

RAPP REPORTER

Fall 2005

A Newsletter of the Brookdale Foundation Group

RAPP Update

In the wake of the worst hurricane season, RAPPs continued their work providing services to grandparents and other relative caregivers. In the states affected by the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, this included emergency assistance to provide water and temporary housing. We thank our RAPPs for all their hard work on behalf of relative caregivers! We are pleased to have such dedicated, hard-working individuals as part of the Brookdale family.

Our Relatives As Parents Programs (RAPPs) provide direct, quality, replicable services to relative caregivers in 43 states. In addition to our state initiative, we also have the local, regional and pilot mental health initiatives. Our 2006 state, local and regional Request For Proposals and guidelines can be downloaded from our website. See our Funding Alert, inside, for more information.

For a complete list of our

WHAT'S INSIDE

This year the RAPP initiative celebrated it's 10th Anniversary; Janet Sainer, our very special consultant, transitioned into retirement; the Second Annual GrandRally to leave no child behind drew caregivers and advocates from across the country to the nation's capitol; Grandparent Apartments opened in New York, proving that where there is a will, there is certainly a way to provide housing for this special population; and State Fact Sheets, that provide critical information about available supports to caregivers and their advocates, were updated and are now available!

In this issue:

- Mentoring: A Powerful Strategy to Benefit Youth and their Relative Caregivers;
- The Second Annual GrandRally in DC;
- Respite for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children;
- Building and Maintaining Support Groups for Relative Caregivers;
- Volunteers Are Valuable Resources; and
- Make Tax Time Pay for Relative Caregivers!

Also in this issue:

- The RAPP Funding Alert!
- Presbyterian Senior Services and Westside Federation for Seniors and Supportive Housing, Inc., open GrandParent Family Apartments in New York;
- Grandparent Empowerment Training;
- A Relative Caregiving Legislative Update;
- "What to Do When A Child Always Says, No!"
- Updates from Generations United and AARP; and
- Data from the U.S. Census Bureau on caregiving families and Hurricane Katrina

RAPPs, please visit our website.

**Making Your
Voices Heard!
1,000 Gather for
the 2005
GrandRally**
MaryLee Allen
Children's Defense
Fund

An estimated 1,000 grandparents and other relatives raising children gathered at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, September 14, 2005, to celebrate all they are doing for children and to make their voices heard by the public and Members of Congress. Relative caregivers came from 40 states across the country, in large groups and small groups, with their grandchildren,

and with others who support caregivers.

The GrandRally for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children was sponsored by AARP, the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, Generations United, and the National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights. It was the second national GrandRally; the first was held in October 15, 2003. The GrandRally Celebration Dinner, organized by the National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights on the night before the rally, was just that – a genuine, fun, warm celebration of the 400 caregivers who had gathered. The dinner was generously supported by the Brookdale Foundation and Casey Family Services, Inc.

It was exciting to see grandparents who came alone in 2003 return this year with

groups of 10, 12, 15 and more. Some who didn't feel

2006 FUNDING ALERT FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS AND STATE PUBLIC AGENCIES

We are pleased to announce the Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP) Local, Regional and State Seed Grant Initiatives for the year 2006.

Up to **fifteen local and three regional agencies** will be chosen from throughout the United States through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Each agency will receive a \$10,000 grant over a two-year period [\$6,000 in the first year and \$4,000 in the second year if all grant requirements have been met], as well as training and technical assistance. Matching support in cash or in-kind will be required of all selected agencies. The sponsoring agency must be a 501(c)(3) entity or have equivalent tax-exempt status.

Copies of the Local RFP guidelines and application form may be downloaded directly from the Foundation's website, www.brookdalefoundation.org

The deadline for the submission of local proposals is **Thursday, January 12, 2006**. Selected applicants will be notified in April and attend our National Orientation and Training Conference in Denver, Colorado, June, 2006.

Up to **five State Public Agencies** will also be chosen through a RFP process. Each agency will receive a \$10,000 grant over a two-year period [\$6,000 in the first year and \$4,000 in the second year if all grant requirements have been met], as well as training and technical assistance. Matching cash or in-kind support will be required of all selected agencies.

Copies of the State RFP guidelines and application form may be downloaded directly from the Foundation's website, www.brookdalefoundation.org

The deadline for the submission of **State proposals** is **Thursday, February 9, 2006**. Selected applicants will be notified in April and attend our National Orientation and Training Conference in Denver, Colorado, June 2006.

prepared to visit their Senators or Representatives in 2003 were ready this year, and brought other

grandparents along with them. More than 15 states have held their own GrandRallies at state capitals in 2004 and early 2005, celebrated their efforts for their children and met with their state legislators to inform them of the work they do and the challenges they face. (See the 2004 *RAPP Reporter* for descriptions of some of these State GrandRallies).

The 2005 GrandRally was filled with energy, excitement and enthusiasm. Members of Congress, relative caregivers and children being raised by relatives joined representatives of the sponsoring organizations to thank the grandparents, and others who gathered, for all

they were doing for children. They were also reminded of ways they can improve policies that would better

support them in caring for their children. Each caregiver received an updated copy of their own state's Fact Sheet on Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children. A copy was also given to each Member of Congress. (See www.grandrally.org for a link to copies of the State Fact Sheets).

Caregivers who gathered on the West grassy lawn of the Capitol on the morning of September 14th, held signs that emphasized the important roles they play, as well as the help they need: "It Takes More Than a Village," "We are a GrandFamily," and "Don't Leave Our Children Behind," were just a few of them. Several grandparents carried pictures of their grandchildren on signs or on t-shirts. (For pictures of the GrandRally, see www.grandrally.org.)

The Rev. Dr. Clifford Barnett, Pastor of the Brighton Rock AME Zion Church in Portsmouth, Virginia, opened and closed the GrandRally, urging those gathered to speak up for themselves and be proud of the work they do every day. He highlighted the importance of partnerships and moving forward together on behalf of children. Rev. Barnett is a leader in his own city where he has helped establish support groups for relative caregivers in all of the schools in the area.

Senator Hillary Clinton, a co-sponsor of the Kinship Caregiver Support Act, told the group "This grand rally is really all about the grand work being done by grandparents all over the country." She was excited to see more than 60 caregivers who had traveled from New York. Representative Jim McDermott, from Washington State, described the proposals he has introduced to offer federal support to assist grandparents and other caregivers who are legal guardians and are caring for children from foster care. Rep. Danny Davis, from Illinois, also addressed the GrandRally to highlight accomplishments and important supports for relative caregivers in legislation he has introduced (See box on page 25 for a brief description of the bills). Rep. Thelma Drake greeted the GrandRally as well and joined a picture with the more than 100 caregivers who had come from Virginia – her home state.

Grandparents who themselves are raising or have raised children spoke eloquently about their cause and commitment to their children. Lola Bailey, President, and Brigitte Castellano, Executive Director of the National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights spoke about the need for persistent advocacy when seeking what is right for children. Cindy Fountain, a grandmother

from New York, having raised five of her grandchildren, spoke about the wisdom, knowledge and strength she has gained as a result of the challenges she has faced in life and the need to continue moving forward. Trini Garza spoke about his difficulties and triumphs while raising not only his grandchildren, but also his great-grandchildren. Mr. Garza is also the Executive Director of La Voz del Anciano (The Voice of the Elderly), a group that advocates on behalf of Hispanic-American elderly citizens in Dallas, Texas. The crowd greeted Grandfather Collins Phillips, who with his wife, Shelia, raises six young grandchildren, with enormous applause when they learned that he and his family were Hurricane Katrina survivors. Fleeing from New Orleans reemphasized for him, he said, the special importance of family when making it through a tough time.

Children raised by grandparents and other relatives spoke passionately about those caring for them, including nine-year-old Michael Owens who read his favorite poem to the crowd and asked everyone not to forget the many children who are lost in foster care. AARP Grandparent Information Center essay contest winner, twelve-year-old Jordan Westwood, read her winning essay called "Why My

Grandma Is My Hero” about her grandmother Lynn. Nineteen-year old Shantel Hays from Washington State also spoke about being raised by her grandmother, who traveled with her to the GrandRally.

Grandmother and CEO of “Grandparents as Parents, Inc.,” Opal Buford, from Indiana, took her two adopted grandchildren, Meghan and Micah, to the podium with her. They are both members of T.W.O., Teens With Opinions, a support group for children being raised by grandparents. There were six T.W.O. members who traveled with the Indiana delegation to Washington, D.C. in support of their grandparents. Decked out in their “safety green” shirts, the Indiana delegation said it gained great energy from participating in the GrandRally. Since returning home, members of G.A.P., Inc. have also had follow up calls from their Washington, D.C. legislators, have met with over fourteen local legislators and are planning their own state GrandRally for January 2006. They

There were groups of caregivers from other states as well. Several are noted below.

