

RAPP REPORTER

Fall 2007

A Newsletter of the Brookdale Foundation Group

In Memory of Janet Sainer

On June 4, 2007, the RAPP family lost Janet Sainer, a dear friend, advocate and mentor. Janet introduced the issue of grandparents and other relative caregivers to the Foundation, which led to the creation of the Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP). RAPP provides comprehensive, quality services to relative caregivers and their families in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Janet was a zealous advocate for the elderly and a leader in the field of aging for almost 50 years. Here is a brief history of some of her many accomplishments:

In 1978, Janet was appointed Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Aging, the country's largest area agency, by Mayor Edward I. Koch. She led the Department for 12 years. Under her leadership, Janet introduced the health promotion unit, which educates the elderly on disease prevention, opened an Alzheimer's Unit, which offers education about the disease and

provides support to caregivers, and worked with Citymeals-on-

believed they would volunteer if given the opportunity. The program, now known as the national Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), uses volunteers, who must be at least 55 years of age, to provide community services in hundreds of ways, such as tutoring children, participating in neighborhood watch programs, building houses, planting community gardens and offering relief services to victims of natural disasters.

This edition of the RAPP Reporter is dedicated to Janet.

Her drive, wisdom, sincere interest in RAPPs and in her colleagues will never be forgotten. In honor of her, the RAPP Network will continue to work diligently on behalf of relative caregiver families across the country.

Thank you Janet!

In Loving Memory of Janet Sainer



Wheels to ensure the delivery of nutritious meals to the homebound elderly.

Early in her career, while with the Community Service Society, Janet developed a pilot project called SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement by Volunteer Experience), using senior volunteers. She encouraged their participation because she

RAPP Update

The RAPP Network continues to grow. The Local RAPP Initiative seeks non-profit organizations interested in creating a support, educational or social group or expanding supportive services to relative caregivers and their families in a specific community; our Regional Initiative seeks non-profit organizations, with experience providing services to relative caregivers, to create and expand groups and supportive services to relative caregiver families in a specific region; and our RAPP State Initiative, provides state leadership on issues faced by this special population. Our Request for Proposals will be on our website in October. We encourage programs from across the country to apply!

During this past year, we were pleased to collaborate with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) and their CEO, Sandy Markwood, on a publication, “Promising Practices in Encouraging &

Supporting Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children.”

Many older adults are the primary caregivers of related

must provide responsive services and supports. It is our hope that the guidebook, written by RAPP Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) who are

providing comprehensive services to relative caregivers, will help other AAAs provide services to this very special population directly, or through collaborations with other programs, like RAPPs, that are already providing services to relative caregiver families.

“Promising Practices in Encouraging & Supporting Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children,” provides examples of replicable programmatic initiatives and is available for download on our website, www.brookdalefoundation.org.

Our RAPP Funding Alert can be found on page 3 of this issue of the Reporter. More information on the RFP is also available on our website.

In this issue, RAPP Initiative Highlights:

- RAPP Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) provide comprehensive services to relative caregivers:
 - ✓ Texoma AAA
 - ✓ Central Illinois AAA
 - ✓ Washington State AAAs
- Regional RAPPs help create and expand support groups and services for caregivers and their families:
 - ✓ The University of Maine Center on Aging
 - ✓ Philadelphia Society for Services to Children
- RAPP Mental Health Programs:
 - ✓ Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
 - ✓ Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC)
- RAPP State Initiatives:
 - ✓ Montana State University Extension
 - ✓ Virginia State’s Task Force and Information Network
- RAPP Mentoring Programs:
 - ✓ Kinship Kare of Northern Arizona’s Grandparent Mentor Program
 - ✓ Upper Cumberland Development District’s MaTCH Mentoring Program; and
- The RAPP Funding Alert!

Also Inside:

- An Interview with LeAnn Thieman, Co-Author, Chicken Soup for the Soul
- Help Relative Caregivers get more tax \$\$\$!
- A Legislative Update
- The RAPP- Cooperative Extension Connection
- Tips for Educating Policymakers; and
- Relative Caregiver Resources

children. In order to adequately respond to their needs, AAAs

We welcome applications from AAAs who are interested in joining us in our mission of providing quality, comprehensive and replicable services to grandparents and other relatives who are the primary caregivers of children.

We have asked a few of our RAPP AAAs to share with our readers some of the ways they have responded to the needs of the older adults they serve who are raising children. This Reporter features those articles.

Providing Comprehensive Services to Relative Caregiver Families

Judy Conner, RAPP Facilitator
Texoma Area Agency on Aging

Two things are realized when grandparents and other relative caregivers assume primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren or relative children:

- they often lack information about the resources and supportive services they will need to fulfill their basic caregiving effort and also need help understanding how to

manage the emotional trauma experienced by the entire family; and

- children are not living

therapy, special education, attention to emotional problems and, in many cases, medical attention. In the Texoma area, there are three main challenges

the participants in our program face, 1) fixed incomes, 2) lack of transportation/cost of gasoline; and 3) mental and physical health issues.

The Brookdale Foundation provided the initial funds to begin our kinship program with first and second year funding. Those two years have given us the time needed to, 1) establish our program, 2) build supports, 3) expand our program; and 4) develop and maintain a strong fundraiser to enable the program to continue after the seed money was gone (see the "Fundraiser" section of this article). The following is a summary of the services provided to our relative caregivers:

Benefits

- Benefit counselors are available, for one-on-one counseling and assessment, through the

FUNDING ALERT!

We are pleased to announce the Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP) Local, Regional and State Seed Grant Initiatives for the year 2008.

Local, Regional and State 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.

Deadlines: Local and Regional proposals: **Thursday, January 10, 2008.** State proposals: **Thursday, February 7, 2008.**

Selected applicants will be notified in April and be invited and required to attend our National Orientation and Training Conference in Columbia, South Carolina, May 16-18, 2008.

Copies of the Local, Regional and State RFP guidelines and application forms may be downloaded directly from the Foundation's website, www.brookdalefoundation.org in October, 2007.

with relatives because of happy circumstances and, usually, not by choice.

The Grandparents/Relatives as Parents Program of Texoma focuses on meeting the multiple needs of the family. Homes are opened to children who need not only food and clothing, but

Area Agency on Aging of Texoma, where our office is located. Initial contact ensures that grandparents are enrolled in all available public benefits such as TANF/child-only grant, Medicaid insurance for the child and Food Stamps. Benefits counseling is an important service to caregivers as it is difficult for the grandparents to embrace other resources and available programs without first meeting the family's basic need for food and clothing.

- Financial assistance is available to help with utility bills, gasoline/transportation costs, and other expenses on an individual basis using funds from the Caregiver Celebration Walk (see Fundraiser).
- Financial assistance is also available, using funds from the Caregiver Celebration Walk, to help with respite care if the grandparent or other relative is also caregiver to an ill or disabled spouse, parent or relative.

Support Groups

- Our support groups provide a safe place for grandparents and other relatives to speak freely

of their frustrations, anger, resentment, guilt, shame, embarrassment and their fear of not being able to raise the children properly. We began with one support group, held during the day, and have now expanded. During the 2007 school year, we will be conducting a total of 5 support groups – day and evening. We have partnered with local area schools and school counselors who not only help contact the grandparents and other relatives, but who also help facilitate the groups.

- We have peer counselors, who are members of our RAPP group, who have been a part of the program for a while and who are now in a position to act as mentors or coaches for the new members of the group. They provide encouragement, support and instruction on meeting the challenges of the situation – “I did it! So can you!”
- We provide the services of a Play Therapist or Children's Counselor for the summer months, if needed. The children have a safe, learning environment while the grandparents and other

relatives, who could not have otherwise done so, attend our support group.

Counseling

- Mental Wellness workshops, taught by licensed professional counselors, give grandparents and other relatives the in-depth counseling that is needed to overcome mental health issues and to help give caregivers the strength to overcome the challenges life has presented them.
- Pro bono counseling, including family counseling, is provided by a licensed professional counselor for everyone in our program.

Education

- Educational workshops, on a variety of topics, provide ongoing encouragement and information to grandparents and their families. According to Tim Dungan, Home Instead Senior Care (www.homeinstead.com), the number one concern for people aged 65+ today is outliving their assets. The second is maintaining their independence and the third is their health and safety. We try to address

these issues in our workshops.

- “Partners in Education” are seminars held as a result of collaborations between our program and local hospitals, physicians, businesses, social services and agencies. The goal is to provide health and wellness education and counsel to the community. Assistance includes helping those who are unable to obtain prescription medication.
- Referrals are made to a local college for information on grants available to children and caregivers interested in attending college for a degree or technical vocation.
- Attorneys provide legal assistance to the participants in our program pro bono and/or at reduced rates.
- Pharmaceutical companies have provided donations to establish a Library & Resource Center within the Area Agency on Aging of Texoma for caregivers. Available for research are books, DVDs/Videos, TV, DVD/Video Player and a computer with internet access.

Cultural Recreation

Traditionally, grandparents have fun with the grandchildren, then send them home to the parents. When grandparents are parents, both they and the grandchildren must learn how to be together 24/7. Grandparents are now the disciplinarian, but that does not mean they cannot have fun times together. Inter-generational activities help caregivers and children enjoy fun times together. Here are some examples:

- The local Children’s Theater provides free admission on rehearsal night to all children and the grandparents and relatives raising them, as well as scholarships, for Drama Workshops, for children of all ages who can then audition for parts in various plays. This theater outing is a cultural event that young and old can enjoy together.
- A Youth Activity Guide of events, programs and camps in the area for children ages birth to eighteen is developed each year. Some camp scholarships are available. The book is provided to our program, free of charge, by the 2-1-1 program of the Area Agency on Aging of Texoma.

- School supplies and other items are purchased by the Caregiver Program for children in school who are being raised by their grandparents and other relatives.

Fundraiser

At the very first RAPP conference I attended, one of the speakers was telling our group of the great fundraisers their program had developed and maintained. Each one sounded great for them, but for our area and community, they could not work. As if she had read my mind, she said something to the effect of, “These ideas may not work for every area. You must look for that opportunity that is unique for your community.” That stayed with me!

In the fall of 2006, certain events happened that provided the perfect opportunity to combine all caregiver programs into the 1st Annual Caregiver Celebration Walk! That first walk raised \$25,000 in cash and in-kind donations. The only stipulation on the spending of the money was that it must be spent on caregivers!

