



And Then There Was A Smile

by Laurie Eytel, CVA

The Montana GRG Project now has over 30 contacts and support group facilitators state-wide!

Thank you for all you do for the grandfamilies of Montana!

A grandparent came with a burden to bear.
They came looking for guidance and perhaps a kind word.

You saw their challenge and decided to help.
Your caring voice opened a door.

A child came looking quite sad and then another, with defiance
And you welcomed them all.

They all came with stories which were all unique.
You offered your help—and you listened.

You may have provided a meal. You may have provided gifts.
You may have provided guidance.

You may have worked behind the scenes. But slowly a change came about.
The mood seemed lighter.

And then there was a smile.
Maybe first from you, then maybe from a child, or a grandparent.

It made all the difference to those you touched,
The child, the grandparent looked to you
And then there was a smile!

Inside this Issue

Page 2	Self Care: <i>Cascade County GRG's Self-Care & Using "I" Messages</i>
Page 3	Self Care: <i>My Action Plan</i>
Page 4	Useful News: <i>My Pet Died: How Can I Feel Better?</i>
Page 5	Health & Nutrition: <i>Cool & Yummy Drinks & Smoothies</i>
Page 6	Services: <i>Financial Foundations Toolkit, New GU Documents & New Website Features</i>
Page 7	Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana



Cascade County Grandparents Take Care of Themselves

-Jona McNamee, Cascade County FCS Agent

Self Care

Editor's Note: I asked Jona McNamee, support group leader for the Great Falls area, how her GRGs take care of themselves so they can better take care of their friends and families. Below is her response—hopefully you can get some ideas for yourself from this fantastic group!

The emotional and physical demands of raising grandchildren to be productive citizens is challenging for grandparents. Often they forget to care for themselves. The Cascade County grandparents strive to care for themselves by using various strategies.

- **We use a “generosity list”** to write down appointments, celebrations and family activities, noting areas where family and friends can be generous with their time and talents to assist the grandparents. We encourage our family members to choose how they can help with the family wellness. We post the ‘generosity list” on the refrigerator for all to reference.
- Grandparents find the **monthly educational meetings** to be a source of encouragement and exchange of ideas from others facing the challenges of raising grandchildren. New friendships are formed each month.
- In the past our grandparents held lunch bunch meetings to **enjoy conversations and support**, some members meet for coffee, work on crafts, visit on the phone, and join an exercise group. Two of our grandparents are 4-H leaders for a 4-H club comprised of grandchildren who are being raised by their grandparents.
- Members are **encouraged to schedule and keep doctor and dentist appointments** for themselves. It is very important that grandparents report to their health provider that they are raising their grandchildren. Stress can cause medical issues.
- Some of our members **attend and graduate from the MSU EFNEP nutrition classes**. During the six week sessions, the grandparents learn to plan, budget for and prepare healthy nutritious meals for their families. Grandparents report that after taking and graduating from the classes their meals consist of a variety of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grain and low fat dairy. Two grandchildren have competed in State Fair culinary contests using the education the grandparents received from EFNEP. Visit <http://www.buyeatlivebetter.org/> to learn more about your local EFNEP program.
- Cascade County grandparents enjoy **having fun together**. We plan roller skating parties, visit the Children’s Museum, attend the State Fair. The activities allow the grandchildren and grandparents to socialize and enjoy respite from everyday routines.
- The leaders of our group **check on each other frequently and encourage self-care**. We stress the importance of taking care of personal needs. Anyone can be a grandparent but we strive to be the BEST grandparents we can be for ourselves as well as our grandparents. We make a difference in many

Use “I” Messages for Better Communication

Speaking for yourself from the “I” position is one of the most effective communication tools. With “I” statements, you take ownership of your feelings, thoughts, and concerns. By saying “I feel...”, “I need...”, “I am worried about...”, you are expressing your own needs. You are not blaming someone else for the way you feel. Practice using these messages today and begin communicating more effectively!

“You” Message — “Apparently you can’t even pick up a few groceries for us.”

