

Montana GRG Newsletter

Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project

Montana GRG Project is Expanding!

The Montana GRG Project received a grant from the Brookdale Foundation of New York to expand the project to the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservations. We have had several grandparents from that area interested in participating in support groups. Gail Whiteman, a member of the Crow Nation, is working with the GRG project to provide services on the two reservations. The first event is a float in the Crow Days parade to let families know that the project will be serving that area.

A grant from the Beim Foundation will help the Montana GRG Project expand to the rural communities of Gallatin and Park Counties. Currently we have a support group that meets during the school year in Bozeman; however, Park County and the outlying areas of Gallatin County have been underserved. We have grandparents from Emigrant and West Yellowstone who have come to the group in Bozeman; however, that is a long way to travel. We hope to start groups in the rural areas during the coming year. Contact us at **(406) 994-3395** or grg@montana.edu if you live in those areas and are interested in participating in a group.

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****New Support Group in Miles City****

A new support group was formed in Miles City as the result of Pete Bruno, Montanan for Children Youth and Families', work in eastern Montana. Pete presented the parenting program *Parenting a Second Time Around* and after attending the series, Don and Vivian Westall agreed to facilitate a group. The group meets the fourth Thursday of the month at the Holy Rosary Hospital.

If you have questions, contact Don and Vivian at **(406) 234-6727**.

2011 Enhancement Workshops

The 2011 Montana GRG Enhancement Workshops were held in Great Falls and Billings during June. More than 100 grandparents and others attended the workshops that focused around the theme of “communication.” We were fortunate to have **Anna Whiting Sorrell**, Director of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services as the keynote in Great Falls and **Denise Juneau**, Superintendent of Public Instruction for Montana as the keynote in Billings.



Dr. Dawn Tarabochia, Assistant Professor, Community Health, MSU Department of Health and Human Development, presented the session “Current Technology & Cyber Bullying: How Can Your Protect Your Grandchild?”

The evaluations indicate that participants had a great day and appreciated the learning opportunities in the workshops. You will find a few photos of the days in this newsletter. We would like to thank the grandparents in Billings and Great Falls who volunteered their time to help with the workshops. Their assistance helped to make the days a success.



Sandy Bailey, Montana GRG Program Director, presented **Hank Hudson**, DPHHS Economic Security Services Manager, with the GRG State Partners Award.



Elyse Lovell, instructor at Montana Tech in Butte, presented the session “Working With Your Child’s School.” She was introduced at the Billings workshop by GRG Louise Jenkins.



Anna Whiting Sorrell, Director of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, delivered the keynote address at the Great Falls workshop.

What is that gray heart behind Anna? The heart is a gift to the Great Falls GRG support group from the First Presbyterian Church's Early Risers group. It represents the gray hair of grandparents and the love that shines for each of their grandchildren. The group has made GRG their 2011 Mission Project. To date, the Early Risers group has donated \$4000 to the Great Falls GRG group, enabling them to send their members to the June workshop and help pay for the writing of wills. A huge THANK YOU goes out to the Early Risers for their support of GRG!

Navigating the Challenge: Setting Boundaries With Your Adult Child

-Adapted from the presentation at the 2011 GRG Enhancement Workshop conducted by Rebecca Koltz, Ph.D., LCPC, Montana State University

Healthy boundaries start with understanding what you want in a relationship, what you value, and respect for yourself. Healthy boundaries are established when you communicate those wants and needs to others. People with healthy boundaries do not tolerate abuse or disrespect from others. They are able to say "yes" or "no" to requests and are able to accept when someone disagrees with a response. Establishing healthy boundaries requires that you know your limits and when to ask for help from others. Healthy boundaries do not necessarily mean having a good relationship but rather the ability to stand up for yourself and be comfortable with your decisions regarding a situation.

Grandparents raising grandchildren often deal with an adult child who is unwilling to be a parent but, at the same time, causes problems for the grandparent who has stepped in to help the grandchild. This is especially problematic because we want our adult children to "get their act together" and start being responsible about parenting. Before beginning the process of setting healthy boundaries with your adult child consider the following:

- Identify ways in which your boundaries with your adult child may be unhealthy. For example, do you give in to his or her demands when you know it isn't right?
- Write letters to yourself encouraging change and nurturing your right to boundaries.
- Make a list of personal rights in your relationship such as the "right to be respected."
- Keep a journal and record a history of the pain associated with not maintaining healthy boundaries.
- Look for role models. Connecting with others in a local support group may help. Seek counseling. If you are unable to develop healthy boundaries with your adult child, talk to a licensed therapist.