In order to accomplish the fundraiser, community leaders must be involved who have strong vision and leadership for collaborations and partnerships. Every community is unique. We must: 1) get a vision of what will work in our community;

2) identify community leaders; 3) build rapport with community leaders; 4) exhibit passion - it ignites others; 5) use existing structures and opportunities; and 6) create new structures and opportunities, if necessary!

Success can be measured by asking this question of our programs, "Are lives, adults and children, being changed for the better by the services our program provides?"

AAAs can, indeed, make a difference in the lives of the older adults we serve who are the primary caregivers of children!

Judy Conner is RAPP Coordinator for the Texoma AAA. For more information on their RAPP services, contact Judy at: jconner@texoma.cog.tx.us.

The Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging Responds to the Needs of Relative Caregiver Families

Joanne Thomas, Executive Director, Central Illinois Agency on Aging

Central Illinois Agency on Aging (CIAA) is one of thirteen area agencies in the state that provides services to seniors 60 and older, their caregivers and grandparents 55 and older raising their grandchildren. We are a private, not-for-profit agency that serves Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Marshall, Stark and Fulton Counties. The Agency receives federal, state

and private funds to administer its numerous programs. In the city of Peoria, there are 2,222 grandparents living with their grandchildren with 39.6% still working (2005 American Community Survey).

Central Illinois Agency on Aging (CIAA) saw, very early, a need in the community to provide support to grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren. In 1996, through a grant from the Brookdale Foundation, the GRG/RAPP was developed. Through many and varied partnerships over the years, CIAA has maintained a viable program with supportive services including support groups, mental health counseling, legal services, health services, income and food assistance, child care and respite.

Over the years, the collaborations and partnerships that sets the Brookdale Foundation's RAPP Network apart from others, have allowed us to create and expand services for grandparents and other relatives raising children.

The connection with Bradley University's Master's in Counseling Program is an example of one of our collaborative partnerships. The Bradley University partnership paved the way to expanded caregiver mental health services to caregivers, of a variety of care recipients, through the National Family

Caregiver Support Program. Partnerships have also enabled CIAA to serve grandparents under the age requirements of the Older Americans Act funding through the use of the Illinois Department on Aging's State General Revenue Funds (The Illinois Department on Aging is a Brookdale State RAPP).

With each year of operation, the collaborative approaches to resource development and service delivery brings new opportunities for partnerships.

Recently, CIAA was chosen to work with the Greater Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce's Community Leadership School to develop a workshop for grandparents that covered such topics as how to talk to your child's teacher; the legal aspects of custody and adoption; recognizing when gang involvement is a threat to grandchildren; and stress management. This private sector involvement has increased local business awareness and support for grandparents who work and opened the door for increased financial and in-kind support for services. Upcoming private sector projects in development include collaborations with the Junior League of Peoria and Caterpillar HSD.

Public sector development includes working with Peoria School District 150 on a model project involving the

Community Schools Program, a partnership with the Peoria Workforce Investment Board and the Community Builders Foundation. This new effort will address literacy needs of grandparents to enhance their ability to affect the educational outcomes of their children; create a joint computer learning program for grandparents and grandchildren; and offer after school tutoring for grandchildren.

Given the increased use of methamphetamines and, in the Midwest especially, the weight loss among girls 15-17 years, partnering with local addiction programs to address the use of methamphetamines among school-age children has also become a priority. Our goal is a high profile conference in spring 2008 using the theme "Meth and Our Children: What Every Family Needs to Know!"

We are pleased that refinements to the National Family Caregiver Support Program have made these services and funds available to a younger segment of grandparent caregivers. We recognize that the funding is not sufficient to meet the needs and that growing the base for all caregivers is essential to further program development. As we continue to work toward this outcome, the Brookdale Foundation has given us a strong collaborative model that encourages public and private partnerships to increase resources at the local

and state levels in order to meet the needs of relative caregiver families.

For more information on Central Illinois Agency on Aging, Inc., please contact Joanne Thomas, Executive Director at jthomas@ciaoa.com or Cathi Sipes, Family Caregiver Information and Assistance Manager, at cathi@ciaoa.com. More information can also be found on their website: www.ciaoa.com.

**Washington State Area
Agencies on Aging
Provide Support to
Relatives Raising Children**

Hilari Hauptman, RAPP State
Coordinator

Washington State is proud to be a member of the Brookdale RAPP Family since 1998. Ten RAPP grants have been given to both local and state projects over the last 10 years which have helped fuel activities, supportive services, new networks and legislative changes. This article will highlight examples of what several (of 13) Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) have been doing to provide greater support for grandparents and relatives raising children in Washington State.

The following example illustrates how AAAs and kinship care providers can work hand in hand to respond to the needs of relative caregivers and their families:

**Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area
Agency on Aging**

In Olympia, Washington, the Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging (LMTAAA) Family Caregiver Assistance Specialist referred a 70 year old grandmother to the local kinship care provider, Child Care and Educational Services (CCES). The Kinship program coordinator invited the grandmother to come to the kinship holiday party at the Children's Museum that night, where she could complete an application for the Kinship Caregivers Support Program (KCSP). This program, which receives a state funded annual budget of \$1 million dollars, is an emergent need fund for kinship caregivers. The grandmother was caring for her 12 year old grandson, placed in foster care when he was born, due to his mother's use of methamphetamines. She has informal custody of the boy, who came to live with her when he was six months old. Her income is very limited, with \$761 per month from Social Security and a part-time job as a waitress. The grandmother and grandson were living in a motel because they had been evicted from her home. Her most emergent need was housing. She has a history of cancer and had recently had two strokes. She had been home from the hospital for one day from her latest stroke and felt a

little tired, but needed to work a shift at the restaurant to pay for the hotel room so they would have a place to live during Christmas. KCSP was able to pay for one week at the hotel, and the hotel matched that week with another week. The following day, the grandmother went to apply for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and medical coverage for her grandson. With help from the Family Caregiver Support Program staff at the LMTAAA, they were able to qualify for low income housing through the Housing Authority. LMTAAA was also able to provide funds for the cost of the deposit through the agency's Special Assistance Fund. KCSP covered the cost of the application and first month's rent. As a result of the collaboration between the AAA and the local kinship program, the grandmother and grandson were able to move into their own apartment on January 5, 2007!

The Lewis-Mason-Thurston AAA, also, in partnership with its local kinship service providers, offered the following innovative strategies to relative caregiver families:

- In collaboration with the Centralia Community College and Child Care and Educational Services, the kinship provider, a support group, *Grandparents as*

Parents Education and Support Group, meets twice a month in Lewis County (a very rural county). College credit is offered to interested participants at no cost. Relatives appreciate this additional benefit!

- Through the Family Support Center in Olympia, a relatives support group (which continued for six years until last year) initiated the "Kin Pal" program, in which the children developed pen-pal relationships with other children, cared for by relatives, in Columbus, Ohio. This program was developed when the facilitator was contacted by the group leader of a support group in Ohio, looking for ideas for their support group. Many of the caregivers in the local support group reported that their grandkids were having a difficult time, with writing, in school. The Kin Pal Program was created to help the children by having them put their feelings in writing and sharing them with other children being cared for by grandparents and other relatives.

**Aging and Disability Services/
Seattle-King County AAA**

The Aging and Disability Services Area Agency on Aging (ADS AAA) is one of six AAAs who received state funding to operate a Kinship Navigator Program (this is one of two sites established in 2005; four others are developing new sites for fall, 2007). In 2004, Casey Family Programs, in conjunction with the Washington State Kinship Oversight Committee, developed a Kinship Navigator model that, for 18 months, was located in Seattle and Yakima. For information on the program's initial evaluation report and the replication guide developed by Tri-West, go to the Washington State Kinship Care website at: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare/> (under "Professionals" heading).

The AAA works closely with Senior Services of Seattle-King County who sponsors the Kinship Navigator Program. They have a full-time Navigator and three back up Family Caregiver Specialists who are all kept very busy helping relatives find the critical resources they need while providing them with a compassionate ear.

The ADS AAA also developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2005 to select three community organizations that could best provide a variety of services to relatives raising children through the National

Family Caregiver Support Program funded by the Older Americans Act. The selected providers offer regular workshops on issues such as school, health, legal and financial topics. They provide outreach and referral to services, assist with costs associated with summer camp, seed money for holiday celebrations, tutoring assistance and school supplies. The programs also hold therapeutic support groups for kinship caregivers and children's social skills groups, along with an evening meal and some transportation assistance. One of the groups offers its members special activities like a summer picnic, a winter holiday party and pizza and bowling throughout the year.

The ADS AAA is involved in an impressive model called the *King County Kinship Collaboration*, was created, because of interest, at the 2004 King County Kinship Gathering, in creating a collaborative partnership that could respond more comprehensively to the specific needs of kinship families and caregivers. Since August 2005, kinship caregivers and representatives from about 30 different organizations from throughout the county have been laying the groundwork for such a partnership. A truly collaborative initiative, the Kinship Collaboration was spearheaded by Casey Family Programs and is now supported

through four organizations: Casey Family Programs, DSHS/Children's Administration, Senior Services and Aging and Disability Services. In addition to the above, a charter agreement was developed and signed by twelve lead organizations.

About 25 individuals—a mix of caregivers and staff from a diverse group of agencies—comprise the Collaboration's full group, which meets to network and help build on the Collaboration's work. In addition, an Advisory Council of caregivers drives the activities and direction of the group. Executives from each lead organization join with kinship caregivers to make up a Steering Committee of the Collaboration, whose job it is to provide resources and administrative guidance.

Since its inception in the fall of 2005, the King County Kinship Collaboration has:

- Completed a comprehensive review of the strengths and challenges of current services in King County;
- Defined its mission, vision and values and identified ideal qualities for supporting kinship care families;
- Reviewed successful collaborative models serving kinship care providers in Tucson, San Francisco and Los Angeles

to see what can be learned from them;

- Developed a charter agreement between 12 lead agencies to support the planning and work of the Collaboration;
- Identified a model for delivering services to kinship families throughout King County;
- Hired a full-time Project Coordinator; and
- Developed a brochure, for the public, that identifies ten sites where relatives can call to connect with services, resources, referrals and information.

Questions or comments about this Collaboration, can be addressed to the Project Coordinator, Barb Wiley at (206) 268-6785 or through email at barbaraw@seniorservices.org.