“I” Message — “I have a short list of groceries we need. I wonder if you can pick them up the next time you go grocery shopping.”

“You” Message — “You didn’t call back yesterday. You made me wait all day to hear back from you.”

“I” Message — “I was hoping to hear back from you yesterday.”



Self Care

One of the best ways to take care of yourself is to **make time to do something you want to do**, NOT something you feel you *should* do, or *have* to do or *need* to do.

Use this **Action Plan** to plan time to do something to make YOU feel good, so you can better care for those around you.



My Action Plan

When writing an Action Plan, be sure it includes:

- 1. **What** you are going to do.
- 2. **How much** you are going to do it.
- 3. **When** you are going to do it (e.g. what time of day).
- 4. **How often** you are going to do it.

Example: This week I will leave the house and visit with a friend (*what*) for one hour (*how much*) in the morning while the kids are at school (*when*), twice—Tuesday and Thursday (*how many*).

This week I will _____ (What)
 _____ (How Much)
 _____ (When)
 _____ (How Often)

How confident are you that you will complete your entire action plan during the week?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 (not at all confident) (totally confident)

Check off each day you accomplish your plan.

Comments:

<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday	_____



Useful News

My Pet Died—How Can I Feel Better?

Every day when Elena came home from school, her cat Tomaso would run to greet her. Then Elena would pick up Tomaso and give the cat a hug. One day, though, Elena came home and her cat wasn't there. Her mom told her that Tomaso had died.

Who Has Pets?

Millions of people across the world own pets. Maybe you have a pet, and maybe some of your friends do, too. A pet can be a special friend, and you might think of him or her as a member of the family. A pet can play with you or just be with you when you don't feel like talking.

What Happens When a Pet Dies?

Unfortunately, pets can't stay with us forever. Like all living things, they will die at some point. Sometimes a pet dies from old age because its body has worn out. Sometimes a pet dies from an accident. Sometimes a pet gets too sick to live. Even when an animal doctor (a veterinarian, or vet) helps, there are some problems that just can't be fixed.

If your pet is in a lot of pain and will never get better, your parents and the vet may decide that the animal should be allowed to die. To make it go more quickly and without pain, the vet can give the pet some medicine that will help it die. The animal gets a special kind of injection (shot) that allows it to die peacefully. Deciding to help a pet die is a hard thing to do.

Why Am I Feeling Like This?

It's sad when a pet dies. For a while, though, you may not feel anything at all. That's OK. Or you may feel like crying and that's OK, too. You may feel lonely because your pet was your friend. You might even feel mad at the vet for not being able to make your pet better. Maybe you feel guilty when you remember one time when you were mean to your pet.

To some kids, it may seem like no one understands what they are feeling. Someone said to Elena: "You can get another cat." But Elena knew she'd never have another cat just like Tomaso. But Elena also started to wonder if it was normal to be crying over a cat.

-This information was provided by KidsHealth®, one of the largest resources online for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids, and teens. For more articles like this, visit KidsHealth.org or TeensHealth.org. © 1995- 2014 . The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth®. All rights reserved.

Talk It Out

Elena decided to talk with her parents about how she was feeling. She wanted to ask about some things she didn't understand, like where Tomaso went after death. Elena's parents answered her questions the best they could. Death is a mystery, and people have different beliefs about what happens after an animal or person dies.

Elena's parents told her about the pets they used to have when they were kids and how it was difficult to say good-bye. They told her that it's OK to be sad when animals die and it's not silly at all. At first, it can be hard to talk about the pet you're missing. You might want to forget about everything instead. But talking with someone you love is the best way to help you start to feel better.

What Comes Next?

When a pet dies, you and your family may want to find special ways to remember your pet. It can be a big help to share a sad thing with people you love. You might have a ceremony to bury your pet or just share memories of fun times you had together. You might want to tell stories or write a poem. You could do a project, too, like making a scrapbook. That's what Elena did.