- Over 50 caregivers and advocates came together to Washington, D.C. from California. Dressed in bright yellow t-shirts, which read “We Care for

Our Kin”, they visited many in the California Congressional delegation, several of whom have already added their names as supporters of bills to help children being raised by grandparents and other relatives. Ten of the caregivers traveled free to Washington as winners of the San Francisco-based Edgewood Center for Children and Families’ essay contest. Their winning essays told their stories and the challenges they faced. California is also planning a State GrandRally in January and already has a commitment for a legislative committee hearing that day on issues affecting grandparents and other relatives raising children. The GrandRally will be co-sponsored by the California Alliance of Child and Family Services.

- About 40 caregivers, and several grandchildren, traveled from New Haven, Connecticut in a yellow school bus, donated by the New Haven School District. They, too, got a chance for a number of visits with Congressional staff and shared data on the unmet needs of caregivers in their state. The GrandRally was a great motivator they said – it inspired them to return home to work. Grandparents on the

Move, AARP and several other organizations had a Connecticut GrandRally at the state Capitol earlier in the year.

- Ohio celebrated twice on September 14th. One group flew into Washington on the morning for the GrandRally to join in solidarity with others from around the country. While another group hosted a State GrandRally at the Ohio State Capitol in Columbus the same day. Special foundation support enabled a coalition of groups to bring 500 advocates from across the state. The Ohio rally created unity among caregivers in the state and gave each the confidence needed to continue. It also garnered much media attention and raised visibility with state legislators. The Kinship Navigator Program, included in federal legislation in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, is already in place in many Ohio counties.
- Minnesota and Washington State also held special activities at home for those grandparents and other caregivers who were not able to travel to Washington. Washington State grandparents gathered on both the 14th and 15th for special

meetings. The “Lunch and Learn” session with the legislator who established the state’s Kinship Care Support Program preceded another meeting the next day with several legislators at the State Capitol in Olympia. Minnesota also held an enthusiastic GrandRally on September 14th which garnered local and statewide television and newspaper coverage. The Minnesota Kinship Caregivers Association plans to make the state GrandRally an annual event.

- There were more than 30 grandparents, aunts, uncles and other supporters who traveled from Florida to attend the GrandRally. They met with 27 Members of Congress and their staffs. They are currently working on continuing and following up on their great advocacy efforts with the district offices of those they visited in Washington.
- A large group of caregivers coordinated by the Healthy Grandparents Program in Georgia also joined the GrandRally. Many of them came, they said, to let lawmakers

know that caring for their relatives is not easy and that many need their assistance. The Georgia delegation is doing it not only for themselves, they said, but also for the many others who will come after them and need this help.

The Second National GrandRally for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children celebrated, drew attention to and created awareness of all that relative caregivers do for the children they raise. The rally highlighted the determination and passion that these grandparents and other relatives have for the cause. It helped inspire and encourage many caregivers to continue to advocate, in their states, for themselves and those in similar situations. The rally was another important step in the relative caregivers’ broader movement on behalf of children. For more information and pictures from the 2005 National GrandRally, please go to www.grandrally.org.

A very special thanks to everyone who participated and supported the GrandRally in so many ways.

Mentoring: A Powerful Strategy to Benefit Youth and their Relative Caregivers

By Dr. Susan G. Weinberger

Across America today, hundreds of thousands of youth of all ages are being matched with mentors. Caring and dedicated volunteers are spending a minimum of an hour a week as a friend and positive role model for young people. The good news is that mentoring is three directional: it benefits the mentors as much if not more than the youth. It is also a powerful strategy that can assist relative caregivers in their daunting task of caring for grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mentoring is not new. It was Homer in the Odyssey who entrusted his son with his friend when he went off to the Trojan Wars and called this trusted advisor and teacher - “mentor.” In Western thought, a mentor is a guide and friend. It is the basis of apprenticeship programs whereby the older craftsman takes his protégé under his wing and shows him the ropes. In the clinical mental health and adoption fields, professionals recognize the important role of bonding with a child. The 1970s and 1980s heralded the corporate incarnation of mentoring. Employees are advised that if they want to climb the ladder of success, they should find a mentor to

guide them over the speed bumps in their career. Most of us can remember the mentors in our lives. These are individuals in our own family, community, church or synagogue, school or places of employment that nurture and encourage us in a non-judgmental way and seem to always be there when we need them with a listening ear. For the most part, these are known as informal mentors and you can probably think of more than one who fits the description. The more mentors that surround us and influence our lives, the more successful we become.

A growing number of young adults are unable to take care of their children due to drug addiction, incarceration, AIDS, violent crime, teen pregnancy, poverty or mental illness. Their children are fortunate that they are being cared for by other relatives. And most of these caregivers are doing a superb job of raising these children. But often this comes with the stress connected to working more than one job while needing to maintain a stable and supportive environment, or perhaps financial concerns, health issues, and lack of access to community resources. Youth are often left in isolation to make decisions by themselves. Caregivers who are elderly and unable to provide the critical guidance that youth so often need must be offered additional resources to help

meet the needs of children in their charge. But even more than all of these issues, *have you ever noticed that most young people today would much rather talk to anyone else but their own families?*

Formal mentoring is defined as a *structured and trusting relationship between caring individuals who offer guidance, support, advice and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of youth known as the mentees*. Many children today have the skills and ability to find mentors on their own. Others would never be able to do so without a formal program to assist them and their caregivers.

Mentoring as a strategy simply makes good sense. It is an ideal solution for youth that are struggling with negative feelings about themselves, poor relationships with family members, peer pressure, bullying, and lack of a support system, poor academic performance or tendency toward risky behavior. Mentors who are matched with these youth help to reinforce traditional family values, ethics, and morals, assist youth to obtain life skills, make positive, informed decisions and become productive citizens.

A myth needs to be dispelled that the only young people who could benefit from a mentor are poor, minority

and from one-parent or caregiver families. This is simply not true. Children who benefit from mentors are also rich, or from the majority population and two parent intact families. All children today could benefit from yet one more mentor in their lives. We can never be surrounded by too many mentors!

How do mentoring programs operate? If you are a professional who works with young people on a daily basis, you will not only want to consider mentoring as a critical intervention but you will also want to establish a quality mentoring program that follows the Elements of Effective Practice, the assurance standards that govern all effective programs today. The elements were established by a group of experts more than a decade ago for MENTOR, National Mentoring Partnership. Below is a brief overview of how your program would be structured:

I. Program Design

Determine the youth population that your program will serve and the kind of mentoring program you will offer. Types include one-to-one, group, team, peer or e-mentoring. Consider the nature of the mentoring sessions such as career involvement, academic support, or socialization. The location of mentoring sessions, whether at a school, workplace, faith-based

organization or in a community setting should also be determined.

II. Program Management

In order to ensure that your program is well-managed, develop a comprehensive system to maintain program finances, personnel records, documentation of mentor and youth matches and program monitoring.

III. Program Operation *(at the heart of mentoring programs)*

A strong, everyday system to operate an effective mentoring program includes an extensive and comprehensive screening process to select quality mentors. This includes for each mentor who applies for program acceptance at minimum:

1. Application and release statement
2. Face-to-face interview
3. Personal references check
4. Employment history
5. Location of last five places of residence
6. State and federal criminal background checks
7. Information on applicant from the child abuse registry
8. Driving record

Programs who meet these requirements will undoubtedly be screening for mentors who are caring, committed, responsible, and

confidential, have an outstanding record of employment, are reliable and like kids. Each mentor undergoes a preliminary training program to prepare them for the experience as well as on-going training and support from the organization. Staff will discuss the program's policies and procedures with each mentor, how to instill self-esteem in youth and what mentors and youth do during their session together. They will also learn how mentors can work with relative caregivers to involve everyone in the process. Caregivers' written permission is required to allow their child to become involved in the program.

Mentors are matched with youth based on commonalities or randomly. Regardless, the most important thing is that the mentor and youth come together to develop a relationship based on trust and confidence. In the process, they have fun. Activities include reading together, board games, arts and crafts, sports, music, career direction, employability or life skills or just sitting down together and talking.

IV. Program Evaluation

Quality and effectiveness are important and a plan to measure program process must be in place. Programs who select indicators of implementation viability and

measure expected outcomes will surely succeed.

What are the benefits of mentoring? Extensive research has proven that youth who are matched with a mentor improve their self-esteem, attitudes, school attendance, peer relationships and academic performance. The good news is that mentors benefit, too. They gain a new perspective on their lives, improve their own attitudes, and agree that mentoring makes them a better person. Families are reporting that their children are happier and get along better with siblings, improve their desire to go to school and are having more fun. Mentors are asked to spend one full year with a child. Then the determination is made regarding continuation of the commitment. Most mentors and youth stay together as friends for a long time if not a lifetime.

