

Three fast facts: How do younger companions benefit from their time with older people?

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Three Fast Facts:

How Do Younger Companions Benefit From Their Time With Older People?

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Mon Ami companions help to reduce social isolation in later life while playing games, going on walks, singing, painting, reading, and — of course — conversing over coffee. Mon Ami pairs older adults with college students who provide companionship and conversation during regular visits. Social and meaningful, not clinical. And companions receive an abundance of benefits in return, playing an essential part in an affirming, intergenerational feedback loop.

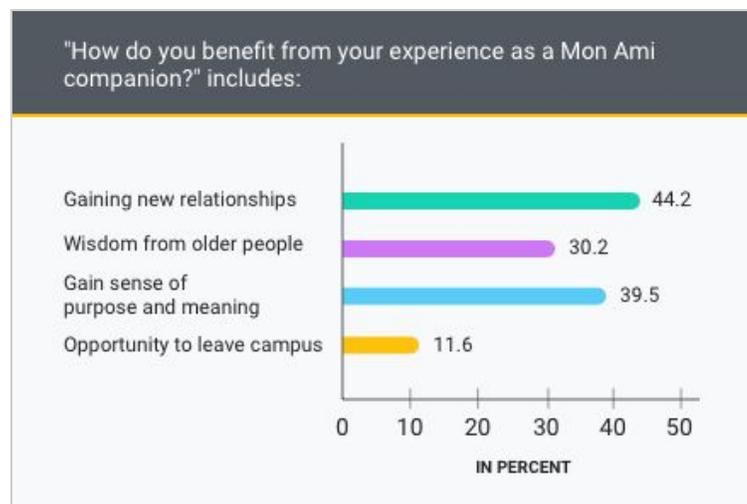
So, how have *Mon Ami* companions benefited from their experiences? Let's hear it from them.

1 Mon Ami companions gain new relationships, community, and wisdom

More than two in five (44.2%) companions reported that they gained new friends from different generations and a broader sense of community. They value the ability to connect with “kind people” and to “engage with those different from me.”

“I get to share experiences with people that I normally would never have the privilege to interact with because of their age.”

Three in ten (30.2%) described the wisdom they have acquired from older people and treasured the chance to “see the world through a new set of eyes.”



“ I am able to develop meaningful and lasting relationships with the families I work with. Their stories inspire me, and their values often calibrate my own.”

2 They feel a sense of meaning and purpose from helping others

Two in five (39.5%) reported gaining benefits that are hard to decipher yet intrinsically important, describing altruistic motivations and a greater sense of meaning and purpose. Some might call these soft skills—but they are so much more than that.



“ I value being present with someone who is much less autonomous than myself at this juncture, but who has surely been present for countless others in the past. There is value, sometimes, in simply not being alone.”

“ The work is very rewarding and by the end of the day makes me very happy.”

3 They get a change of pace, flexibility, and some supplemental income

- Companions described a host of other benefits, too. One in nine (11.6%) valued the opportunity to leave their college campuses.
- Others described the companion experience as relaxing and a way to de-stress, with others noting how much they appreciated the flexibility in scheduling appointments.
- In addition to knowing that they are making a difference while gaining wisdom and insights from older people, *Mon Ami* companions also earn supplemental income to help with tuition, food, or other expenses.

Results are based on 43 online responses to a Mon Ami survey of companions in May 2019. Dr. Cal J. Halvorsen trained and advised the Mon Ami research team, including Joy Zhang, Aidan Campbell and Elana Rich, on content analysis and coding techniques for all open-ended questions and wrote this report. Quotes were edited for context and brevity. For more information on the Center on Aging & Work at Boston College School of Social Work, go to <https://www.bc.edu/research/agingandwork/www.bc.edu/socialwork>. For more information on Mon Ami, go to www.monami.io.