Pierce County Aging & Long Term Care AAA

The Pierce County AAA has been linked to kinship care activities for many years. For the past four years they have supported the Relatives Raising Children Summer Youth Activities Program by providing \$15,000 (through the National Family Caregiver Support program). This program was developed by the Pierce County Relatives Raising Children Program, sponsored by Child and Family Guidance Center. Edith Owen, a long time RAPP member (since '97) developed

and runs the program which creates summer respite opportunities for relatives while offering children of all ages fun and meaningful camp experiences. The fifty children who participate each summer have over 100 different camp opportunities to choose from including day camps, sports camps, special needs camps, resident camps and camps for children attending summer school.

A camper who participates in the program recently wrote:

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to thank you for paying for my camp. Even though it rained every day, I loved camp. I would not have been able to go to camp if you hadn't been able to pay for me. I hope the program is continued in the future years so that I can enjoy these wonderful camps every year. Thank you so much. (Signed, a youngster being raised by a grandma and grandpa)

The Pierce County Relatives Raising Children Program, with support from the AAA, also sponsors a popular annual all-day conference and provides counseling services for both children and relative caregivers. Edith has been particularly successful in gaining the support of non-traditional community agencies, including the county's juvenile court and a men's prison, to

assist with mailings and designing a kinship engraved wood gift for relatives.

For more information on the program, contact Edith Owen, Coordinator, at 253-565-4484 ext.105 or edith@cfgcpc.org.

Native Kinship Care Initiative

In 2003, Washington State received a second grant from the Brookdale Foundation to develop, in collaboration with two AAAs; Northwest Regional Council and the Olympic AAA and two staff, Sharon Wolf and Sheryl Lowe, who are tribally affiliated, a new Native Kinship Care Initiative. Resources and events were developed to help provide needed information to members of 11 tribes.

Activities have included training and guidance, about the success of their exemplary model, from the Founder and former coordinator of the Native American Kinship Care Program (NAKCP), funded by Casey Family Programs; surveying Native kinship caregivers regarding their need for services and resources; developing three one-day Native Kinship Care trainings and gatherings that recognized and honored the care provided by relative caregivers and provided critical information on topics such as legal issues, Indian Child Welfare Act, grief and loss, support groups, nutrition, family group conferencing and other important issues.

Sharon Wolf created a tribally focused Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource Guide which was disseminated at trainings and through the mail both in and outside of Washington State. Currently, in the Northwest AAA service area, Eythl Warbus, who is the new Coordinator of the program, is working with other tribal partners to start a support group on the tribal lands of Nooksack and Lummi. The group is in the planning stages and working to form a group of grandparents/relatives from each of these 11 tribes. Sheryl Lowe is currently working with Washington State University Extension Services to sponsor a "Parenting the Second Time Around," (PASTA) facilitator training in October 2007. The training will be for staff and caregivers of local tribes on the Olympic Peninsular who are interested in providing classes based on this curriculum (For information on the PASTA training curriculum, please see the resource section of this Reporter).

For information on WA State's RAPP initiatives contact: Hilari Hauptman at: 1-800-422-3263 or at haupthp@dshs.wa.gov.

A Legislative Update

Jaia Peterson Lent, Generations United

Kinship Caregiver Support Act

The Kinship Caregiver Support Act (S. 661, H.R. 2188) would provide a range of supportive services to children being raised by grandparents or other relatives. The bill was recently reintroduced by Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) in the Senate and Representatives Danny K. Davis (D-IL) and Timothy Johnson (R-IL) in the House. Each bill has 16 co-sponsors. Additional support is needed to help raise the visibility of the bill and increase its chances for passage.

Kinship Caregiver Support Act Provisions:

1. Establishes a **Kinship Navigator Program**, which will help link relative caregivers, both inside and outside of the formal child welfare system, to a broad range of services and supports that will help them meet the needs of the children in their care. It also will help agencies more effectively and efficiently serve kinship care families. State or local agencies, agencies serving large metropolitan areas, and Indian tribal organizations or a consortium of tribal

organizations may apply for competitive grants;

2. Establishes a **Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program**, which will give states the option to use federal funds for subsidized guardianship payments to relative caregivers on behalf of the children they are raising in foster care, provided the children are eligible for federal foster care payments. State agencies must take steps to rule out return home or adoption for the children and take other steps to ensure that this placement is the best permanency alternative for the child;
3. Allows states to establish **separate licensing standards for relative foster parents and non-relatives foster parents**, provided both sets of standards protect children and include criminal record checks. This provision recognizes that certain licensing standards for non-relative foster parents, such as requiring a separate bedroom for each child, may not be appropriate for foster parents who are related to the child;

4. Requires state child welfare agencies to **provide notice within 60 days of the removal of a child from the custody of the child's parents, to all adult grandparents and other relatives of the child**, subject to exceptions due to family or domestic violence;
5. **Expands eligibility for the education elements of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program** to include youths exiting from foster care to legal guardianship. This helps current and former foster care youths gain access to higher education through tuition assistance in the form of Education and Training Vouchers (ETV).

The House Ways and Means committee is responsible for reviewing the bill, determining whether or not to make any changes, and deciding whether or not to pass it along to the full House of Representatives to be considered for a vote. This year, the Ways and Means Committee has been showing significant interest in issues related to foster care and child welfare and has been holding hearings to learn more about needed policy changes. In the Senate, both Democratic and Republican leaders of the

Finance Committee, which is responsible for the legislation there, have made statements urging strong consideration of supports like subsidized guardianship to help children leave foster care to permanent homes with relatives. Many advocates are optimistic that some child welfare reforms will pass in the 110th Congress. However, the attention given to this issue continues to compete with other priorities including some that are of significant importance to grandfamilies such as the State Children's Health Insurance Programs.

Educating your legislators makes a difference! Recently, Generations United held a Hill day during their biennial conference where many caregivers and other advocates met with their legislators to talk about the challenges grandfamilies face and to urge support for the Kinship bill. At least 12 additional legislators agreed to co-sponsor the bill following those meetings!

For more information on the Kinship Caregiver Support Act, contact Jaia Peterson Lent at jlent@gu.org or 202-289-3979.

State Children's Health Insurance Programs

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is due to be reauthorized before September 30th this year. SCHIP is the federally subsidized children's health insurance program for children

whose families are too poor to afford private health insurance, but too well-off to qualify for Medicaid. Within broad federal guidelines, each state determines the design of its program, eligibility, benefits and payment levels. The program is known by a different name in each state.

Like many programs, covering everything from food stamps to museums to voting procedures, SCHIP must to be reauthorized every few years if it is to stay in effect. The good news is that both the House and the Senate have passed Bills reauthorizing SCHIP. However, before the Bill can go to the President's desk for his signature or veto, the House and Senate must agree on a single version of the Bill. At the time of writing, during the August lull, legislators were being assigned to the conference committee, who has the task of producing a compromise between the House and Senate versions of the reauthorization.

Both versions include massive funding increases, as well as vastly improved enrollment strategies, designed to cover many more low income kids. House and Senate leadership are confident that they can produce a compromise. But neither is sure that the President will sign. His staff has said that he could veto if the final SCHIP Bill is too expensive.

For more information contact Vicki Bolton, vbolton@gu.org or 202-289-3979

Living Equitably: Grandparents Aiding Children and Youth Act (LEGACY)

In 2003, provisions of the LEGACY intergenerational housing bill were signed into law as part of the American Dream Downpayment Act. The provisions call for a study of the housing needs of grandparents and other relatives raising children; training for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials on issues affecting grandfamilies; and housing demonstration programs designed specifically to support grandfamilies. In 2006, \$4 million in funds were appropriated to implement the Act. Generations United worked with HUD to provide national satellite training to HUD employees on the special housing needs of grandfamilies in May of 2007. HUD is expected to release the study of grandfamilies housing needs and notice of funding availability for the housing demonstrations later this fall.

National Family Caregiver Support Program

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) has been supporting caregivers with information, respite and other services since 2000. The age at which relatives raising children become eligible for the NFCSP was lowered from 60 to

55 when the Older Americans Act was reauthorized last year. In addition, older people who are caring for an adult relative with a disability now also qualify for supportive services. Advocates have requested funding of \$190 million for this important program, an increase of \$32 million on current funding levels, to recognize the need to provide support to newly eligible families, as well as increasing the level of support available to all family caregivers. More than 400,000 grandparents raising grandchildren are newly eligible, along with thousands of older people caring for adult relatives with disabilities. For more information contact Jaia Peterson Lent at jlent@gu.org or 202-289-3979.

Lifespan Respite Care Act

The Lifespan Respite Care Act passed and was signed into law in December, 2006. The Act authorizes competitive grants to states to make quality respite available and accessible to family caregivers, regardless of age, disability, or family situation. The legislation allows grantees to identify, coordinate and build on federal, state and community-based respite resources and funding streams, and would help support, expand and streamline planned and emergency respite, provider recruitment and training, caregiver training, and evaluation.

Unfortunately, funding for Lifespan Respite has not yet been appropriated. The House appropriations bill includes \$10 million for the program, but the Senate version does not.

Advocates are encouraging those who support the program to contact their legislators and urge them to retain the \$10 million for Lifespan Respite Care in the FY08 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations bill.

For more information about the Lifespan Respite Care act visit <http://www.chtop.org/NRC.htm> or contact jbkagan@verizon.net.

Proven Partnerships, Proven Impact: The RAPP-Cooperative Extension Service Connection

Caroline Crocoll, National Program
Leader-Family Science

The Cooperative Extension System is a national, publicly funded, non-formal educational network meeting the need for research and educational programs that enable people to make informed decisions; become self-reliant; improve their quality of life and well-being; and engage fully in the growth and development of their communities. Established in 1914, this unique system is intended to provide a broad segment of the population with practical education that has direct relevance to their daily lives.

The partnership that supports the Cooperative Extension System is a collaborative one

and includes the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) www.csrees.usda.gov an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture www.usda.gov, the 108 land-grant universities (in every state and territory) http://www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinks/partners/state_partners.html and thousands of county and regional Extension offices <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html> throughout the nation.

Extension Educators have a tremendous impact on local communities as well as on state and national efforts. In educating and supporting relatives as parents, the system has taken an active leadership role. We coordinate local and statewide collaborations to develop programs and resources that address the challenges and promote the strengths of grandparents and other relatives raising children. In partnership with the Brookdale Foundation Group's Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP), Cooperative Extension has been designated as a lead organizer, or key partner, in the development of statewide RAPP networks or local RAPP programs around the nation.