There are many ways you can hold on to your happy memories. And you can always love your pet. A new animal can't replace your old pet. But someday the time may be right for you and your family to adopt a new animal for everyone to love.

Are you ready to welcome a new pet into your family? Be sure to think about adopting from a shelter or Humane Society. There are some great places on the Web to search for adoptable pets in your area.

Montana Pets on the Net

<http://www.montanapets.org/>

Pet Finder

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

Adopt A Pet

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



Health & Nutrition

**Want a fun and easy way to get all the required daily servings of fruit?
Even the pickiest eaters will love these delicious drinks and smoothies!**

-Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/>

Rainbow Juice

100% juices. Pour several different colored 100% juices into ice cube trays and freeze. After frozen, place the different colored cubes into a glass and pour apple or white grape juice over the cubes.

Ingredients:

- Different juices

Pineapple Fizz

In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend until smooth.

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups pineapple juice
- 2 large scoops pineapple sherbet
- 1/2 cup sparkling water

Sunny Surprise Smoothie

Blend all together in a blender until smooth and serve.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup low-fat or non-fat milk
- 8 ounces frozen strawberries
- 3 ounces orange juice concentrate
- 1 frozen banana (cut into chunks before freezing)

Vanilla Fruit Smoothie

Blend everything until smooth. Makes 1 serving.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup frozen strawberries, bananas, or peaches
- 1/2 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 tablespoon frozen apple juice concentrate

Fruit Smoothie

Blend everything until smooth. Makes 2 servings.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup non-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup frozen strawberries
- 1/2 cup frozen banana slices
- 1/4 cup low-fat milk
- 5 ice cubes

Orange Julius

In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend for about a minute or until ice cubes are crushed.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 6 ounces orange juice—frozen concentrated
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 10 ice cubes

Strawberry Banana Cooler

In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend until smooth. Makes about 4 servings.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups unsweetened orange juice
- 1/2 cup whole frozen strawberries
- 1 banana, sliced
- 4 ice cubes

Orange Banana Crush

In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend until smooth. Makes about 3 servings.

Ingredients:

- 1 orange, peeled, cut into chunks
- 1 medium banana, peeled, cut into chunks
- 1 can (6 ounces) unsweetened pineapple juice
- 1 cup crushed ice
- 1 tablespoon honey



Services

Free Financial Foundations Toolkit Available

April is Financial Literacy Month! Get the advice and confidence you need to make sound money decisions with the free **Financial Foundations Toolkit** from usa.gov.

- You'll learn:
- ~ How to save for college or retirement when money is tight
 - ~ What you should do right after a job loss
 - ~ Your insurance rights in serious medical situations
 - ~ How to avoid financial scams and identity theft

Go to <http://promotions.usa.gov/financial-literacy.html#pdf> to order your free kit. A little planning now can add up to a better financial future!

You can also download lots of other free publications:

- *Guide to Disability Income Insurance*
- *Guide to Long Term Care Insurance*
- *Consumer Action Handbook*
- *Savings Fitness*
- *Fighting Fraud 101*
- *Smart Saving for College: Better Buy Degrees*
- *Job Dislocation: Making Smart Financial Choices after a Job Loss*
- *How to Submit a Complaint*
- *My New Money Goal*

Our Friends at Generations United have Released Three Valuable New Documents

Grand Resources: A Grandparent's and Other Relative's Guide to Raising Children with Disabilities will equip caregivers, including those that provide full- and part-time care to relative children, with the national resources they need to help their children thrive, now and in the future.

In addition to the guide, Generations United has developed a **resource directory** that serves as a companion piece to the guide and provides a detailed list of the quality services, resources, information, and advocacy tools vital for children with disabilities. The resource directory does not contain every resource available, however, it will be updated periodically to include new resources.

