets built through people who make an introduction, lend expertise, or decide early that it's worth backing.

Introductions

To funders, foundations, and civic leaders in Western Colorado and beyond.

Capital & philanthropy

Support for acquisition, renovation, and the discovery work ahead.

Operating partners

Mission-aligned operators for elder care, early childhood, and campus enterprises.

Professional expertise

Legal, architecture, finance, licensing, healthcare, and education.

Board & advisors

People who have built something like this, or funded it.

Volunteers

Time, trade skills, and hands as the building comes back online.

Have a question? Know someone we should meet?

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The website has a volunteer form, a contact form, and more on the work — including other ways to contribute.