These collaborative partnerships ensure that relative caregivers obtain information about available services in a number of ways, including support groups, educational forums and seminars, resource directories,

newsletters, community trainings, local and state conferences, websites, and chat rooms. In many states, Cooperative Extension has developed partnerships with agencies such as State Units and Area Agencies on Aging, AARP, Head Start, Tribal Partners, Social Services, Health and Human Services, Long-Term Care Networks, Departments of Economic Security, Behavioral Health Agencies, and Children's Associations to develop a wide variety of programs and resources that support grandparents and other relatives as they step in to raise children.

Extension Educators have also incorporated relative caregiving into their existing educational programs and activities. As Extension staff became involved with relative caregiving issues over the past decade, they discovered that there were few educational curricula available. To address this gap, states developed research-based resources and programs for use in their communities and partnerships. The publication, "*Cooperative Extension's Educational Response to Relative Caregivers' Needs and Concerns*,"

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/61804readinglist.pdf>, identifies many of these resources. Although this publication is currently being updated, it still serves as a

premier resource for this important work.

Another excellent resource is the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Simulation Workshop <http://ag.arizona.edu/grandparents/southern/workshop.html> from the University of Arizona. The simulation is used by educators and agencies who want to conduct a simulation in their own community to raise awareness and increase actions among agencies to better serve grandparents and other relatives raising children.

Newly funded RAPPs are emerging through the efforts of the University of Missouri Extension- St. Louis County, the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Dutchess County. Regardless of their role in your community or state, Extension Educators are exceptional partners in supporting relative caregivers and their families!

For more information, contact Caroline Crocoll at ccrocoll@csrees.usda.gov.

Caroline E. Crocoll, Ph.D., CFLE, CFCS, NCC is the National Program Leader for Family Science Research and Extension in the USDA/CSREES Families 4-H and Nutrition Unit and is based in Washington, D.C.

Help Relative Caregivers Get More Money to Care for Their Families

Roxy Caines, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

The Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are federal tax credits worth thousands of dollars that reduce taxes and supplement wages. Relative caregivers may not know that they can be eligible to claim these tax credits. Informing grandparents raising grandchildren and other relative caregivers about the EIC and CTC is necessary to ensure eligible workers claim all the tax benefits they've earned.

In 2007, workers can claim an EIC up to \$4,716 if they:

- Earned less than \$37,783 (\$39,783 if married)
- Raised a child under age 19 in their home for more than half the year. (Children can be under age 24 if a full-time student or any age if they have permanent and total disabilities.)
- Have a Social Security number (SSN) that authorizes work. (A spouse and child must also have an SSN that authorizes work.)

In 2007, workers can claim a CTC up to \$1,000 if they:

- Earned *more than* \$11,750
- Raised a child under age 17 in their home for more than half the year

- Have an SSN or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). (A spouse and child are also required to have one of these.)

What else should families know about the EIC and CTC?

- Some families can claim both tax credits.
- Workers who were eligible for the EIC or CTC in the past but did not claim them can claim their refund for up to three previous years.
- The EIC and CTC are not counted as income in determining eligibility for other public benefits, such as cash assistance, food stamps, SSI, Medicaid, or federal housing assistance. The tax credits will not immediately count against asset limits that may apply to these programs.
- Workers in the following states, may be able to claim a state EIC in addition to the federal EIC: DC, DE, IL, IN, IA, KS, MD, ME, MA, MN, NE, NJ, NM, NY, OK, OR, RI, VA, VT, WI. 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.
- 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.

FREE tax filing assistance is available!

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 bilingual outreach materials including color posters, flyers, brochures and envelope stuffers in English and Spanish; facts about the tax credits; strategies to promote them and link workers to free tax filing assistance; and examples of how organizations are involved in outreach efforts. Other outreach materials including flyers in 18 additional languages are also available.

To view the Kit online visit: www.cbpp.org/eic2007. To request a FREE copy of this Tax Credit Outreach Kit or to find organizations in your area that promote the EIC and CTC, contact: *Roxy Caines*, (202) 408-1080 or caines@cbpp.org.

There are several free tax filing assistance programs sponsored by the IRS that can help workers claim tax credits and file forms correctly. Call 1-888-227-7669 to find an AARP Tax-Aide site near you (or visit www.aarp.org/money/taxaide). Or call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 for nearby Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) or Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) sites.

RAPP Online Workshops for Grandfamilies and Professionals

Melissa Adle, RAPP Coordinator

The University of Maine Center on Aging's RAPP recently held a pair of online educational and discussion forums focusing on grandfamilies. The first of the two programs was specifically for grandparents and other relatives raising their relatives' children, and the follow-up program was geared toward professionals working with relative caregiver families. Both

were marketed together and available free of charge. The only computer knowledge needed to participate was the ability to use e-mail and to access the internet periodically throughout the program.

The first workshop, "*Raising the Children and Managing Everyone Else: An E-Conversation for Grandfamilies*," was held in May 2007. It brought together more than 20 grandparents and other relative caregivers from across the country for two days of education, sharing and conversation. An online discussion forum, moderated by experienced facilitators, was held each day from 11am-2pm

EST. Barbara Kates, Director of Maine Kids-Kin, a program of Families and Children Together and a fellow Brookdale RAPP, shared her expertise on issues affecting grandfamilies and resources available to caregivers. Bonny Dodson, LCSW, of Community Health and Counseling Services, provided assistance with addressing clinical and mental health issues.

A list of possible discussion questions was available online for registrants before the course. During the forum, discussion topics were created by the facilitator based upon the needs and interests of the participants. Each topic focused on one theme, such as life changes since caregiving, using sources of support, or managing relationships with children's birth parents. Participants could choose to participate in any or all of the topic areas at any time, via e-mail or the forum website.

The facilitators switched between topic areas to offer suggestions and ask questions of participants. Many caregivers chose to share their personal stories, as well as ask questions and share ideas about what has worked- or not worked- for them. One caregiver ended her participation in the forum by saying, *"Thank you for this great way to connect with other grands across the country. It has been helpful and enjoyable. I would love to hear from anyone that cares to."*

Each evening from 6pm-8pm during the two day event, caregivers were invited to participate in an informal chat that was also facilitated by Bonny and Barbara. The chat was 'live,' which means that questions and comments showed up on the computer screen as soon as they were entered.

Caregivers appreciated the ability to open up about what was going on in their lives with other people who had similar experiences. One caregiver who participated throughout the event commented, *"Thank you for having a most helpful and enjoyable chat from everyone from all over. It was a good way to connect, get ideas and good resource info from different people. If I can help anyone with any info that I have accumulated throughout the years, I would love hearing from you. For those that are new at this--pray, have patience, perseverance, and know that you are not alone."* Although not all grandparents have access to the internet, many are excited about an opportunity to connect with others that fits into their schedule and doesn't require additional travel.

As a follow-up to the May event, professionals working with relative caregivers gathered together online in June, 2007. More than 50 people, representing a variety of professions from across the

country, took part in the two-day workshop, *"Developing and Sustaining Support Groups for Grandfamilies."* Participants were provided with access to reading materials and a resource list online when they registered. The discussion was open from 9am-3pm each day. Participants could join in whenever it was convenient, and the average total time each person participated was about 3 hours throughout the program.

The first morning began with a discussion of the use of collaboration to help begin groups and to strengthen continuing groups. Carol Moore, a Consultant/Storyteller who provides training to nonprofits, schools and universities, facilitated this portion of the workshop. The first afternoon focused on special issues for rural communities. It was facilitated by Sandy Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE, an Associate Professor & Extension Specialist at the Department of Health & Human Development at Montana State University in Bozeman and a fellow Brookdale RAPP. One person working in a rural area commented, *"Thanks for offering the opportunity to be part of this learning process. I hope it is only the beginning...not just for myself and our office but for the many outlying areas (rural) that we serve. I found it most effective."*

The second day was spent discussing clinical issues that

can come up in support groups with grandfamilies. This session was facilitated by Barbara Kates, who had also facilitated the program for caregivers, and by Virginia Holmes, a therapist with extensive experience working with kinship families. During this portion, themes and concerns that were brought up by families during the May workshop were incorporated into the discussion. One participant stated, *“I liked being able to hear what others are doing all across the country. Some comments truly hit me and made me think of new program ideas for Grandfamilies. I am grateful for the opportunity because I have not started a grandparent support group and others experience will help when I do.”*

Both online workshops were organized by the Center on Aging’s Maine Rural RAPP Initiative funded through a RAPP grant from the Brookdale Foundation. They were conducted using Moodle software (www.moodle.org) and the technical aspects were managed by Dr. Lauren Storck, Center on Aging online consultant.

For more information on the online workshops, please contact Melissa at Melissa.adle@umit.maine.edu or Jennifer Crittenden, at Jennifer_Crittenden@umit.maine.edu.

Philadelphia Society for Services to Children’s Kids n’ Kin Program

Since 1991, Philadelphia Society for Services to Children, or “PSSC” has offered the Kids n’ Kin program to kinship caregiver families in Philadelphia. In addition to home visits from trained social workers, Kids n’ Kin offers family therapy, workshops, support groups for caregivers, and legal help through a formal programmatic collaboration with the Support Center for Child Advocates. Kids n’ Kin also provides support for families of incarcerated parents, that includes therapeutic trips to a state correctional facility for women and groups for children with incarcerated parents.

Building on the expertise developed through the Kids n’ Kin program, PSSC created The Kinship Institute, last year. The development of the Institute was supported through a Regional RAPP grant from The Brookdale Foundation.

The Institute complements the direct service offerings of Kids n’ Kin by promoting policies and programs that benefit relative caregiver families. It helps to address kinship families’ needs by expanding how and where services are offered to them and by improving the quality of existing programs and services in the region. The Institute accomplishes this by:

- 1) advocating for policies and

legislation that benefit kinship caregivers; 2) networking existing programs; and 3) offering trainings and technical assistance.

