

A Story-Collection Evening

Students (or any younger group) interview seniors (or any elders), in pairs. This is the interview guide, the consent, and the harvest — nothing else.

Kids welcome. Food shared. Nobody pays.

A note to the host

This is your program, in your room, run by you — a teacher, a club exec, a program coordinator, a seniors' centre activities lead, a librarian. Nothing behind this kit convenes anything or shows up to run it. Take what's below, change whatever doesn't fit your room, and run it this week if you can.

Pairing tip: where you can, match strangers, not family members — a student interviewing their own grandparent is lovely, but a student interviewing someone else's grandparent is often where the surprise lives. Mixed languages are a feature, not a problem to solve around: if a pair shares a language the interviewer speaks better than English, let the interview happen in it. A grandchild interviewing in Cantonese *is* the program working.

You will need: pairs of chairs or a few small tables, this sheet printed one per pair, pens, and something to eat.

The shape of the evening — about 90 minutes

0:00 – 0:15 · Welcome and pairing. Say hello, get people fed, pair people up (strangers where possible), and walk everyone through the consent line below together, out loud, before any pair starts talking.

0:15 – 1:00 · The interview. Forty-five minutes. One student, one elder, the questions below as a starting point, not a script. If the elder wants to ask the interviewer something back, that's the evening working, not a detour — leave room for it.

1:00 – 1:15 · Harvest, together. Fifteen minutes. Each pair fills out the harvest sheet together — the elder's words, the elder's call on how they're used.

1:15 – 1:30 · Open floor. Three volunteers share one thing they heard tonight — with their elder's nod, right there, before they speak.

Before any interview starts: the interviewer's one job

Read this out loud to the room before pairs begin:

You are not there to change their mind about anything. You are there so the city doesn't lose what they know.

That's the whole brief. Don't correct, don't argue, don't steer. Ask, listen, and write down what you hear.

The interview guide

Seven questions. Use them as a path, not a checklist — if a story runs long, let it.

1. When did this city first feel like home to you?
2. What could you count on then that's gone now?
3. What's broken, today, for people like your interviewer?
4. Who around you actually holds this block together?
5. What should Toronto look like in 2030 — for someone your interviewer's age?
6. If you could fix one thing about this city with a snap of your fingers, what would it be?
7. What's one lesson this city shouldn't lose — something you know that you're worried nobody younger does?

The consent line — read together, then each elder initials their own sheet

Before the interview starts, the elder chooses what happens to their own words. There are four choices, and they're plain:

- **Kept between us.** The notes stay with me, the elder. Nothing leaves this room.
- **Kept in the room.** The notes go into [host institution]'s own archive. Nothing goes further than that.
- **Shared, without my name.** My words can go into the citywide harvest — anonymous.
- **Shared, with my name.** My words can go into the harvest, credited exactly how I choose to be named.

Either the elder or the interviewer can ask to downgrade this later — move it toward more private, never less. Neither one can upgrade it without the other's fresh yes.

Recording: only if the elder asks for it. If so, voice before video, always — audio only unless the elder specifically wants video too.

Consent line for the sheet (elder initials one box):

[] Kept between us [] Kept in the room [] Shared, no name [] Shared, with my name: _____

Initials: _____ Date: _____

Harvest sheet — one per pair, filled out together

Interviewer's first name (first name only — many interviewers are young people):

_____ Elder's name (or "anonymous"): _____

This paper sheet stays with the host institution and never leaves the building; names on it are never typed into the online form — only the four answer lines below travel, per the consent class.

Consent class chosen (from above): _____

VISION — "Toronto in 2030 should ____"

COMPLAINT — what's broken? (cross-streets optional)

NOMINATION — a neighbourhood superhero (someone who quietly holds this place together)

WISDOM DEPOSIT — one lesson this city shouldn't lose

Where the elder's consent allows it, this sheet's harvest items go to →



unitetolove.ca/harvest

If the online form isn't live yet, the paper is the record — nothing is lost. Hand it to your host coordinator; it goes in when the form does.

Translate this kit

A one-page translation is itself a civic act. Priority languages, per the multilingual program (pending census confirmation): Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Urdu, Tagalog, Spanish, Tamil, Italian, Portuguese, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Farsi, Bengali. Interviews in any language are first-class — you don't need an English version to run tonight in yours. Send translations through the same link:



unitetolove.ca/harvest

For the host institution — what leaves the room

Only aggregate counts leave: how many pairs, how many interviews, how many harvest items collected. No roster, no names, no attendance list leaves your building. That's true no matter which consent class any individual elder chose.

A free, open kit. Copy it, change it, translate it, make it yours. — uniteTOlove.ca