Professionals who are thinking of setting up a program for youth may want to investigate what programs already exist in the community. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Contact your local school district's central administrative offices. They can direct you to programs existing within the schools. You can also inquire about mentoring if your community has a local United Way, Boys & Girls Club, Voluntary Action Center or Big Brother Big Sister agency. Any of

these organizations will be delighted to work with you if they exist in your community. You can also research on line by going to www.mentoring.org the website of MENTOR, National Mentoring Partnership. It will assist you to find the location of mentoring programs in your community as well as many valuable resources and materials to guide your planning and program implementation.

The African Proverb *it takes a whole village to raise a child* is one of the best reasons why we should consider mentoring as a powerful intervention for our children. Young people today deserve all the help they can get!

Dr. Susan G. Weinberger is President of the Mentor Consulting Group in Norwalk, CT. She is a pioneer in the creation of school-based mentoring in America. Her clients are worldwide. Susan's latest book, *Mentoring A Movement: My Personal Journey* may be ordered on her website www.mentorconsultinggroup.com for delivery in December 2005.

Respite for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

By Melinda Perez-Porter and Janet Sainer

Caregiving can be one of the most rewarding experiences for relative caregivers. On the other hand, they face a myriad of issues as they struggle to keep their families together. Health insurance

coverage, concerns about accessing available benefits, the ability to make decisions with or without a legal relationship to the children, as well as advanced age can lead to physical and mental health problems. Studies have shown that grandparents are likely to neglect their own health by skipping or postponing medical appointments as they strive to meet the needs of the children in their care. In a survey, caregivers identified exhaustion, poor eating habits, sleep deprivation and failure to exercise as symptoms of the demands and stresses of caregiving [Family Caregiver Alliance, 2003]. Chronic health problems have been reported in studies of Hispanic, Caucasian and African-American grandparents raising grandchildren [Minkler, M. & Roe, K.M, 1993]. Family caregivers also face increased risk of excessive use of alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs [Sumner-Mayer, Kim, 2004]. These challenges can be overwhelming when relatives care for children with mental or physical disabilities.

The benefits of respite care are clear. Turning over their caretaking duties to others ensures that caregivers get the rest they need in order to resume the care of their children. A tired caregiver has an even more difficult time facing what can seem like the endless challenges of caregiving. A break allows

time for rest or social activities and a "recharging of batteries." Respite, when clearly defined and easily accessible, creative and flexible, can help caregivers face their caregiving responsibilities.

Community-Based Programs

Community-based interventions, in the form of support groups, have proven to be a source of assistance and support for relative caregivers. These groups have recognized the challenges faced by caregivers and their need for supportive programming that provides a break from caregiving responsibilities.

The Brookdale Foundation's Relatives As Parents Programs (RAPPs) have used creative approaches to provide caregivers with time off. Some of the lessons learned indicate that caregivers may find it difficult to seek help; that it may take caregivers time to accept help and enjoy time away from their children; and that respite is possible *any time* programs provide activities for children. Here are some examples of categories that can lead to respite opportunities:

(1) CHILD CARE

Child care, provided in or out of the home, is the traditional and most recognized form of providing time off for relative caregivers. When offered during support group

meetings, conferences, workshops and seminars, child care is an important way of ensuring that caregivers have time away from their children. Child care may also be offered by giving caregivers the opportunity to drop kids off and go shopping, to a movie or activity of their choice. It can be provided through collaboration with social work interns, staff, teens and trained volunteers. No matter what avenue is used, if caregivers know that the children are well cared for, they are free to enjoy and benefit from their support group meetings or other activities.

EXAMPLES OF CHILD CARE ACTIVITIES

Vouchers: Some programs use vouchers to provide financial assistance that can be used to pay for child care; others allow caregivers to choose the providers, others offer a list of possible providers and still others contract with a specific child care agency.

“Swap” child care programs are those where caregivers take turns caring for each others’ children.

(2) CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES RAPPs have proven that anytime activities are provided for children, caregivers get some time off. If caregivers feel that the children enjoy programs and services, they will bring them

to the programs and, in effect, allow themselves to get a break. Some groups have tried to introduce caregivers to respite by having a children’s activity and inviting the caregiver to stay and observe the interaction between the child and the respite worker. The hope is that once caregivers know that the children are in good hands, they may accept, and even enjoy, time away from their children. If children enjoy the activities provided, that may, in itself, be an incentive for the caregiver to access other social, educational and supportive services offered that will result in much-needed time off.

EXAMPLES OF CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES

Art classes; parties; camps during the summer, spring, winter, fall, weekends, day and overnight; movie nights; field/day trips; after-school programs; tickets to sporting events, the circus, concerts and shows; special activities for children on Saturdays; safe, fun events for the many children who are learning disabled and regular therapeutic activities for children that include play therapy, psycho-education that addresses coping, social skills, grief and building self-esteem.

Collaborations with local museums, libraries, zoos, schools, YM/YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs (kids can be

dropped off for certain times and supervision is provided by trained staff), Cooperative Extension Services, parks and other recreational providers are key to the creation and expansion of children’s activities that lead to caregiver respite.

(3) CAREGIVER ACTIVITIES

Planned social activities, at least once a month, with fellow caregivers, lessen isolation and can be one of the most rewarding experiences for caregivers. Any activity that focuses on the caregiver and that is done with a group of caregivers who are going through the same challenges, results in a special occasion for all.

EXAMPLES OF CAREGIVER ACTIVITIES

Concerts/musical performances; dinner/shows; breakfast, brunch and lunch outings; plays; shopping/day trips; “Grandparent’s Night Out”; “Grandparent’s Day” recognition ceremonies and celebrations, all spell relief.

Creative programs include:

Prom Night: An annual semi-formal event for grandparent caregivers! They get to dress up, dance and have dinner surrounded by others who are also caring for children.

Yearly Grandparent Recognition Ceremonies: Caregivers are recognized with lunch or dinner, music and recognition certificates in

a variety of forums including restaurants, senior and community centers, picnics, local parks and with outings to sports or other events.

(4) INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Sometimes, respite opportunities that provide a fun event for both caregivers and children are the most successful. The events are a fun way to ensure that caregivers and their children enjoy time together without worrying about homework and chores. Supervision for the children may be offered to allow caregivers the opportunity to relax and connect with other caregivers.

EXAMPLES OF INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Holiday parties; day trips for both grandparents and children; annual picnics; boat trips; nature walks; family and respite weekends offer programs and activities for children during the day while grandparents relax or join educational, stress free activities and reunite with the children at night. Potluck dinners before support group meetings are always welcomed by both caregivers and children and provide a much needed meal before the meeting.

Family Fun Night: A monthly family celebration with food, door prizes and lots of intergenerational activities. Celebrations include pool parties; fall festivals, holiday crafts,

picnics in the park and Grandparents Day.

Family Spa Night: An evening of relaxation and respite for caregivers and children that include spa services such as massages, manicures, haircuts, foot soaks, yoga, stress management techniques and a sampling of health foods while children enjoy separate, structured activities.

RESPITE NEEDS

- **Support and increase resources for the Older Americans Act and the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP).** In 2000, a major new initiative was added to the Older Americans Act which recognized, for the first time, the importance of and the need for family caregivers and provided financial support for services to help these families. An important service among the five categories of services designated in the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) is respite. We recommend supporting funding increases for the NFCSP and that an exploration be undertaken to address the age limitation so that more relative caregivers and their families can also be included in the program. There is also a need to respond to the needs of grandparents and

other relative caregivers as primary caregivers of children, distinct from other older adults without caregiving responsibilities.

- **Educate professionals and national organizations about the many ways that respite can be provided to ensure a broad range of services to both caregivers and the children in their care.**

Training and technical assistance of professionals and national organizations that support a broad interpretation of respite and how its provision can benefit both caregivers and the children is needed. The training can emphasize creative respite opportunities for caregivers as well as children and the importance of focusing on the special needs of relative caregivers distinct from other family caregiver roles. In addition, since two populations are being served, funding streams that address the needs of both can be accessed to ensure the delivery of services. As part of the technical assistance, a fact sheet with specific ideas for this population can be developed and disseminated to interested organizations.

- Expand Collaborations with local, state and national agencies and programs in order to create or expand respite services that benefit caregivers and the children in their care.** Collaborations with local, state and national programs can result in the creation and expansion of cost-effective respite services for caregivers. Partnerships with the school systems, Cooperative Extension programs, faith-based organizations, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YM/YWCA's, Boys and Girls Clubs and other national organizations can result in creative ways to address caregiver respite. Whether through in-kind assistance or funding, collaborative partnerships will help local, community-based organizations provide caregivers with the respite they need. These collaborations can, in turn, be replicated nationwide.
- Support legislative initiatives that address the issues faced by relative caregivers.** The many unmet needs of relative caregivers result in challenges that can impair their ability to provide care. We recommend the support of legislative initiatives and public policy that will make a difference in the lives of non-traditional families. A special

emphasis should be placed on the needs of relative caregivers and the children in their care. The issues of access to health insurance and medical benefits, legal status, transportation, mental health, housing, respite and education should be addressed at the national, state and local levels.