Leaders from Philadelphia’s social service agencies, public and private organizations, elected officials, policy makers, and relative caregivers have bonded together as The Kinship Institute Advisory Committee. This committee – which also serves as the RAPP Regional Advisory Committee – provides a strong network of advocates, experts and caregivers who provide advice and assistance on the Institute’s efforts. The Institute is shaping its early advocacy efforts, in part, on a study conducted by Dr. Joseph Crumbley, a recognized expert in the field of kinship care and a long-time consultant for the Kids n’ Kin program and The Kinship Institute. This study, *“The Status of Services for Relative Caregivers in Philadelphia,”* revealed that housing is a primary concern for many relative caregivers. The study also demonstrated that many service providers are unaware of “relative caregivers” and have no system for identifying these families or helping them access appropriate services.

A legislative sub-committee of the Kinship Institute’s Advisory Committee has formed to examine pending legislation, review legislative gaps, and work with lawmakers to pass

responsive legislation. The Institute is now focusing on reaching out to advocates in other areas of the state in order to speak with state and federal legislators on behalf of a larger constituency.

While still young, the Institute has already facilitated information-sharing and networking opportunities. A two-day conference in October 2006 served as the springboard of these efforts. Over 300 people (200 caregivers and 100 service providers) attended the conference, gathered information in the areas of legal, financial, health, and supportive services and received a free copy of a new resource guide developed by the Institute.

While a major conference is expected to be a biannual event, the Institute began offering, in April 2007, technical assistance to service providers through monthly networking and informational meetings. These meetings are free and open to all service providers, most of whom work with relative caregiver families, even if they are not running a program designed for kinship families. Topics to date have included "An Overview of Kinship Care," "Kinship Family Dynamics," and "Accessing Behavioral Health Resources in Philadelphia." The meetings are facilitated so that attendees have the opportunity to share information about their own

organizations and make announcements about upcoming events. Over 45 people have attended at least one session, with a number of people returning multiple times, increasing the awareness of kinship families in Philadelphia's service community.

Along with programming for providers, the Institute is planning community-based "mini-conferences" for relative caregivers. These conferences will be held in geographically diverse sections of Philadelphia and include outreach in local newspapers, churches, and community organizations, with a goal of reaching caregivers who are not already accessing services or support. The first mini conference will be in September, in collaboration with a major church in West Philadelphia.

The Institute also issues a quarterly newsletter, *Connections*, which lists activities and programs for caregiver families to help build communication, collaboration, and access to programs. This newsletter is sent to hundreds of caregivers, with additional copies printed and distributed to service providers for further dissemination.

Finally, efforts are underway to provide training and technical assistance. Under the guidance of Dr. Crumbley, Institute staff members developed a

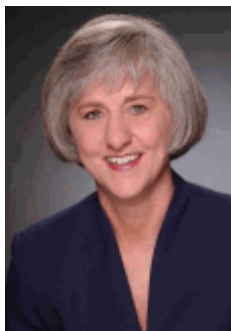
curriculum, "Workplace Workshops for Relative Caregivers." Recognizing that over half of the nation's 2.4 million grandparent caregivers are employed, the Institute is promoting responsive programming by bringing workshops to caregivers in their place of employment.

Thanks to networking opportunities at the Brookdale Foundation's conference, the Institute will explore the possibility of collaborating with AARP in providing workplace content for relative caregivers. Additionally, PSSC staff members have provided training on working with relative caregiver families for local social service agencies.

The Kinship Institute looks forward to acting as an agent for change and progress, which is possible thanks to the strong and diverse members of its Advisory Committee and the support of Funders, such as the Brookdale Foundation.

For more information about The Kinship Institute, the Kids n' Kin program, or PSSC, please contact Karen Fisk, the Director of The Kinship Institute, at 215-875-4961 or cneal@pssckids.org.

AN INTERVIEW WITH
LEANN THIEMAN
CO-AUTHOR, CHICKEN SOUP
FOR THE SOUL



RAPP REPORTER: How did you become a Co-Author of the Chicken Soup for the Soul Series of books?

LeAnn:

I wrote my own true story about being a part of Operation Baby Lift. This book did well and an excerpt from the book was published in “Chicken Soup for the Mother’s Soul.” Then I started to write other people’s stories and contribute them to other books in the Chicken Soup book series. I really learned how to write personal stories well. The editors knew I was a nurse and they asked me to be the co-author for “Chicken Soup for the Nurse’s Soul.”

RAPP Reporter: What made you write your first book on Operation Baby Lift?

LeAnn: It was 18 years after the event, so many people didn’t know my story and I thought it was time for that story to be told. I had no idea

that the whole world would care as it has. The book has sold very well and I have a whole career in speaking and writing based on that event.

RAPP Reporter: You are the co-author of books in the Chicken Soup series including “Chicken Soup for the Grandma’s Soul,” “Chicken Soup for the Caregivers Soul” and “Chicken Soup for the Nurses Soul.” What inspired you to tackle each topic?

LeAnn: After “Chicken Soup for the Nurse’s Soul,” I approached the editors and said we needed one “for the caregiver’s soul” and that was my second book. I’ve written a total of nine. Some of the other topics were assigned to me.

RAPP Reporter: What are some of the other titles?

LeAnn: Other titles include “Christian Woman,” “Mother and Son,” “Father and Daughter;” and “Christian Soul 2.” I came up with “Caregivers” and “Adopted Soul,” which are issues that are dear to my heart.

RAPP Reporter: All of your books give a sense of hope. What has helped to you keep a positive attitude towards life?

LeAnn: Reading thousands of these stories certainly does. I read about 2,000 stories for each book. The contributors give me hope!

RAPP Reporter: Which is your favorite book?

LeAnn: Every time I finish a book, I think it is my favorite. I can’t really pick one. I compare it to raising a child ...as you go through one stage you think this is my favorite stage and then when you go on to next stage, you think, “No, this is my favorite.”

RAPP Reporter: What do you think is the most important message in your books?

LeAnn: Hope. It really is all about hope. These books offer people hope. It is said that one of the greatest human needs is the one to be understood. I think the books do that. I get mail from people who say they read just the right story on the right day. They grow from it and get blessed by it. Not only people going through trials, but people recount their happiness when they read about it from others.

RAPP Reporter: In your book, “Chicken Soul for the Grandma’s Soul,” you included a few stories by grandmothers raising grandchildren. What made you choose their stories?

LeAnn: This is such an important issue happening in families and societies. The fact is that grandparents and other relatives raising children should be honored and recognized. The other reason is that we received 2,000 story

submissions. Volunteers read the stories and these stories by grandmothers raising grandchildren scored the highest. It shows the importance and how much these grandmothers are appreciated.

RAPP Reporter: What advice would you give to grandparents and relatives who are caregivers?

LeAnn: You must care for yourself as attentively as you do other people. The same benevolent heart that calls you to be a caregiver, is the same heart that is so benevolent that sometimes it doesn't remind you to care for yourself. That's why I speak to relative caregivers about balancing their lives and caring for themselves, emotionally, physically and spiritually every day.

RAPP Reporter: What would you recommend to those who work with relatives as parents?

LeAnn: Interestingly, to remind them to care for themselves because they are so busy setting up programs and helping caregivers that they too shortchange themselves. Someone once told me that I was so busy setting up programs, that I forget to set up my own personal programs to take care of me.

RAPP Reporter: Who should read your books?

LeAnn: People who want to hear from and relate to other people who are in similar phases of their life.

RAPP Reporter: What is the next book?

LeAnn: "Chicken Soul for the Adopted Soul," is due out in March 2008. "Chicken Soul for the Nurses Soul 2" is coming out in November 2007.

RAPP Reporter: What words of advice and encouragement would you like to leave with our readers?

LeAnn: We have, from the beginning of time, shared true personal stories to sustain and help each other. That is what the Bible is and that is what the history books are. After reading tens of thousands of stories, I know that there are blessings and healings in the stories so I encourage everyone to share their own stories with friends and family.

For more information on LeAnn and her collection of Chicken Soup for the Soul stories, visit her website:

<http://www.leanthieman.com>.

Kinship Kare of Northern Arizona's Grandparent Mentor Program

Beth Knisely Tucker
Coconino Extension Director

In 2004, the Kinship Kare of Northern Arizona (KKONA), a program of the University of Arizona, Coconino Extension,

expanded to include a pilot grandparent mentoring program, the first in the country, where grandparents assist other grandparents or family caregivers with education, advocacy and support. The program includes 40 hours of a combination of training and mentor group sessions, followed by 40 hours of time volunteered to help other grandparents in the community. The program has graduated 13 Grandparent Mentors.

The idea for training grandparents to assist other grandparents raising grandchildren comes from KKONA's belief that experienced grandparents can be the best support, advocates and educators for other grandparents who are new to the process of raising grandchildren. The Mentor Volunteer program was also born of the necessity to expand the coordinator's (Michele Lytle's) outreach by training grandparent volunteers. In a six-month period, KKONA received 240 phone requests for help from throughout Northern Arizona, which stretched Extension's resources and challenged us to think creatively about meeting our outreach needs.

Grandparent Mentors have helped the KKONA coordinator provide outreach to start support groups led by peer-Grandparent Volunteers in rural communities. Mentor

volunteers are facilitating 4 of the 5 support groups. Bilingual mentors conduct some support groups in Navajo and Spanish. Being able to conduct a support group using the native language is important to developing trust. Support group participation increased by 33% from 2004 figures.

Grandparent Mentor volunteers have also enriched many more programs including being team facilitators for the Simulation Workshop trainings we have for agencies to experience what it is like to be a grandparent household. They (the mentors) have also been co-trainers for a training of peer facilitators to start support groups in rural communities throughout Northern Arizona.

We have been able to graduate a second class in the KKONA mentoring program, which, in turn, has led them to assist twenty grandparents to write and implement action plans. One grandmother commented that she would not have pursued getting her granddaughter's birth certificate, which was discouraging her, until she identified steps to take with the help of KKONA volunteers. Thirty-five percent of mentees completed their action plan. Actions taken included: 71% acted on guardianship issues; 42% received benefits from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program; and 40% cited an ability to keep kids safe

from abusive or unhealthy situations. One mentor was able to translate documents and court proceedings that a grandparent was not able to understand.

For more information on the KKONA Mentoring Program, contact Michele Lytle at mlyle@ag.arizona.edu.

**Upper Cumberland
Development District's
MaTCH Mentoring Program**
Patricia Jones, RAPP Coordinator

Advocate's for the Aging's MaTCH Program is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee, Department of Finance and Administration, Office of Criminal Justice Programs. This project serves families of the Relative Caregiver Program. Most of the caregivers served by this project are able to provide a loving nurturing home for their relative children, but are unable to provide enrichment activities for them. By providing a mentor for the children, the caregiver's support system in the community is expanded and positive attitudes and goals are encouraged. Some of the activities with mentors include playing ball, going to the park or helping with homework. The MaTCH Program also provides group activities, like camps and trips, for the children.