When working through the process of developing a healthy relationship with your child, remember that it will take time. Start by owning your feelings. Practice saying things such as, "I feel really sad when you criticize me." Then start using those statements in interactions with your adult child. Try to communicate your feelings in a tone of voice that isn't angry or accusing. Take a stand on a problem and don't back down. For example, if your daughter comes to the house and is intoxicated, let her know that she is not welcome unless she is sober. Expect resistance as this is a change in how you interacted with her before. Also, expect to feel guilty at first. It is very hard to turn away your own child, but for the health of yourself and your grandchild, you need to set boundaries. Remember that we can only change ourselves; however, by changing our actions, the reactions by others will eventually change.



It's Back to School Time

Regardless of the age of your grandchild, back to school is an exciting, yet sometimes stressful time. Summer fun has come to a close and is being replaced with the school routine. Here are some tips to make the transition go smoothly that you might consider.

- Make sure your child has plenty of sleep. Even though daylight stretches into the late evening, start a routine of bedtime and keep it as consistent as possible.
- Gather the school supplies that your grandchild will need. In larger communities these are often posted in the stores. In smaller communities you may need to call the school ahead of time to get the list of supplies.
- Check with your school to see if they have any programs to assist with purchasing school supplies. Some communities advertise the programs and they are easy to find. In other places you will need to ask at the school and/or your place of worship. Don't be hesitant to ask for this assistance. The programs were created to serve families such as yours.
- Find out who your child's teacher will be for the coming year. You will want to make a point to go in and meet him/her. Most schools will have an open house early in the school year. This is a good opportunity to talk to the teacher. And do this even for your high school age grandchild!
- Let the school know of any special needs your grandchild may have. You will want to know if there are any services or special programs that may assist in your grandchild's academic success.
- Ask if the school has a newsletter and if so how it is distributed. Those that come home in a backpack with your child may not make it to you! By knowing when the newsletter comes out, you can check with your grandchild and remind him/her to give it to you.
- Make sure your grandchild gets a good breakfast before school. Most public schools participate in the Child and Adult Food Program sponsored by the USDA. Many serve breakfast and lunch. Ask for the form to see if your grandchild qualifies for free or reduced prices for the meals. Again, don't hesitate to apply – this is what your tax dollars go to and good nutrition is important so that children can learn.
- Find out what extracurricular activities are available through your grandchild's school and/or the community. These activities help a child with socialization skills, teamwork, and learning more about a subject area outside of the academic school day. The activities may be sports, art, music, 4-H, or scouting. Often there are scholarships or possibly a fee scale to help keep the costs at a minimum for you.
- Avoid "hyper-scheduling" your grandchild. While one or two extracurricular activities are healthy for kids, overscheduling does not allow them to take time to relax and be creative on their own.
- Participate in your grandchild's education. In addition to getting to know the teacher, help your grandchild with homework. Provide a quiet place for homework to be completed. Volunteer, when possible, at your grandchild's school. Attend sporting events and other activities that your grandchild participates in at school.
- Encourage your grandchild. Help him/her realize that he/she can do anything they want with hard work and dedication.

Resources from the National Institute on Mental Health: *Coping with Traumatic Events*

The National Institute of Mental Health conducts and supports research not only on a wide range of mental health disorders, but also on individual reactions to national crises and traumatic events. In the past two decades we have experienced the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack; the Oklahoma City bombing; wars and violence in the Middle East; disasters such as earthquakes, tornados, fires, floods, and hurricanes, including the Gulf Coast oil spill; and most recently the shooting in Tuscan, Arizona.

There are many different responses to crisis. Most survivors have intense feelings after a traumatic event but recover from the trauma; others have more difficulty recovering — especially those who have had previous traumatic experiences, who are faced with ongoing stress, or who lack support from friends and family — and will need additional help. Their website has information about trauma, coping, and resilience. Go to <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml> to browse all topics or go to the links listed below.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml>

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Research Fact Sheet

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-research-fact-sheet/index.shtml>

Depression

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression-easy-to-read/index.shtml>

Panic Disorder

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/when-fear-overwhelms-panic-disorder/index.shtml>

Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters: What Parents Can Do

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-violence-and-disasters-parents/index.shtml>

Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters: What Community Members Can Do

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-violence-and-disasters-community-members/index.shtml>

Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters: What Rescue Workers Can Do

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-violence-and-disasters-rescue-workers/index.shtml>

Mental Health and Mass Violence: Evidence-Based Early Psychological Intervention for Victims/Survivors of Mass Violence

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/massviolence.pdf>

Information about Children and Violence

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/children-and-violence.shtml>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also has resources related to trauma, stress and coping; go to <http://www.cdc.gov> to browse all topics or go to the links listed at right.