This is an excerpt of a paper that was written for Generations United's 2nd National Symposium on Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children.

Building and Maintaining Support Groups for Grandparents (And Other Relatives) Raising Grandchildren

By Melinda Perez-Porter

The Foundation's Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP) began in 1996 and encourages and promotes the creation or expansion of services for grandparents and other relatives who have taken on the responsibility of surrogate parenting due to the inability of parents to care for their children. Seed grants of \$10,000 are awarded every year to up to 15 local, community-based agencies that provide direct services to relative caregivers and up to 5 public state agencies to develop a statewide network of organizations that work together to provide guidance, information and support to local communities and stimulate the expansion of

services to caregivers at the state level. RAPPs offer extensive services, primarily to relative caregivers caring for children outside the foster care system, in 43 states. Building and maintaining support groups are key pieces of the "Brookdale RAPP Model." Here are some of the ways they do it:

BUILDING SUPPORT GROUPS

RESPONSIVENESS TO CAREGIVER NEEDS AND THE COMMUNITY

Programmatic initiatives must be responsive to the needs of the relative caregivers groups seek to serve. Meeting dates and times should be regular but flexible in order to accommodate caregivers. Regular meeting times also ensure that everyone, including caregivers and referral sources, know when the group meets. It is also important to give some thought to the group's name. Some caregivers may not want to go to a "support group" but will visit "Chat and Chews," "Coffee and Conversation" groups and groups that provide fun events like monthly "Family Spa Night" or "Family Fun Night." When groups start, caregivers have a lot of questions about the myriad of issues they face [Relative caregivers face the challenges of school enrollment, consent to medical care, accessing available benefits and

medical insurance with or without the benefit of a legal relationship, information about available childcare and mental health issues and assistance with disabled or special needs children. A place to go and receive support, information, education and/or respite can make a difference]. Meetings that are informative and answer questions, about legal issues, available benefits and where to access those services, are very much appreciated. Caregivers will come to the group for the information provided.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Support group facilitators bring the issues faced by relative caregivers to the attention of the community. RAPP state and local initiatives have been very effective at educating professionals, legislators, caregivers and other advocates on the issues and needs of caregivers. Legislators, Departments of Social Services, child welfare

agencies, school counselors, employee assistance program staff at local businesses and community organizations have benefited from information about the obstacles to services faced by caregivers. RAPPs have provided this much-needed information in a variety of ways including community

come together regularly to identify issues confronted by caregivers, advisory committees develop plans to have those issues addressed and help educate the community. They also help support groups by assisting them with programmatic initiatives, referrals, presentations at group meetings, articles for newsletters, fundraising and continuity.

ESTABLISH TRUST!
An important part of building and sustaining any group is not only to know the issues faced by grandparents and other relatives raising children, but to also recognize the importance

forums, state and local conferences, legislative breakfasts, advisory groups and task forces composed of caregivers and professionals from many different arenas. Advisory committees are key to making this goal a reality. Composed of professionals from a variety of backgrounds who

of establishing trust with caregivers and with the organizations that will become referral sources for the program. No matter how great a program is or what needed services are offered, if trust is not established with the caregivers and the organizations that will be referral sources for the group,

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Download a copy of our 2004 RAPP Reporter for a list of Cooperative Extension Resources developed by or in partnership with RAPPs, the Best Practices Manual For Service Providers Assisting Kinship Caregivers in the State of Michigan, developed by our Michigan State RAPP, information about the Parenting A Second Time Around Curriculum for group facilitators and the Ties That Bind Training, a curriculum that focuses on parental substance abuse and its impact on relative caregiving families, by visiting our website, www.brookdalefoundation.org

For Fact Sheets on the issues confronted by relative caregivers including one on support groups and to obtain a copy of Generations United's Second Intergenerational Action Agenda, visit their website, www.gu.org; and

To register a support group on the AARP Grandparent Information Center Database – a great marketing tool – and to obtain a copy of Lean on Me: Support and Minority Outreach for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, about effective promotion, recruitment, start-up and sustaining strategies for support groups, visit www.aarp.org.

Caregivers will not come and organizations will not refer them. Facilitators should, therefore, follow-up, in person or by phone, with organizations to whom they have sent fliers and support group brochures so that these possible referral sources can get to know them and feel confident that the caregivers they refer will get assistance and benefit from the program. Caregivers may also not want to discuss the reasons children are in their care and will not do so unless and until they have established a relationship with the group's facilitator or the other caregivers in the group. This may take time. It may not be possible to start a support group immediately.

PROGRAM INCENTIVES AND MARKETING

Support group incentives include the provision of pot luck dinners, snacks, refreshments, door prizes, distribution of school supplies, socks, toys, books, clothes, food baskets, supermarket gift cards, salon gift certificates and tickets to museums, concerts or other recreational events.

Collaborative partners work with RAPPs to assist with donations that can be offered as incentives. Intergenerational activities and holiday gatherings can help caregivers and children get to know each other and help groups establish trust. Once the group has a "core" group of caregivers, these

announcements and news releases to local papers that not just give meeting dates and times, but also advertise upcoming events or include calendars listing those events. Don't forget to advertise your group in community and senior centers, hospitals, doctor and dental offices, day care centers and head start,

schools, legal aid/legal services offices, juvenile/family court, libraries, employee assistance offices of businesses in your community, banks, churches and synagogues, grocery stores and supermarkets, beauty and barber shops,

SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS

Collaborations are key to helping support groups create or expand cost-effective services for relative caregivers.

Examples of successful collaborative partnerships include work with faith-based organizations, hospitals, head starts, senior centers, cooperative extension offices, state universities, AARP, legal services/legal aid offices, mental health clinics, housing authorities, Area Agencies on Aging, doctor's offices, food stamp and other benefit offices, Departments of Health, eye doctors; hearing specialists, therapists/counselors, Medicaid offices, day care centers, schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, YM/YWCAs, park districts, zoos, libraries, museums, amusement parks, bowling alleys, baseball and basketball organizations and other recreational centers, stores, supermarkets, bakeries, pizza shops and restaurants, beauty/barber shops, prisons.

Any organization that serves the elderly, families and children as well as businesses that provide services or sell goods can become valuable partners that can help you with the success of your support groups for caregivers.

Caregivers can, in turn, help the group with its outreach efforts. Word of mouth, from caregivers who have been helped by the program, provides invaluable marketing.

Aggressive and constant outreach is key to the success of any support group. Outreach and marketing include public service announcements, meeting

recreational centers like YM/YWCA's and bowling alleys, Food Stamp, Medicaid and Department of Social Services offices, cable TV channels, community fairs and display booths at malls. Easy to read fliers and brochures, with the name of a contact person, are very important to the success of a group. Everyone in your

agency should know about the availability of the support group and what to tell caregivers who call for assistance. Registration with AARP's database of support groups and listing the group on the State Fact Sheets developed by national organizations are also great ways to advertise a support group. It is important to recognize that outreach and marketing are ongoing program activities that last throughout the life of the program and do not and should not end when groups reach their target number of caregivers.

MAINTAINING SUPPORT GROUPS

Establish Collaborative Partnerships

Support groups grow and flourish when they recognize the strengths of collaborative partnerships. The Foundation encourages RAPPs to collaborate with a wide range of agencies on the local, state and national levels [To find out more about the composition and valuable work of State Taskforces, visit the Foundation's website and click on the 2004 RAPP Reporter]. These collaborative partnerships enable programs to promote community awareness and access cash or in-kind resources, like space to hold support group meetings, food and refreshments, presenters for group meetings, articles for newsletters, transportation

assistance, volunteers to make calls to remind caregivers of meetings, to find out how they are doing, to send cards on special or important dates and access tickets, coupons or gift certificates to offer as incentives to attend support group meetings.

Collaborations help build and maintain programs, allowing them to grow and expand by helping them provide services that would not otherwise be available to caregivers and children through the Foundation seed grant.

A community map helps groups identify community resources and enables the constant, ongoing outreach, collaborative partnerships and fundraising needed to ensure that a program is well known. Once community resources are identified, they can be used to develop creative opportunities for outreach, fundraising and collaborations.

These, in turn, lead to group development, maintenance and continuity [Have you created a Community Map? Visit the Brookdale Foundation's website and click on our 2004 RAPP Reporter to find out how to create a community map to help support groups with outreach, fundraising and collaborative partnerships].

Grow with Your Group

As the group grows, it is important to listen to and rely on caregivers to tell groups what they need. Once initial questions are answered, caregivers may want more recreational opportunities or specific educational opportunities. Phone calls, meeting reminders and newsletters are good ways to encourage attendance at meetings and show concern for and interest in the relative caregivers who have expressed interest in or come to the group.