The MaTCH Mentoring Program and the Relative Caregiver Program serve 14 rural counties in the Upper

Cumberland area of Tennessee. The goal is to have at least 3 active mentors in each of the 14 counties served.

For more information on the Upper Cumberland MaTCH Mentoring Program, contact Patty Jones at: pjones@uccdd.org.

**Montana State University
Extension's Grandparents
Raising Grandchildren
Project**

Sandy Bailey
Family and Human Development
Specialist, MSU Extension

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Project offers education and support services for grandparents rearing their grandchildren across the state of Montana. The project is housed within Montana State University (MSU) Extension on the Bozeman campus. Fifteen support groups are available across the state for grandfamilies.

This fall, the Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project was selected by the University's Family and Consumer Sciences honor society, Phi-Upsilon Omicron, as a yearly project recipient. The honor society has provided local grandparents with items such as gift cards to the local grocery store, presents and games for the holidays, and a variety of household items. In addition, they have volunteered to provide daycare services to area grandparents to give them

some much needed respite. If your organization is near a university you may want to explore whether or not student honor societies have similar service projects.

This past summer, the Montana project held its first series of conferences to provide information on a wide variety of subjects to service providers and grandparents raising their grandchildren. Over 100 grandparents and service providers attended.

Montana State University Extension also published a variety of self help articles that are available to our grandparents and other relative caregivers. These articles offer information on over 60 topics such as depression, finances and age appropriate discipline techniques. The publications are available on-line at <http://www.montana.edu/publications/index.html>.

Virginia Kinship Care Initiative Statewide Task Force and Information Network

Ellen Nau, State RAPP Facilitator

Founded in early 2000, the Virginia Kinship Care Initiative Task Force and Information Network is facilitated by the Virginia Department for the Aging (VDA). I have coordinated the group's activities since the program's originator left VDA in August of 2000. In addition to my role

as Task Force facilitator, I serve as coordinator of VDA's Title III B In-Home Services Program, Adult Day Care, the National Family Caregiver Support Program and the Department's state funded respite and care coordination programs. It is the mission of the Virginia Department for the Aging to foster the independence, security and dignity of older Virginians by promoting partnerships with families and communities.

It is in the area of collaboration and partnerships that the Kinship Care Initiative Statewide Task Force is accomplishing its greatest successes. Over a four year period, the Task Force has increased its membership to include local kinship providers throughout the Commonwealth and aligned itself with several academic institutions who conduct kinship care studies. Our collaboration with the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) Kinship Care Task Force has undoubtedly led to the Code of Virginia including a definition of kinship care. In addition, the Code of Virginia now requires local boards of social services "to consider kinship care as an alternative to foster care placement if it is in the child's best interest." 2005 Virginia legislation allows a grandparent to be issued a certified copy of a birth certificate of a child when there is evidence of need.

Our collaboration with DSS has made VDA realize that Area Agency on Aging (AAA) staff need to be educated about DSS services available to children in kinship care situations in order to aid grandparent clients. Monitoring AAA National Family Caregiver Support Programs has afforded VDA the opportunity to raise staff awareness of DSS services for children. Conversely, VDA has participated in educational programs that DSS has held for its local department workers on kinship care issues.

The Kinship Care Initiative Statewide Task Force is now looking forward to another statewide collaboration. This time, with the newly formed Virginia Association of Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Families. Two of our Task Force members serve as board members for this Association. Membership on the Virginia Child Care Council has brought kinship care issues to the attention of this important regulatory body.

The VDA *Grand Parents Caring for Grand Children Resource Guide* has been distributed to all AAAs and is available on the agency's website. Further information sharing among various kinship care providers has been enhanced by the use of video conferencing to encourage attendance at Task Force meetings. *Every known local kinship care group in the state*

is invited to participate in our meetings. Providers can use their own video conferencing services or avail themselves of video conferencing facilities at local Virginia Department of Health (VDH) offices. Kinship care providers from the far corners of the Commonwealth can be tied into Task Force meetings and avoid the expense of hours of travel to the VDA office in Richmond, Virginia. VDH has been very supportive of coalition efforts to share information visually in addition to the coalition's frequent email exchanges.

Coalition cooperation with various academic institutions' research projects on kinship care has also been a focus of the Task Force's attention. Requests to the Task Force for information for these academic studies are now received frequently. Various task force members advocate to address kinship care issues.

State budgetary constraints have hampered the expansion of children's benefit programs to kinship care families. In the future, task force advocacy efforts will undoubtedly be strengthened by its continual membership expansion to groups not limited by lobbying or advocacy restraints.

The children and kinship caregivers of the Commonwealth of Virginia will continue to benefit from the efforts of the Virginia

Department for the Aging and the Kinship Care Initiative Statewide Task Force. We are thankful to the Brookdale Foundation for starting us on this path!

For more information about the Virginia Kinship Care Initiative Statewide Task Force and Information Network, contact Ellen Nau at Ellen.Nau@vda.virginia.gov

West Virginia University Extension Services

Laura Lou Herbert, RAPP Coordinator

The West Virginia RAPP State Initiative has been in existence since 1999. We continue to work on behalf of grandparents and other relative caregivers. Here are some of our highlights:

1. West Virginia University Extension Services is planning a family camp at the state 4-H Camp, located at Jackson's Mill, on June 1-3, 2007.
2. The RAPP Facilitators of the **Eastern Panhandle RAPP** group provided an orientation to Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) staff. The facilitators talked about the challenges, issues and limited resources available to relative caregivers. They provided informational packets to the DHHR staff to facilitate the referral of caregivers to RAPP. As part of the orientation, the RAPP facilitators emphasized peer to peer support as the strength of

the group. This collaboration has resulted in reciprocal training opportunities. DHHR child protective staff has trained members of the Eastern Panhandle RAPP group on available supports;

3. **The Kanawha County RAPP** group meets monthly and has an average membership of about 10. Recently, a guest speaker from Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc., came to answer legal questions. The Kanawha County Schools has a Student Care Authorization Form that parents can sign and, when notarized, may be used to designate who may care for the children. The caregiver's authority begins on a designated date and remains in effect until terminated by the parents.

The Authorization Form gives caregivers the following powers:

- ✓ to make all parental educational decisions for the student(s), including but not limited to matters involving student discipline, special education services and all other matters that require parental consent;
- ✓ to seek appropriate medical treatment or attention on behalf of the student(s) as may be required by the circumstances, including but not limited to doctor and hospital visits; and

- ✓ to authorize medical treatment or medical procedures in an emergency situation.
- 4. The **McDowell County RAPP**, serves meals as part of their “Supper in A Sack,” group meetings. Staff from West Virginia University Extension Services bring the ingredients for a meal, share the recipes for the food and provide some of the ingredients for the relative caregivers to take home. The benefits of this program are enormous. The food is prepared by the families under the supervision of the extension agent. This is an opportune time for the multigenerational families to bond and communicate in a fun setting. All ages love to help with the food preparation from young children, to teens, to middle age adults, to the elderly. Preparation and cleanup is as much fun as the eating!

To find out more about West Virginia’s RAPP State Initiative, contact Laura Lou Harbert,
LauraHarbert@WVDHR.org

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota’s Adolescent Mental Health Group

Linda Hammerstein, RAPP
Coordinator

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota’s “*GrandFamily Connection*” Service piloted an adolescent mental health group that is now on-going at one of our support group sites. It took quite a few attempts to hit upon the most successful format for the group, but persistence paid off. A clinical approach wasn’t popular, nor was a format that required a very narrow age range and committed, time-limited attendance.

What we found works best for our area is to offer an adolescent mental health group concurrently with a caregiver support group. This way, grandparents aren’t making an additional outing in their already packed schedules, and the whole family stays in the same building: grandmother in her group, younger children in childcare, and youth in their group.

The one and a half hour session uses a “sandwich format”, with the “meat” in the middle. Each session begins with an entering activity --- time for an open-ended art project with simple, but varied art materials where youth can casually check in with one another and the facilitator and relate anything new.

Next, comes the “meat” -- the topic of the evening. Topics have included handling anger, managing stress, earning trust, self-esteem, being proactive in planning for your life, healthy body image, attitudes about money, drug use, handling racism and other unfair treatment as well as communicating with grandparents. I’ve found that it doesn’t work well to be overly devoted to covering what I had planned and that the group seems to meet its participants needs better if we address the concerns that group members introduce. We can always repeat a topic later if it doesn’t get sufficiently covered.

We close with something fun, usually a simple game, most often something active since by then they have been still for quite some time. We typically have 4-6 participants, ages 12-14. It’s not a large group at this point, but I think those that do attend, get a lot out of it, and we are confident that it will grow over time.

For more information on LSS’ adolescent mental health group, contact Linda Hammerstein at lhamers@lssmn.org

**Mountain Empire Older
Citizen's RAPP Mental
Health Program**

Marilyn Maxwell, Executive Director

Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc. (MEOC) is located in the Central Appalachian Mountains of the western tip of Virginia and has served as the region's Area Agency on Aging since 1974. In 2002, MEOC expanded its growing intergenerational offerings by becoming the sponsor of the newly organized Southwest Virginia Children's Advocacy Center (CAC). It was because of this expansion of services that MEOC was able to begin addressing the serious mental health problems we were all witnessing among the children and caregivers in our KinCare Program, first established as a Brookdale RAPP in 1999.

Although we believed that we offered a comprehensive array of services to KinCare families in our RAPP program, we realized that the missing piece was mental health treatment services. We had been referring KinCare children to our area community mental health providers for counseling (i.e. case management), but our KinCare program was full of children who had been so traumatized by what they had been through prior to coming to live with their relatives that they needed additional therapeutic interventions. Both the children and the relative caregivers were

suffering. The more our KinCare program expanded, the greater the need for more intensive therapy for children.

It was obvious to us that the more the mental health needs of children increased, the more they also increased for their relative caregivers. Clearly, our existing caregiver support groups were not designed to address the mental health problems we were seeing. Our analysis was that a therapeutic support group or group therapy sessions for caregivers would better address the mental health issues we were witnessing. Based on the severity of the untreated mental health needs prevalent within our KinCare population, we developed a response utilizing the in-house programs and assets of MEOC, mainly our Children's Advocacy Center, our transportation program, our dedication to integrated and intergenerational services, and our large network of community partners.