Coping with Stress

<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/index.html>

Coping With a Traumatic Event: Information for the Public

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/masscasualties/copingpub.asp>

Listen to an NIH podcast about coping with traumatic events

<http://www.nih.gov/news/radio/podcast/2007archiveindex.htm#e0030>

What You Need to Know About Medicare

-Kimme Evermann, State Health Insurance Program, Montana DPHHS

Medicare is the federal health insurance program available to beneficiaries who are 65 years and older, as well as some adults with disabilities of any age based on Social Security criteria.

Medicare coverage is offered to beneficiaries in four PARTS:

Part A = Major Medical/Hospitalization,

Part B = Outpatient Services,

Part C = Medicare Health Plans/Medicare Advantage,

Part D = Prescription Drug Coverage.

As basic health insurance, Medicare doesn't cover all a beneficiary's health care costs, and many choose to purchase supplemental insurance policies to help cover out-of-pocket expense. For beneficiaries with few financial resources, there are several state and federal programs available to help. For those just coming on to Medicare or are continuing to work after age 65, it is important to get accurate and timely information; there are deadlines and some important decisions to be made that are necessary to ensure you the best health care future you can plan.

In Montana, there is a Medicare advocacy program which makes counseling, information and education available to new Medicare beneficiaries, current beneficiaries, family members and community partners; the STATE HEALTH INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, known as the SHIP, has counselors available in all 56 counties of Montana and provides "Local Help For People With Medicare". For your local SHIP counselor, please don't wait or hesitate; call **(800) 551-3191**.

Remember These Great Resources...

Get Your Fact Sheets!

State fact sheets are available for grandparents and other relatives raising children.

www.grandfactsheets.org

Get Your Back Issues!

Be sure to check out all the GRG Newsletter back issues.

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/grg/grg/newsletters.htm>

Get Your MontGuides!

There are many helpful MSU Extension MontGuides available to you. Topics include parenting, financial planning, retirement and many more.

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/montguides.html>

Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana

Western Region

Flathead County

Tim Bohrer
The Nurturing Center, Inc.
Kalispell
(406) 756-1414

Lake County

Nori Pearce
Ronan
(406) 676-4271

Madison/Jefferson County

Andrea Sarchet
Whitehall
(406) 287-3282

Lewis & Clark County

Rocky Mountain Development
Council Head Start
Janet Coughlin
Helena
(406) 457-7308

Ravalli County

Brenda Fisher
Family Services
Hamilton
(406) 363-1961 ext. 107

Allison Dunne
WORD—Local Living Family Center
Florence
(406) 273-0142

Central Region

Cascade County

Jona McNamee
Great Falls
(406) 454-6980
Mariellen Ritts
(406) 453-3554

Fergus County

Denise Seilstad
Lewistown
(406) 535-3919

Gallatin County

MSU Extension Family &
Human Development
Bozeman
(406) 994-3395
grg@montana.edu

Glacier County

Carrie Jackson/
Connie Bremner
Eagle Shield Center
Browning
(406) 338-7257

Hill County

Rocky Boy Reservation
Stone Child College
Box Elder
Mary St. Pierre
(406) 395-4875

Phillips/Blaine Counties

Fort Belknap Reservation
Paula Enkerud
Harlem
(406) 353-2656

Central Region, cont...

Stillwater County

Lisa Terry
Columbus
(406) 322-8035

Teton County

Jane Wolery
Choteau
(406) 466-2491

Eastern Region

Custer County

Don & Vivian Westall
Miles City
(406) 234-6727

Dawson County

Pete Bruno
Montanans for Children,
Youth and Families
Glendive
(406) 939-5591

Roosevelt County

Ardis Oelkers
Culbertson
(406) 787-5312

Rosebud County

Jennifer Anderson
Forsyth
(406) 346-7320

Yellowstone County

Bernie Mason
Billings
(406) 256-2828



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*Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you are, who ever you are, you need one.
~Jane Howard*



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