Leverage Resources

Foundation (and other) funds bring visibility and credibility to support groups. RAPPs are encouraged to use their Brookdale grant to leverage funding opportunities that will enable them to meet the needs of the caregivers and children they serve.

An example of this is where RAPPs have leveraged the receipt of unrestricted funds, like the Foundation's seed grant, to serve caregivers under age 60 and to obtain other funding, like that available through the National Family Caregiver Support Program, to serve relative caregivers over 60. Visit the Foundation's website for tips, from a Brookdale Fundraising Brainstorming session, that can help you with ideas about where to seek possible funding.

By leveraging resources, RAPPs have been able to

obtain funding to help build and maintain their support groups.

Expand Services to Meet Children's Needs

An important and necessary way to build and expand services to caregivers is by providing services and activities for children. Although caregivers will think twice about coming to meetings to help themselves, they will come if their children enjoy the meetings and want to attend. Any time programs provide services to children, they provide respite. Childcare, children's activities, caregiver activities and intergenerational activities all afford caregivers a break from their caregiving responsibilities, and are very much appreciated. Children benefit by getting to know each other and realize that they are not the only ones being cared for by grandparents or other relatives. Collaborations with parks, museums, theatres and other recreational centers can help groups achieve this goal.

CONCLUSION

The objective of RAPP is to enable agencies to provide accessible, replicable, group and individual supportive services to relative caregivers beyond the two-year grant period. These suggestions have allowed RAPP support groups to build and sustain quality, cost-effective services for caregivers.

No matter what the activity is, caregivers will enjoy activities, with or without their children, that provide them with the opportunity to enjoy themselves and/or each other in a forum that is planned by others.

This paper was presented at the Annual Family Life Electronic Seminar on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Visit <http://hec.osu.edu/grg>, for more information and excellent resources from this E-Seminar.

VOLUNTEERS ARE VALUABLE RESOURCES

By Carol Moore
Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Big Stone Gap, VA

Volunteers provide a valuable service to our Relatives As Parent Program (RAPP). It is their support, time and resources that allows Mountain Empire Older Citizens KinCare Program to provide a diversity of services. We are located in rural southwestern Virginia in the midst of the Appalachian Mountains. We have few human service programs, but we have a wealth of community support.

In 1999, when KinCare received funding from the Brookdale Foundation, we gave a great deal of thought to caring for children. Our first support group was scheduled with a substitute

teacher from a local Head Start with all the proper criminal background checks, references and understanding of child development. One person came. The next group was scheduled, no children.

Years later, it was time for our Family Fun Night. We were anticipating 130 people including children and caregivers. We reserved the new conference room in the Transit Building for the children's activities. While attending a community meeting, I met the Director of the local *AmeriCorps* program. I provided a storytelling and children's literature training while sharing information about the KinCare program. They offered to help with Family Fun Night.

Expecting a large group of people, I called the Director of the AmeriCorps Program and asked for help. It was amazing. The Director not only came, but brought volunteers to help with games and art materials. There were over twenty college students playing games and making art with the children! A *Virginia Cooperative Extension agent* came with the PlayStation nutrition game. *Retired Senior Volunteers* was contacted. KinCare's *intern from the University of Virginia* at Wise was coming. Tables had been set up with games and art materials. We were ready!

One of our *advisory members* brought their karaoke machine. This provided an evening of entertainment no one will ever forget. He also brought his three daughters who sang right along with us, demonstrating how to use the machine. The caregivers enjoyed an evening of respite. They talked to each other as the children enjoyed a game of Twister. Each child received several books, collected by AmeriCorps members, as take home gifts.

For the past five years, a *local Episcopal Church* has sponsored our December Family Fun Nights. The members of the church come with craft materials so that everyone can make and take something home. They also generously support our annual Back to School project!

KinCare has utilized volunteers to care for children and assist with Family Fun Nights for five years. For several years, *Foster Grandparents* would coordinate activities, serve pizza and play with the children. Advisory members and Retired Senior Volunteers play a major role and offer invaluable help - they do whatever is needed.

This year, we will celebrate our fourth Fall Festival. This is sponsored by *the Boy Scouts*. They rent the National Guard Armory in Big Stone Gap. The Boys Scouts, leaders, and

volunteers turn it into a festival event. They have games, cakewalks, treat bags, door prizes, which last year included two VCRs, and dinner. The Scouts start planning this in the spring as an annual project. KinCare families just show up and enjoy the evening.

The University of Virginia at Wise will be hosting fifty college and university student services programs with housing on campus. Our Holidays for Kids is their philanthropy project. They will be bringing gifts for the children. College students will help with the organization and tagging of the gifts. Information is on their website.

Before you panic and think anyone is allowed to come in and provide care for our children, think again. Each volunteer is someone who works with children or I know personally. KinCare was developed to preserve and strengthen families. By providing Family Fun Night, with volunteer assistance, caregivers come knowing they have time to rest in an environment based on trust. Children come for fun and pizza.

We have a saying in KinCare, "a job worth doing is worth doing together." For those of you who offer care for children during support groups or caregiver gatherings, your community

advisory committee, faith-based groups, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Americorps, community groups and friends are valuable resources.

For more information on Americorps volunteers, visit their website:

www.americorps.org. For more information on Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions visit www.seniorcorps.gov.

Make Tax Time Pay for Relative Caregivers! Help Families Claim All the Tax Credits They've Earned
By Roxy Caines

Relatives raising children could qualify for federal tax credits worth thousands of dollars and not even know it. The Earned Income Credit (EIC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) can greatly benefit low-wage workers with children by reducing taxes and supplementing wages. Some workers could receive a refund even if they don't owe taxes!

How much is the EIC worth?

Workers who supported one child living in their home for more than half the year and earned less than \$31,030 (\$33,030 if married) in 2005 could get an EIC up to \$2,662. Workers who raised two or more children in their home for more than half the year and earned less than

\$35,263 (\$37,263) in 2005 could get an EIC worth up to \$4,400. Children claimed for the EIC must be under age 19, under age 24 if a full-time student or any age if they have permanent and total disabilities. To claim the EIC, a worker, spouse and child each must have a Social Security number (SSN) that authorizes work.

income tax of \$110. Lisa will receive an EIC refund of \$3,636. Lisa's CTC will eliminate the income tax she owes and provide an additional CTC refund of \$1,050. The EIC and CTC give her a total tax refund of \$4,686 this year!

or call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 for nearby Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) or Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) sites.

Will the tax credits jeopardize other benefits?
Families can get the EIC and CTC and continue receiving public benefits, such as cash assistance, food stamps, SSI, Medicaid, or federal housing

What about the CTC?

Some workers raising children could get an even larger refund by claiming the CTC. Workers who earn *more than* \$11,000 in 2005 and raised a child under age 17 who lived with them for more than half the year could be eligible. The CTC is worth a maximum of \$1,000 per child.

Join the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' National Tax Credit Outreach Campaign!

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' produces an Earned Income Credit and Child Tax Credit Outreach Kit that contains facts about the tax credits, ideas to promote them, strategies to link workers to free tax filing assistance, examples of what organizations across the country are doing, and bilingual outreach materials including color posters, flyers, brochures and envelope stuffers in English and Spanish. Brochures in 18 additional languages and sample newsletter articles are also available. The Center's National Tax Credit Outreach Campaign can also help connect you with other organizations involved in tax credit outreach in your area.

To request a FREE copy of this tax credit outreach kit or to link with other organizations in your area, contact: *Roxy Caines*, (202) 408-1080 or caines@cbpp.org

Most families receive a credit worth several hundred dollars. To claim the CTC, a worker, spouse and child must have a SSN or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

Together, the EIC & CTC can really add up!

Some families may be able to claim both the EIC and the CTC. For example: Lisa Smith is a single grandmother raising her two grandchildren ages 7 and 13. In 2005, she earned \$18,000 and owes

workers must file a tax return using Form 1040 or 1040A **AND** fill out and attach Schedule EIC to claim the EIC or Form 8812 to claim the CTC. To take advantage of the full range of benefits available and to help make sure forms are filed correctly, link families to free tax filing assistance. Several free assistance programs are sponsored by the IRS. Call 1-888-227-7669 to find an AARP Tax-Aide site near you; visit www.aarp.org/money/taxaide

assistance. The EIC and CTC are not counted as income in determining eligibility for these programs and will not immediately count against asset limits that may apply to these programs.

Are there other tax credits that can help kinship families?
The Child and Dependent Care Credit (DCTC) and the Adoption Credit are non-refundable federal tax credits that can reduce the amount of taxes families owe which may increase their EIC or CTC refund.

The DCTC can be claimed by workers who paid child care expense during 2005 in order to work or look for work. Workers who claim a child under age 13 who lived with

them for more than half the year as a dependent can claim a DCTC up to \$3,000 or up to \$6,000 for two or more children. A worker, spouse and child must have a SSN or ITIN and must complete and attach Schedule 2 to their 1040A tax return or Form 2441 if filing Form 1040.