Our Children's Advocacy Center partnership had identified child abuse treatment services as a needed component and MEOC management was subsequently able to leverage funding to employ and support a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) as our CAC Director and Therapist. As a result, KinCare families heretofore absent from our programming were able to benefit from crisis intervention

services and short-term therapy to children who have been sexually and/or physically abused.

By working with the CAC staff and MEOC management, we have developed treatment services for our KinCare children and families. A referral process has been implemented to address the mental health needs of caregivers and children by offering case management and support as well as more intensive therapy. Our CAC Clinical Director modified and adapted several different mental health instruments to develop a "KinCare Behavioral Symptoms Checklist." The CAC Clinical Director trains our KinCare Director to administer the checklist.

Under the direction and guidance of our CAC Clinical Director, the CAC Community Educator directs a therapeutic support group for relative caregivers. The community educator follows a curriculum adapted by our Director of Children's Services from various sources. The therapeutic group meets monthly and has the following goals:

- ✓ To understand the importance of separation, loss and grief for children who are not living with their parents;
- ✓ To meet the challenges of caring for children who have witnessed

violence, have experienced abuse or neglect and need multiple sources of treatment and support;

- ✓ To understand that disciplinary techniques used with children who have experienced some form of emotional trauma differs from those used with children who have not experienced trauma;
- ✓ To understand that crisis situations are normal and help caregivers plan for them;
- ✓ To understand how their own issues of separation, loss and grief over the birth parents affect their coping abilities and those of the children in their care;
- ✓ To understand and identify how their own health issues and age impacts the child and the family; and
- ✓ To identify their strengths and look at ways to better care for themselves.

The community educator leads our regular KinCare support groups in addition to our therapeutic group. Furthermore, the Family Advocate Service, a program of our CAC, works with the caregivers of the

children that receive therapy through the CAC. Having the CAC as a MEOC service has been tremendously beneficial for our KinCare Program in general and our mental health program in particular.

We have tried to integrate the KinCare mental health services into our existing structure as much as possible and our referral system as appropriate. We incorporate the costs for funding our KinCare mental health services into the budget of our Department of Children Services. This budget includes all the costs associated with the programs and services of Healthy Families for Southwest Virginia, The Southwest Virginia Children's Advocacy Center and KinCare.

There is still work to be done. Our LCSW needs additional staffing to help her respond to all the requests for treatment. MEOC is seeking additional funding sources as well as looking for a retired LCSW to volunteer to assist in the CAC and with our KinCare mental health program.

Fundraising and grant writing for our Children's Services Department benefits all of the individual initiatives under its umbrella. Examples of shared fundraising and combined funding requests include United Way funding, support from individual donors through a mail solicitation campaign and

support from various local fundraisers. For the past five years, Virginia's First Lady has hosted very successful fundraising luncheons, dinners and receptions for our Children's Advocacy Center. Applebee's Pancake breakfasts have been another avenue of successful fundraising for us. MEOC's program is both an aging and a children's service and the diverse funding base — Brookdale Foundation, Older Americans Act, Virginia Department of Social Services, National Children's Alliance, Weyerhaeuser and Thurman Foundations, Children's Miracle Network, Speedway Children's Charity, Wellmont Foundation, local and state governments and local fundraisers --- reflects that. KinCare also benefits from the in-kind services of staff funded with other state and federal sources. MEOC sees KinCare as both a service for children and for their caregivers. If we tried to raise money solely for one initiative, we would not be successful. We therefore combine our fundraising for KinCare under the umbrella of our Departments of Children's Services and Family Support Services.

For more information on MEOC's mental health program, contact Karen Gusler at kgusler@meoc.org.

Tips for Educating Policymakers

“THE NINE P’S”

The Children’s Defense Fund

PASSIONATE – Don’t be shy about sharing your passion. You know the love and support you are giving the grandchildren and nieces and nephews you are raising – and the extra help you need. Tell your story and the stories of other caregivers in your communities and states. Explain how even a little bit can help. Praise what is working and be direct about what is not. Let policymakers and their staff feel your passion, excitement and commitment. Help them understand what they can do to help and why it is so important!

PREPARED –

Homework is key. Remember you are the experts. Have the data ready to make the case for the changes you want. Let your policymakers know how many children, grandparents and other relatives in their states and communities need help. Numbers are important – but not sufficient. Know where your policymakers are coming from. Is she raising a grandchild? Has she been a foster or adoptive parent? Does she sit on the board of AARP or another organization supporting seniors? Think about how you can link her interests to yours. When you get a chance to meet with her, check on how much time you will have so you can pace yourself accordingly. One story, a few facts, a statement

on the benefits of the reforms you are seeking, may be all you have time for. But always be prepared with “your ask” when you leave.

POLITICAL - This is political with a small “p.” It is not about being a Republican or a Democrat – or an Independent. A good politician knows how to convince the voters that she can do for them what no other candidate can. It is helpful to know what your policymaker stands for so you can help make important links for her. Learn how she voted on proposals for children and families in the past. Check the Voting Scorecard of an organization you respect. Learn whether she is up for re-election. How do the investments in kinship care you want resonate with other concerns in her campaign?

WILLING TO PARTNER – Progress isn’t made when groups with the same goals come in with competing agendas. Valuable time is wasted. Partnerships are important. Identify those in your community and state and at the national level you can join hands with in advocating for changes that will support children being raised by grandparents and other relatives. Remember that partnering means you have a unified message but it doesn’t mean that you always have to do things together. Reach out to both likely and unlikely allies.

PRAGMATIC – As many of you know from your experiences in your own states and communities, the public policy process often moves slowly. It may not always go in the direction you want. As you work for change for your children, it is important to be pragmatic – to be realistic about the policy process and the need to compromise on occasion.

PATIENT – Educating policymakers takes patience. You have got to think beyond the hurdles you may be facing and willing to wait for the next opportunity. If one strategy doesn’t work, try another.

POLITE – Never forget to say thank you at each step of the process. You can express your disappointment in a particular action but at the same time urge your policymaker to consider a different position in the future. Sometimes it takes patience to be polite. But, never cross anyone off.

PERSISTENT – Stand for what you believe in. You are likely to hear a lot of “Yes, buts” in your contacts with policymakers. Don’t let those “buts” become barriers. Don’t let your policymakers off the hook. Think of your contacts as the beginning or continuation of relationship rather than just a visit or phone call. Your contacts will build – one on the other – and you often can see behaviors change. Stay in contact when you are home.

Don't let him forget the children.

PERSEVERING – Perhaps the most important tip is the need to stick with it. Persevere. Stick to your goal and to be willing to alter strategies as needed to achieve it. Key your eye on the prize – the children and youth you are seeking to help.

For more tips on educating policymakers, please contact the Children's Defense Fund's Child Welfare and Mental Health Division at 202-662-3568 or hswope@childrensdefense.org.

UPDATES ON OUR NATIONAL PARTNERS

AARP FOUNDATION

Benefits QuickLINK: Help for Grandfamilies

Benefits QuickLINK is an online benefits screening tool offered by the AARP Foundation that helps adults find out if they, or the children in their care, may be eligible for *10 public benefits for adults and 5 public benefits for children*. Included in the screening results are fact sheets about each benefit with local and state agency contact information as well as live links to online program applications when available. Benefits QuickLINK is free, fast, and easy to use and is powered by Benefits CheckUp, a service of the National Council on Aging.

The Brookdale Foundation's Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP) has become the AARP Foundation's first Benefits QuickLINK National Affiliate!!! That means that this Fall, RAPP will have its own Benefits QuickLINK Organizational Edition designed for use by all RAPP programs and providers. Through this affiliation, all RAPP members will have access to the personalized Benefits QuickLINK Organizational Edition, allowing them to greatly enhance their services to grandfamilies.

Features of the Organizational Edition include the ability to conduct and track public benefit screenings; complete application forms and track application submissions; access to special outreach tools, a print version of the screening questionnaire, and the Medicare RX Application Forms Center where you can review and download Medicare Prescription Assistance program applications. Stay tuned for more information from Brookdale on when you will have access to the RAPP Organizational Edition. In the meantime, RAPPs and other organizations can begin using the public version of Benefits QuickLINK by going to www.aarp.org/quicklink. Interested parties can also sign up to participate in a web demonstration of the tool by going to www.ncoa.org/events/oe.

AARP Foundation Women's Scholarship Program: Offering Scholarships to Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Grandchildren!

Supported by a generous donation from AARP, the AARP Foundation is offering scholarships to women aged 40 or older of limited financial means that are:

- (1) returning to the workforce after an extended absence;
- (2) in jobs with insufficient pay, benefits or growth opportunities; or
- (3) **grandmothers or other female relatives raising another family member's child/children (with ability to demonstrate significant financial responsibility for those child/children).**

Scholarships will range from \$500 to \$5,000, will be awarded on the basis of demonstrated financial need and merit, and can cover tuition, fees, and books needed for coursework. The actual amount of the scholarship will depend on financial need and the cost of the education sought. The AARP Foundation will award up to 75 scholarships during the first award cycle. Scholarships may be used for any course of study at a public or private, not-for- post-secondary school, including community colleges, technical schools and four-year universities. Funds may be used to pay for tuition and other

related fees, including books. The AARP Foundation will send scholarship funds directly to the authorized educational institution.

The program application may *only* be submitted on-line. The application form and additional information on the scholarship program is available at www.aarp.org/womensscholarship. The access key is **AFWSP**. The online application requires basic contact information and education, employment and/or community service history. In addition, applicants must answer three short essay questions about: (1) their educational goals; (2) the benefit of the scholarship to themselves and their families or communities; and (3) any significant obstacles they have faced in their lives and how they have overcome them. Completed applications must be submitted no later than **October 31, 2007**. Program finalists will be notified in **November, 2007** at which time additional information may be requested. Our 2007 scholarship recipients will be notified in **January 2008**. Scholarship funds will be made available shortly thereafter.

GENERATIONS UNITED

Generations United (GU) is a nonpartisan organization that bridges child and aging policy, practice, and research on intergenerational issues at the national, state, and local levels.