Grand Resources: A Fact Sheet for Grandparent and Relative Caregivers to Help Access Support through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is often the only financial support available for grandfamilies. TANF may provide you and your grandfamily with support in several ways:

- Monthly cash to help meet the needs of your grandfamily or to meet the needs of just the children you're raising
- Short-term help to meet a need like buying a crib or paying a utility bill
- A pathway to access other important supports, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/food stamps and Medicaid

These three documents can be downloaded from the Montana GRG Website: <http://www.montanagrandparents.org/whatsnew.html>

There Have Been Some Big Changes to the Montana GRG Project Website!

Go to montanagrandparents.org to see the changes we have made.

- You can sign up on the website to receive the newsletter.
- The "Make A Gift" button makes it easy for supporters of GRG to make a tax-deductible donation to the GRG Project.
- A "What's New" section with news, events and topical information for contacts and families.
- A "Contacts" page where support group leaders and state-wide contacts can find information and materials for their groups.
- Lots of links to local, regional and national information.

Check it out today and let me know what you think and what we can add.
deborah.albin@montana.edu

Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana—By County

Blaine County—Harlem & Fort Belknap Indian Reservation
Liz Werk
MSU Extension
(406) 353-2656

Big Horn County—Wyola
Kristy Old Coyote
LBHC Extension
(406) 638-3114
Jacinta Stewart
(406) 679-2259

Big Horn County—Hardin
Janice Eckman
Parent Place
(406) 665-4151

Big Horn & Rosebud Counties—Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation
Ryhal Rowland
MSU Extension
(406) 477-6498

Cascade County—Great Falls
Jona McNamee
MSU Extension
(406) 454-6980
Mariellen Ritts
(406) 453-3554

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

Dawson County—Glendive
Pete Bruno
Family Life Institute
(406) 939-5591

Fergus County—Lewistown
Denise Seilstad
MSU Extension
(406) 535-3919

Flathead County—Kalispell
Nikki Roth
The Nurturing Center, Inc.
(406) 756-1414

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

Glacier County—Browning & Blackfeet Indian Reservation
Carrie Bear Chief-Evans/
Connie Bremner
Eagle Shield Center
(406) 338-7257

Hill County—Havre
Lea Ann Larson
MSU Extension
(406) 265-5481

Hill County—Rocky Boy Indian Reservation
Mary St. Pierre
Stone Child College & MSU Extension
(406) 395-4875

Lake County—Ronan
Nori Pearce
MSU Extension
(406) 676-4271

Lewis & Clark County—Helena
Candi Standall
(406) 202-1668
Jackie Stoeckel
DPHHS, Child & Family Services - Program Bureau
(406) 841-2402

Madison/Jefferson Counties—Whitehall
Andrea Sarchet
MSU Extension
(406) 287-3282

Missoula County—Missoula
Erin Crabtree
(406) 552-9779
Kelly Moore
MSU Extension
(406) 258-4206

Richland County—Sidney
Ludmila Keller
MSU Extension
(406) 433-1206

Roosevelt County—Culbertson
Ardis Oelkers
MSU Extension
(406) 787-5312

Roosevelt County—Fort Peck Indian Reservation
Carol Bemer
(406) 768-2430

Rosebud County—Forsyth
Jennifer Anderson
MSU Extension
(406) 346-7320

Rosebud County—Lame Deer & Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation
Kay Medicine Bull
Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Cheyenne Nation
(406) 477-6654

Silver Bow County—Butte
Brenda Hergott
Butte 4-C's
(406) 723-4019
1-800-794-4061

Stillwater County—Columbus
Lisa Terry
MSU Extension
(406) 322-8035

Teton County—Choteau
Jane Wolery
MSU Extension
(406) 466-2491

Valley County—Glasgow
Roubie Younkin
MSU Extension
(406) 228-6239

Yellowstone County—Billings
MSU Extension
(406) 256-2828



Family & Human Development
316 Herrick Hall
PO Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717-3540

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit #69
Bozeman, MT
59715

Contact Us

316 Herrick Hall
PO Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717-3540
grg@montana.edu
(406) 994-3395
www.montanagrandparents.org

<http://www.msuextension.org>

Montana State University Extension is an ADA/
EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and
provider of educational outreach.

Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project

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