What about the adoption credit?

This non-refundable tax credit can be claimed for expenses incurred to adopt a child. It is worth up to \$10,390 per child under age 18 or any age if totally and permanently disabled. To claim this tax credit, a worker must complete and attach Form 8839 to their tax return.

Working families can also claim state level tax credits.

If you live in one of the following states, make sure kinship families know that they can claim the state EIC in addition to the federal EIC: DC, DE, IL, IN, IA, KS, MD, ME, MA, MN, NJ, NY, OK, OR, RI, VT, WI. Twenty-eight states also have a state DCTC. Some state level tax credits are refundable and can add more money to the pockets of working families. For more information, contact your state department of revenue.

Help families get all the money they've earned!

Workers who were eligible for the EIC or CTC in the past but did not claim them can get their refund for up to three back years. Workers

can ask the volunteer tax preparers at AARP Tax-Aide or other sites for help.

Congratulations to the Presbyterian Senior Services and Westside Federation. On October 14, 2005, after lots of work, they officially opened the GrandParent Family Apartments in the Bronx, NY. Here is their story:

BUILDING THE PSS/WSF GRANDPARENT FAMILY APARTMENTS

By David S. Taylor,
Executive Director
Presbyterian Senior Services

On June 1st, after more than seven years of work and planning, our dream came true when the first grandfamily moved into the newly constructed residence known as the PSS/WSF GrandParent Family Apartments, a residence for grandparents raising their own grandchildren. The 12.8 million dollar project is a joint effort by Presbyterian Senior Services (PSS) and the West Side Federation For Senior & Supportive Housing, Inc. (WSFSSH). How did PSS and WSFSSH do it?

In 1995, Presbyterian Senior Services started its first support group for grandparents raising grandchildren in the poorest economic Congressional District in the country, the South Bronx. After several fits and starts, PSS moved the

support group from the local Presbyterian Church to a nearby senior center sponsored by PSS with a large group of older adults from which to draw. Still the support group was not well attended until we changed the time from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm and provided recreational activities for the grandchildren. Clearly the first lesson to learn was that the way to the grandparents' hearts was through their grandchildren. Shortly afterwards, PSS opened an in-city summer camp to provide respite for the grandparents and fun for the grandchildren.

By 1998, the program had outgrown the senior center and we began searching for a larger space. What we saw we didn't like. In back of the senior center, there was a very large empty lot with lush green grass, unheard of in New York City. The lot was owned by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). One day, standing in the backyard of the senior center, I said to myself, "We can build a new resource center here." The "thunderclap thought" arrived a second later: "If we are going to go to all **that** much trouble, then why not put some apartments on top of the resource center?"

To build, we had to convince NYCHA, the largest housing authority in the country, to sell or lease the property to

PSS and WSFSSH: not an easy task when you consider the property consists of 29,000 square feet of undeveloped land and valued at almost \$400,000. In the end NYCHA would agree to lease the property at one dollar a year for 99 years. But until that decision in 2001, my partner, Laura Jervis, the Executive Director of WSFSSH, our attorney, Martin McCarthy and I would shuttle back and forth for three long years from one endless (and usually, fruitless) meeting to another, trying to convince the powers to be that building the residence on NYCHA property was the right and visionary thing to do. It was like trying to get the Queen Mary II to change its course in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. But luck was on our side when in 2001, a new chair of NYCHA was appointed who embraced the idea and things began to move more quickly.

For me the key factor in building this residence was the decision by the PSS and WSFSSH Boards of

Directors to form a partnership. By forming the partnership, both not-for-profit agencies maximized their strengths. PSS brought to the table its many years of



GrandParent Apartments, Bronx, New York

experience running a kinship program and WSFSSH its housing development and financing experience. In 2002, PSS and WSFSSH were awarded a six million dollar grant from the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal which became the bedrock for raising the additional 6.8 million dollars. WSFSSH's connections and knowledge of federal, state, city and private housing development funds and PSS' connection to the Presbyterian Church, both nationally and in New York City was a winning combination for raising the

12.8 million. Another key factor was hiring an experienced practicing attorney and professional development consultant. Since this project is the first of its kind in New York State, the partnership and funding sources often had to reinterpret and rewrite the rulebook. Having an experienced developer like WSFSSH and a skillful attorney were invaluable.

These are some of the lessons I learned on this seven year journey:

First, you don't have to know an iota about housing development to build a residence for grandparents raising grandchildren. During the seven years, I often referred to myself as the "apprentice" since this was my first building. Whatever I lacked in knowledge and experience, the partnership more than made up for it.

Another lesson I learned is that trust is tantamount to a successful partnership. I have known both my partner and attorney for many years. But I did ask lots of questions

until I felt I understood what was transpiring.

You need to be determined. There are just so many hurdles to climb, people to convince and years of labor without seeing many results--and one can easily become discouraged. The more difficult and groundbreaking your project is, the more years it will most likely take. There will be low moments, very low moments. So stay determined, doggedly hold the course and do not give up. The supportive words of your friends and colleagues will be the tonic that keeps you going.

Boards can be difficult at times, especially when making financial decisions that involve millions of dollars. So you have to figure out the best way to work with your Board and keep their confidence. I found it helpful to bring in my partner agency to meet with the PSS Directors. I enjoy fundraising and find it to be exciting and exhilarating, especially when a check for several thousand dollars lands on my desk. However, whether you enjoy fundraising or not, the bottom line is there is no escaping the reality that a large portion of your time and energy will have to be devoted to it.

What has surprised me most in building this house is how little understanding there is about one inescapable fact:

erecting a residence like the GrandParents Building is insufficient without an array of *on-site support services* for the grandfamilies. A building is not complete until the final brick is laid. Those support services are the final brick. From the very beginning of this journey, both my partner and I understood this.

The residence has 40 two-bedroom and 10 three-bedroom apartments with 4,500 square feet for support services and 5,079 square feet for commercial space. The building provides twenty-four hours security and a two-bedroom apartment for a live-in superintendent. Today, staffing the building are a Building Manager, Superintendent, Custodian, Security Personnel, MSW Director of PSS Social Services, MSW Senior Social Worker, MSW Spanish-speaking Social Worker, a part-time Attorney and several part-time Youth Workers. In the next month, a Master's level Coordinator for the after-school enrichment program will be hired.

Finally, both PSS and WSFSSH hope that the PSS/WSF GrandParent Family Apartments will encourage communities to create new housing for grandparents raising grandchildren. The need is great!

GRANDPARENT EMPOWERMENT TRAINING

By Carole Cox
Fordham University

Empowerment training focuses on strengthening grandparents by enhancing their skills and knowledge so that they are better able to parent and deal with the problems and issues they encounter within their homes and the community. A key aim of the Grandparent Empowerment Project is to enable grandparents to become community advocates working towards policy and service changes that will better address their concerns. The program, developed in 1998, has been offered continually at Fordham University with funding support from the New York City Department of the Aging. Each training program has 15 grandparents representing diverse groups and areas of the City.

The 7 week course, offered to 15 grandparents, focuses on some of the most pressing issues affecting grandparent caregivers. The criteria for participation in the training are that the grandparent is the primary caregiver for a grandchild and is able to commit to the entire 14 sessions. Participants are selected from local grandparent support groups and through community outreach announcements. In addition to classes dealing with parenting skills, the course includes classes on

advocacy and community outreach. Participants in the program are expected to give presentations on the material they learn and to act as grandparent advocates in the community. By reaching out to others, their own sense of personal empowerment is reinforced.

Each class begins with specific learning objectives for the session. Participants are also given time to discuss the previous class as well as their experiences in implementing any of the material at home. The classes include videos, lecture, discussion and role playing as each activity complements the other and enhances the learning experience. These varied educational strategies are essential as participants come from varied educational backgrounds. These combined instructional methods have proven to be effective even with grandparents who are unable to read, as the written material is thoroughly discussed in the class. The specific classes include:

- Understanding Empowerment
- Helping Children Build Self-Esteem
- Communicating with Children (2 sessions)
- Dealing with Behavior Problems
- Talking with Your Grandchild about Sex and HIV

- Talking with your Grandchild about Drugs
- Dealing with Loss
- Dealing with a Child's Grief and Loss
- Navigating the Service System
- Legal and Entitlement Issues
- Developing Advocacy Skills
- Getting Your Message Across (Making effective presentations)
- What Did We Learn?

At the completion of the training, participants are awarded certificates in a formal graduation ceremony at the University. This recognition of their accomplishments has been an important part of the program. The graduation underscores the importance of the training to the grandparents, their families and the community. Moreover, in addition to signifying the grandparents' achievements, receiving diplomas at Fordham University in New York further enhances their positions as role models for their own grandchildren. As one grandchild stated, "If grandma can do it, I guess I can to."