RAPPs were well represented as presenters and attendees at GU's 14th International Conference held July 2007. Over 400 people joined for a week's worth of workshops and sessions dedicated to the best in intergenerational practice and policy. Slides and handouts are available at www.gu.org.

You'll also find links to our newest resources at the website, including a report on Latino children in foster care with relatives, updated grandfamilies fact sheets, a seven-minute DVD that promotes multigenerational communities, and a dedicated page on intergenerational housing. The page includes training materials prepared for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to increase awareness of the unique housing needs faced by grandfamilies.

GU is also excited to begin a partnership with the American Bar Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures to track state legislation impacting grandfamilies. The resulting website will list state legislation that exists or is pending that impacts grandfamilies. Since you may be the first to know when legislation is filed in your state, email gu@gu.org or call 202.289.3979 to share the news.

We'll return the favor when you ask to receive Generations This Week, GU's weekly e-

newsletter, and Together, GU's magazine.

CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND (CDF)

Included in this reporter is an article, from the Children's Defense Fund, on educating policymakers. See, also, the caregiver resources section below and visit CDF's website, www.childrensdefense.org for more resources and information.

RELATIVE CAREGIVER RESOURCES

From AARP: New Publications from the GIC

The AARP Foundation Grandparent Information Center (GIC) has many FREE resources for grandparents and other relatives raising children – and has just recently published several new ones:

- **15 Minutes to Your Family's Financial Health (D18862)**
A pocket-book sized flip-book that provides helpful information for grandparent and other relatives raising children about money – including credit, debt and identity theft. Includes tips for helping grandchildren learn about money.
- **Benefits QuickLINK for Grandfamilies Affiliates Fact Sheet/Order Form (D18873)**

An overview of the online tool, Benefits QuickLINK, explaining how it can be used to help grandfamilies access the public and private benefits they may be eligible for. Includes information about how organizations can get involved with Benefits QuickLINK – either by promoting the tool, conducting screenings, obtaining an Organizational Edition, or becoming a National Affiliate. A mail-in order form listing GIC resources is included.

- **Benefits QuickLINK for Grandfamilies Promotional Card (C2359)**

A card promoting the Benefits QuickLINK tool for use with grandfamilies. Includes a list of the 10 benefits for adults and 5 benefits for children, as well as the web link for Benefits QuickLINK.

- **Time to Care Business Case (D18872)**

Information for employers about why they should offer the appropriate family supports to grandparents and other relatives raising children. Includes information about their unique issues and needs, as well as about the resources available to them that employers should know about.

- **Una Labor de Amor: Abuelos que Crian a sus**

- **Nietos – Spanish DVD (C2301)**

A Spanish language DVD about grandparents and other relatives raising children. Includes information about the issues and challenges they face, as well as some of the creative solutions available in many communities, as well as resources offered by AARP Foundation GIC. Excellent outreach/education piece – only 11 minutes long.

- **Caring for Grandchildren Brochure (D18234)***

A general brochure targeting grandparents who provide care for grandchildren on a full-time or part-time basis or professionals and friends who support them. Provides information about what the AARP Foundation has to offer and background info on grandparent issues.

- **Guide to Public Benefits for Grandfamilies (D18354)***

A guide to public benefits for cash assistance, disabilities, food and home energy, foster care and related supports, health, and tax credits.

*These two publications are not entirely new, but have both been revised and made bi-lingual. You can also order GIC materials from AARP Fulfillment by sending **an email** to fulfillment@aarp.org that includes:

- Your name, mailing address and telephone number, and
- The titles and stock numbers of *each* item and the quantity of each requested.

You can also write to AARP Fulfillment, 601 E St, NW, Washington, DC 20049, or call, toll-free, 1-888-OUR-AARP (687-2277) and provide the above information. Single copies of each of the GIC's publications can be ordered directly from the GIC website at: www.aarp.org/grandparents. Many of the publications listed online are also available for download in PDF format. *Challenges and Opportunities in Children's Mental Health: A View from Families and Youth* http://nccp.org/pub_ucr06a.html

Caring for their Children's Children: Assessing the Mental Health Needs and Service Experiences of Grandparent Caregiver Families
To access the report visit: http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1427&L2=61&L3=131

Kinship Care: Relative Caregivers Speak Out;

Kinship Care: Birth Mothers Speak Out, and

Kinship Care: Teens and Young Adults Speak Out, Each tape costs \$85 and can be ordered from:

Dr. Joseph Crumbley
The Pavilion
261 Old York Road
Suite 620A
Jenkintown, PA 19046
(215) 884-7889 or Fax: (215)
881-7787; E-mail:
office@drcrumbley.com or
visit his website:
www.drcrumbley.com.

Help youth find financial aid for college or vocational training
Casey Family Programs has published *It's My Life: Financial Aid*, a 30-page resource guide for caseworkers, other child welfare professionals, and all adults who help young people transitioning from foster care get access to financial aid resources. Download both guides or find out how to obtain free printed copies at www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/IMLPPostsecondaryEd.htm

The Adventures of Nana Cat and Her Children, by Maureen Catherine. For a copy of the order form, visit the Florida Kinship Center's website: <http://www.flkin.usf.edu>.

From Generations United:
Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children: Caregiver Support Groups; and *Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children: Housing Needs and Challenges.* The fact sheets can be downloaded at GU's website, www.gu.org.

In addition, the blueprint from the 2nd National Expert Symposium on Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children, held on July 2004 is also available. "*Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children: The Second Intergenerational Agenda.*" The Action Agenda is also available on GU's website, www.gu.org.

All Children Deserve a Permanent Home: Subsidized Guardianship as a Common Sense Solution for Children in Long-Term Relative Foster Care. To access the report visit GU's website at: http://ipath.gu.org/documents/A0/All_Children_Deserve_A_Permanent_Home.pdf

Meth and Child Welfare: Promising Solutions for Children, Their Parents and Grandparents
To access the document, visit Generation's United's IPath: http://ipath.gu.org/UG_re1201437.asp

From The Children's Defense Fund:
Summary of the Kinship Caregiver Support Act and Checklist of Pending Federal Proposals Affecting Children in the Child Welfare System or At Risk of Coming to the Attention of the System. These summaries as well as others are available at <http://www.childrensdefense.org>. Click on the Child Welfare and Mental Health Research Division.

Kinship Care Resource Kit for Community and Faith-Based Organizations: Helping Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children. The kit is available online at the CDF website.

Grandparent's and Other Relative Caregiver's Guides. Four guides to help caregivers learn about important issues affecting the children in their care. The four topics are: child care and early education programs; food and nutrition programs; health insurance; and raising children with disabilities. The guides are available online at the CDF website.

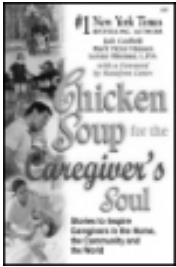
Expanding Permanency Options for Children: A Guide to Subsidized Guardianship Programs. The guide is also available online at the CDF website.

**From LeAnn Thieman:
Chicken Soup for the
Grandma's Soul**



Chicken Soup for the Grandma's Soul: Stories to Honor and Celebrate the "Ageless" Love of Grandmas

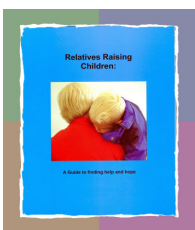
Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul



Over 54 million Americans help care for ailing family members. Millions more lay and professional caregivers selflessly minister to people in homes, daycare, and community services. While often rewarding, this benevolence requires tremendous emotional, physical, and spiritual strength. *Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul, Stories to Inspire Caregivers in the Home, the Community and the World* is written specifically for them.

These and other LeAnn books can be ordered from her website, <http://www.leannathieman.com/onlineshopping.html>.

From the Brookdale Foundation: *Relatives Raising Children: A Guide to Finding Help and Hope.*
Marianne Takas.



This book is based upon what long-term relative caregivers (and the family service

professionals who work with them) have learned about raising relative children. It is designed to provide useful information, strategies and ideas to help link relative caregivers to others who can help. 166 pages, Third Edition, 2005. \$6.

Order forms are available on our website:
www.brookdalefoundation.org.

In honor of grandparents across the country, we have included two poems: one from Janet Sainer and one from Rolanda Pyle!



**The Brookdale Foundation's
Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) Presents:
A Tribute to Grandparents Who Are Raising Their Grandchildren
By Janet Sainer**

- G- Grandchildren, to whom you are so devoted**
- R- Remarkable Resourcefulness you show Raising your grandchildren**
- A- Admiration and Appreciation we have for your Achievements and Accomplishments**
- N- Needs that are addressed in a No-Nonsense fashion**
- D- Determination; Devotion and Dedication you show to your families**
- P- Preservation of your families; the Problem Solvers you are and Public Policy you help shape**
- A- Awareness you have created as Active, Ardent Advocates**
- R- Rewarding Role models you are and the Respect we have for you**
- E- Empowerment you learn that helps Enrich the lives of your grandchildren**
- N- Noteworthy National recognition you have received and deserve**
- T- Tough and Tenacious Trainers and Teachers that you have become**
- S- Superb Supportive Surrogate parents that you are**

We offer our congratulations to all grandparents (and relative caregivers) for your compassion, caring, commitment and, most of all, the love you bring to your grandchildren. Thank you!



Thank You

A Tribute to Grandparents Raising Their Grandchildren

By Rolanda Pyle

We celebrate you for all you've done
For caring for your granddaughter and your grandson
You took on this awesome task that no one else could do,
Because no one loves and cares for your grandchild quite like you.

You had the courage to start all over again
Raising your grandchildren at an age when
You thought you might retire, travel and rest
But the children needed caregivers, and they needed the best.

Some came to you in pampers and most in tears
Needing nurturing and someone who cares.
Others came as toddlers, exploring the world on the run
You couldn't believe this happened – after you thought that you were done.

Still others came at school age, when they needed guidance and direction
Science may have you baffled but you are great at giving affection.
And some of you have teenagers, oh my, what can I say.
Just keep reminding yourself that they won't stay this way.

We know it has not been easy – often quite a heavy load
And there have been many bumps along the road
You've been misunderstood, labeled and denied the services you need
Often criticized and not recognized for your labor or your good deed.

But we are here to honor you who have done so much
To change the lives of children with your special touch
We thank you grandparents: we thank you once, we thank you twice
And know you are appreciated for the rest of your life.
Thank you, grandparents

The Brookdale Foundation Group
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New York, NY 10022