Evaluations of the program, in conjunction with the grandparents' self-reports, indicate that the classes have increased their knowledge and skills and that they feel more competent raising their grandchildren. In addition, grandparents report that they

are better able to deal with agencies and programs and to advocate for their own needs. Graduates continue to give presentations to grandparent groups, support groups, schools and other organizations and to take active roles in the community. The impact of the empowerment training is intergenerational; as it further enables the grandparents it contributes to the well being of the grandchildren. Empowering grandparents so that they are better able to fulfill their new roles has ramifications for the whole community.

For more information on the Grandparent Empowerment Program developed by Dr. Carole Cox, Professor, you can contact her at Fordham University. Her e-mail is ccox@fordham.edu. The complete curriculum is available through Springer Publishing, *Empowering Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: A Manual for Group Leaders*.

What Do You Do When A Child Always Says, "No?" Step into the "Neutral Zone"!

By Claire Harrison

Once upon a time...

I accidentally found the "neutral zone." It was some 25 years ago. I was a young mother with a two-year-old from hell who was stubborn to the core. One day, when

she was screaming her opposition at taking a bath, I thought to myself: “This child is a terrible pill.”

A character, then, jumped into my mind—an awful, hateful little girl named Hilda Pilda. When my daughter paused to take a breath, I quickly said in my most dramatic voice, “Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Hilda Pilda who never, ever wanted to take a bath.”

Five minutes and one story later, my daughter was happily playing in her bath and I was sitting on the floor wondering exactly what miracle I had wrought. Today, after telling hundreds of stories to my two daughters and three grandchildren, I call that miracle—stepping into the “neutral zone.”

***What is the “neutral zone”?
A place where...***

Anger, frustration, and fighting get left behind. Here’s how it works:

- You start creating the “neutral zone” when you step back from your own upsetting emotions and decide to defuse a difficult situation with a story.
- A child is a natural-born listener to stories. In fact, researchers who study story-telling say that a

love of stories is universal in human beings and the ability to listen and tell stories begins at age two.

- Children *really* want to hear the story—so much, in fact, that they’re willing to step back from their angry feelings in order to listen.
- The story creates an emotional “neutral zone.” It’s about the difficult situation you and your child are facing, but it’s not about either of you. It’s about a *story* child and a *story* parent.
- The “neutral zone” provides you with a new way to communicate. You get to express your worries through the *story* parent.
- The child gets to yell “No” when the *story* child won’t do what the *story* parent wants,
- The child gets to say, “Yes” when the *story* child figures out the consequences of an inappropriate choice and agrees to do the right thing.
- By the time the story is over—3-5 minutes at most—you have a happy, agreeable child, a positive ending, and an enriching family experience.

Is it that simple? Yes. And what’s more...

Have you ever heard a toddler or preschooler say, “I’m sorry for what I did. I apologize and I’ll never do it again”? Of course not.

Children get into difficult situations and don’t know how to get out of them. They’re just too young to have the social skills. But that doesn’t mean they don’t want a way out. They do but, just like you, they don’t want to lose “face.”

Stories allow you to “negotiate” with a child in a non-threatening and pleasurable way. You have the story-telling resources, and a child has the hunger for words and a powerful imagination that allows him/her to “experience” the story. And the more stories you tell to defuse situations, the more accustomed a child gets to your new method of “negotiating.” Pretty soon, all you need to say is “Would you like to hear a story about the time that...?” and the child will settle down to listen!

Claire Harrison is the President of “Once Upon a Time, Inc.,” More information on her work can be found on her website:

www.onceuponatime.com

**GENERATIONS UNITED
UPDATE**
By Brent Elrod

Generations United, a national membership organization focused on

improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies, has had a busy and wonderful 2005. From launching GU's i-PATH, our new and improved website, to convening our "best-attended" 13th International Conference, including co-sponsoring the 2nd National GrandRally, to launching new initiatives promoting shared sites and environmental health, it's been a great year in advancing inter-generational awareness and action. We've worked with our partners to generate momentum at the national level on a number of fronts, including subsidized guardianship, kinship navigator programs, affordable housing, intergenerational shared sites, and seniors in support of quality pre-kindergarten.

Among the publications GU released in 2005 are:

- Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children: The 2nd Intergenerational Action Agenda;
- GU's Public Policy Agenda for the 109th Congress;
- An Action Agenda to Create Affordable Housing Opportunities; and
- Grand Voices for America's Children:

New Perspectives on Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children.

The latter publication includes the results of focus group research conducted to determine the most effective messages to promote awareness and understanding of relative-headed families among the general public. Each of these publications is free for download at GU's i-PATH (Intergenerational Programs, Actions, Technologies, and How-To), www.gu.org.

RAPP Reporter readers may also visit i-PATH to download PowerPoint slides and handouts from GU's International Conference. This event featured a wonderful array of speakers (many from state and local RAPPs), including grandparent caregivers, teens raised by relatives, and longtime advocates working in the field. Janet Sainer, esteemed Brookdale consultant and long-time friend to GU, chaired a panel discussion, and also helped convene a conference luncheon entitled "Uniting Generations from Pre-K to Social Security."

In addition to co-sponsoring the National GrandRally, GU actively promoted intergenerational issues leading up to the December 2005 White House Conference on Aging. The WHCoA occurs once every

ten years, helping set national aging policy for the next decade. GU's Executive Director, Donna Butts, is honored to be named as an at-large delegate to the event and invites readers to join with GU in charting the intergenerational progress of supports and services for grandfamilies at the conference and beyond. Add your voice to GU's intergenerational resolutions by visiting <http://www.gu.org/White881283.asp>.

AARP UPDATE

By Magaret Biscarr

AARP led efforts in 2005 to update the State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children. The revised fact sheets are available for download on AARP's website: <http://www.aarp.org/research/family/grandparenting/aresearch-import-488.html>, as well as on the websites of all of the national partners who have worked to develop and maintain the fact sheets, including the Brookdale Foundation, Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support, Children's Defense Fund, Child Welfare League of America, and Generations United.

These state fact sheets continue to be a tremendous resource for grandparent and other relative caregivers as they seek supportive programs and services in

their local communities. Included in the state fact sheets are:

- Census data on the numbers of grandparent caregivers and the children they are raising;
- A comprehensive list of local programs, resources and services;
- State foster care policies for kinship (grandparent and other relative) caregivers;
- Information about key public benefit programs;
- Important state laws; and
- A list and contact information for national organizations that may be of help.

Also new from the AARP Grandparent Information

Center is a *Guide to Public Benefits for Grandfamilies*.

This new guide includes information about a host of cash assistance, health, nutrition, and tax credit programs that can help grandparents and other relatives raising children. You can order this publication, free of charge, by writing to:

AARP Fulfillment
601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC
20049

Include in your request the stock number D18354 and the total number of guides you would like to receive. Visit the AARP Grandparent Information Center website at www.aarp.org/grandparents for more information, articles, publications, and other resources for grandparents and other relatives raising children.

ADMINISTRATION ON AGING

The Young Caregivers Report has recently been released. You can access a copy of it by visiting the following link:
<http://www.caregiving.org/data/youngcaregivers.pdf>.

THE CENSUS BUREAU

Kenneth Bryson has compiled information on the counties affected by Hurricane Katrina. The information is enclosed.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

N4a's 31st Annual Conference & Tradeshow, "Shaping Communities for a Maturing America," will be held August 6-10, 2006 at the Fairmont Hotel in Chicago Illinois. For more information, please visit their website, www.n4a.org

**Pending Legislation that Offers Special Assistance
for Children Being Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives
Children's Defense Fund**

In both the Senate and House of Representatives, bills are pending that would help relative caregivers provide permanent homes for the children in their care. Some of the assistance would be available to a broad group of children being raised by relative caregivers, while other help would be available only to children in foster care whose relatives are legal guardians. Differences between the various bills are described in the attached table. Highlights of the individual bills are summarized briefly below.

The **Kinship Caregiver Support Act (S. 985)**, a bill with bipartisan support, reaches children living with relative caregivers both in and out of foster care. It would establish a Kinship Navigator Program to help link children in relative care to the services and assistance for which they are eligible. It also establishes a Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program that will allow states to use federal funds to enable relative caregivers who are legal guardians and want to care permanently for children who are in foster care to do so. The bill also includes two provisions that will make it easier for relatives to know when children are about to enter foster care and to be licensed as foster parents, if placement becomes necessary.

The **Guardianship Assistance and Promotion and Kinship Support Act (H.R. 3380)** also reaches children living with relative caregivers whether in or out of foster care. It would establish a Kinship Navigator Program to help caregivers get the assistance they need to the children in their care. It also establishes a Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program, which has a broader reach than the Senate bill or the House bill described below. The new federal assistance could be used for relatives and non-relatives who care for children in foster care. It requires notification of relatives when a child enters foster care and permits separate licensing standards for relative and non-relative homes, provide child safety is assured. It also makes older youths who leave foster care to live with relatives who are legal guardians eligible to receive independent living services, including education and training vouchers for higher education.

The **Leave No Abused or Neglected Child Behind Act (H.R. 3576)** includes two important provisions for relative caregivers and the children they are raising, within a broader set of reforms designed to make improvements in the public child welfare system. It allows states to use federal dollars for Kinship Guardianship Assistance payments and also permits states to establish separate licensing standards for relative and non-relative foster parents, provided both standards assure the safety of the children. It expands funding for services to keep children safely with their families. It also provides funding to improve the quality of services and promote permanence for children already in foster care. Finally, it gives states funds to enhance the quality of the child welfare workforce.

September 2005

Current Legislation that Offers Special Assistance for Children Being Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives

Jaia Peterson, Public Policy Director, Generations United

National Family Caregiver Support Act

- Designed to provide support services to informal family caregivers providing care to older relatives with serious illness or disability;
- Signed into law as part of reauthorization of Older Americans Act in November, 2000;
- Includes grandparents and older relatives raising children, related to a child by blood or marriage who are 60 years of age or older, live with the child and are their primary caregiver, with or without a legal relationship;
- Services under the Act include *information about available services; assistance in gaining access to services; organization of support groups and caregiver training; respite care; and supplemental services to complement the care provided by caregiver;*
- States have the *option* to use 10% of the funds under the Act to provide services to grandparents and other relatives raising children;
- Services are provided by Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) or those with whom they contract.

Pending Action on the National Family Caregiver Support Act

- The National Family Caregiver Support Act is up for reauthorization this year as part of the Older Americans Act.
- This means that Congress has an opportunity to make changes to the way the law is written. It also provides an opportunity for individuals affected by the National Family Caregiver Support Program to educate their members of Congress about ways to improve the program.
- One of the issues that Congress may consider is whether to lower the age limit for grandparents and other relatives raising children to qualify for the program. Currently only 29% of grandparents raising grandchildren are over 60 and qualify. If the age limit were lowered to 55, nearly half of grandparents raising grandchildren would be eligible for services.

LEGACY: Living Equitably – Grandparents Aiding Children & Youth Act

- Signed into law in December, 2003 as part of the American Dream Downpayment bill. The Act provides for:
 - ✓ the creation of national demonstration projects with the Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Section 202 elderly housing program to develop housing specifically for grandparents raising their grandchildren;
 - ✓ the completion of a national study of the housing needs of grandparents raising grandchildren; and
 - ✓ specialized training, education and outreach to HUD personnel regarding legal issues confronted by grandparent and other relative-headed families.

Pending Action on LEGACY:

- Although LEGACY was signed into law in 2003, HUD has not taken significant steps to implement the program.
- HUD officials have told advocates that a specific appropriation (or earmark) for LEGACY is required to in order for them to implement its provisions.

Tips for Planning a State GrandRally

The Children's Defense Fund

Planning and holding a GrandRally in your state capital will educate policy makers and the broader public about the issues facing grandparents and other relatives who are raising children, and what needs to be done to help. A rally will assist in building and strengthening state relative caregiver networks – statewide partnerships of individuals and organizations that can come together in an organized way to bring about changes for children and families. You may want to start small and then build on the momentum each year. Or you may already be doing something that you can build upon. We hope these tips are helpful!

- ◆ Form a GrandRally planning committee that meets weekly either in person or by telephone.
- ◆ Contact city and state-wide organizations helping relative caregiver families about the GrandRally and request their involvement on the planning committee.
- ◆ Map out a plan that makes clear the purpose of the GrandRally, sets goals for the number of participants, identifies potential co-sponsors, and lays out a timeline and a budget.
- ◆ Begin working to get commitments and raise funds if necessary.
- ◆ Spread the word about the event. Send emails and mailings. Make personal telephone calls to caregiver networks throughout the state. Design flyers for networks to share in their communities. Contact churches, senior centers and support groups.
- ◆ Decide on your overall message. Prepare data and other materials to back it up, including stories.
- ◆ Invite state legislators, judges and other key supporters to the GrandRally.
- ◆ Designate leaders in various parts of the state who can assist in getting people to the rally.
- ◆ Keep track of who is coming.
- ◆ Secure permits for the day of your event, if they are required.
- ◆ Send regular updates to your network and continue to advertise the event.
- ◆ Develop a program and decide on speakers for the GrandRally.
- ◆ Prepare logistics for the day of the rally. Arrange for meals, chairs, tables, microphones, first aid and bathroom facilities. Don't forget the balloons!!
- ◆ Work with a media person to help develop your message, send out press releases and arrange interviews with grandparents and other relatives raising children.
- ◆ Arrange for press on the day of the rally, prepare press packets, and have staff there to assist them.
- ◆ Have plenty of volunteers to help on the day of the event.
- ◆ Have a wonderful GrandRally!!
- ◆ Thanks to everyone who helped and participated.
- ◆ Get started on your next steps!


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Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data

Result contains 60 rows.

	PCT008001	PCT008002	PCT008003
	Population 30 years and over in households: Total	Population 30 years and over in households: Living with own grandchildren under 18 years	Population 30 years and over in households: Living with own grandchildren under 18 years; Grandparent responsible for own grandchildren under 18 years
Baldwin County, Alabama	86,190	2,360	1,291
Mobile County, Alabama	219,518	11,416	6,531
Washington County, Alabama	10,045	473	317
Acadia Parish, Louisiana	31,459	1,381	863
Ascension Parish, Louisiana	40,537	1,867	1,032
Assumption Parish, Louisiana	12,864	826	468
Beauregard Parish, Louisiana	18,188	635	449
Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana	100,089	4,401	2,565
Cameron Parish, Louisiana	5,602	287	85
East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana	211,348	9,987	5,006
East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana	10,320	692	406
Iberia Parish, Louisiana	38,483	2,443	1,315
Iberville Parish, Louisiana	16,609	1,350	772
Jefferson Parish, Louisiana	264,460	12,476	5,922
Jefferson Davis Parish, Louisiana	17,167	826	447
Lafayette Parish, Louisiana	99,755	3,256	1,762
Lafourche Parish, Louisiana	49,700	2,143	871
Livingston Parish, Louisiana	49,647	2,239	1,227
Orleans Parish, Louisiana	255,218	17,338	9,478
Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana	14,444	858	436
Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana	13,062	777	458
St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana	39,191	1,777	832
St. Charles Parish, Louisiana	26,459	1,244	546
St. Helena Parish, Louisiana	5,885	463	332
St. James Parish, Louisiana	11,545	742	323
St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana	22,490	1,663	794
St. Landry Parish, Louisiana	47,706	2,437	1,437
St. Martin Parish, Louisiana	25,940	1,221	678
St. Mary Parish, Louisiana	29,429	1,637	915
St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana	111,254	3,536	1,667
Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana	61,938	2,877	1,733

Custom Table - American FactFinder

Page 2 of 2

	PCT008001	PCT008002	PCT008003
	Population 30 years and over in households: Total	Population 30 years and over in households: Living with own grandchildren under 18 years	Population 30 years and over in households: Living with own grandchildren under 18 years; Grandparent responsible for own grandchildren under 18 years
Louisiana			
Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana	55,648	3,359	1,799
Vermilion Parish, Louisiana	29,782	1,142	560
Washington Parish, Louisiana	24,153	1,405	821
West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana	11,664	645	367
West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana	5,630	315	219
Amite County, Mississippi	8,166	441	276
Forrest County, Mississippi	34,549	1,721	1,008
George County, Mississippi	10,249	458	198
Greene County, Mississippi	6,034	261	168
Hancock County, Mississippi	26,124	1,097	592
Harrison County, Mississippi	102,887	4,615	2,543
Jackson County, Mississippi	73,405	3,779	2,210
Lamar County, Mississippi	20,730	715	344
Marion County, Mississippi	13,992	873	561
Pearl River County, Mississippi	27,755	1,251	703
Perry County, Mississippi	6,532	468	308
Pike County, Mississippi	21,452	1,396	786
Stone County, Mississippi	7,213	410	215
Walthall County, Mississippi	8,310	578	336
Wilkinson County, Mississippi	5,317	435	300
Chambers County, Texas	14,728	664	353
Galveston County, Texas	143,461	6,641	3,400
Hardin County, Texas	27,497	865	570
Jasper County, Texas	20,655	948	560
Jefferson County, Texas	135,542	6,570	3,390
Liberty County, Texas	36,039	1,762	1,043
Newton County, Texas	8,545	401	274
Orange County, Texas	48,413	2,092	1,175
Tyler County, Texas	12,054	577	380

NOTE: A hyphen (-) indicates that data are not available for this geographic area for the selected data element (column) in your custom table. Please consult the Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data Technical Documentation (PDF 6.92MB) for more information.