



## Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project Receives the *Generations United 2013 Grandfamilies Award*

On August 1st, at the 17th Annual Generations United International Conference in Washington, D.C., GRG Project Director, Dr. Sandra Bailey, accepted the 2013 Grandfamilies Award. This award honors an organization, professional, or relative caregiver that has made an outstanding contribution to the field of grandparents and other relative caregivers raising children.

This award belongs to all of you—the caregivers and your families, the partnering agencies and organizations, the support group leaders and contacts, the community members, and the funders and supporters. **Thank you for investing your time, energy and passion in supporting our Montana grandfamilies!**



Sandy Bailey, right, accepts the award from Susan Dreyfus, left, of the Alliance for Children and Families/Families International.

**generations  
United**

Because we're stronger together®

**Generations United (GU)** is the national membership organization focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. GU represents more than 100 national, state, and local organizations and individuals representing more than 70 million

Americans. Since 1986, GU has served as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU acts as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration between aging, children, and youth organizations providing a forum to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation. **Learn more at <http://www.gu.org>.**

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## Homework...Help Your Grandchildren Make the Best of It

### Education

Research shows clearly that children are more likely to succeed in learning when their families actively support them. When family members read with their children, talk with their teachers, participate in school or other learning activities and help them with homework, they give children a tremendous advantage.

Homework has been part of students' lives since the beginning of formal schooling in the United States. It is important because it can improve children's thinking and memory. It can help them to develop positive study skills and habits that will serve them well throughout their lives. It can encourage them to use time well, to learn independently and to take responsibility for their work.

But helping children with their homework benefits families as well. It can, for example, be a way for families to learn more about what their children are learning in school and an opportunity for them to communicate both with their children and with teachers and principals. Your interest in your grandchildren's education can spark their enthusiasm and lead them to understand that learning can be rewarding and is well worth the effort.

Below are questions to ask yourself and, by answering "yes" to them, you can help your grandchildren be more successful in school.

#### Show That You Think Education and Homework are Important

- Do you set a regular time every day for homework?
- Does your child have the papers, books, pencils and other things needed to do assignments?
- Does your child have a well-lit, fairly quiet place to study?
- Do you set a good example by showing your child that the skills he is learning are an important part of the things he will do as an adult?
- Do you stay in touch with your child's teacher?

#### Monitor Assignments

- Do you know what your child's homework assignments are? How long they should take? How the teacher wants you to be involved in them?
- Do you see that your child starts and completes assignments?
- Do you read the teacher's comments on assignments that are returned?
- Do you monitor TV viewing or video game playing that may be cutting into your child's homework time?

#### Provide Guidance

- Do you help your child to get organized? Does your child need a schedule or assignment book? A book bag or backpack and a folder for papers?
- Do you encourage your child to develop good study habits (for example, scheduling enough time for big assignments; making up practice tests)?
- Do you talk with your child about homework assignments? Does she understand them?

#### Talk with Teachers to Resolve Problems

- Do you meet with the teacher early in the year *before* any problems arise?
- If a problem comes up, do you meet with the teacher?
- Do you cooperate with the teacher to work out a plan and a schedule to solve homework problems?
- Do you follow up with the teacher and with your child to make sure the plan is working?

#### Information adapted from

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Communications and Outreach, *Helping Your Child with Homework*, Washington, D.C., 2005. The entire publication is also available on the Department's Web site at:  
<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html>



## Services

### OPI's Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

Soon, your grandchildren will be going back to school and you can take an active role in their education with the help of the OPI program, **Family and Community Engagement (FACE)**.

FACE is a comprehensive approach to Parental Involvement. This approach recognizes that "parents" in the traditional sense may not be the people that students are living with. Many students are cared for by grandparents, relatives, family friends, foster parents, or systems of care. The FACE program also recognizes that "it takes a village to raise a child." Many members of a community are interested in the education of children, including students' families, neighbors, nonprofits, faith communities, medical professionals, and businesses. All of these stakeholders can, and should, be engaged in the process of supporting student success.

A substantive parental involvement is required at every level of the program. Specifically, shared accountability between schools and parents for high student achievement, local development of parental involvement plans with sufficient flexibility to address local needs, and building parents' capacity for using effective practices to improve their own children's academic achievement. When schools collaborate with parents to help their children learn and when parents participate in school activities and decision-making about their children's education, children achieve at higher levels.

Studies have found that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- pass their classes, earn credits, and be promoted;
- attend school regularly;
- have fewer suspensions and incidents of violent behavior;
- have decreased drug and alcohol use; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

**To learn more about this valuable program in YOUR school, contact:**

Heather Denny, [hdenny@mt.gov](mailto:hdenny@mt.gov), (406) 444-2036  
Cheryl Heldt, [cheldt@mt.gov](mailto:cheldt@mt.gov), (406) 444-0686



Information courtesy of

[http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/TitlePrgms/TitleA/TitleA.html#gpm1\\_4](http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/TitlePrgms/TitleA/TitleA.html#gpm1_4)

### GRG Support Group Spotlight: Butte

The newest Montana GRG support group has been going for only a month but they have big plans. Welcome to the GRGs in the Butte area!

**Location:** Butte area.

**Sponsoring Organization:** The Butte 4-C's is a non-profit resource and referral agency that houses several programs. It has programs for families, like the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship; programs for child care programs; Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); Connecting Families, a program that offers supervised visits for a fee; Parenting classes; and the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group. Butte 4-C's focuses on children, families, and child care providers. It collaborates with area programs to build support and a resource system for families as well as collaborate with community coalitions to develop services to meet the needs of the community. Website: [www.butte4-cs.org/](http://www.butte4-cs.org/)

**For More Information:** Tonya Crooker at (406) 723-4019.

**Support Group Started:** July, 2013.

**Group Schedule:** Meets once a month, second Tuesday of the month.

**Focus of the Group:** Primarily support but there are educational and social components as well. As a group they set some goals and determined that they would like guest speakers occasionally with information pertinent to their situations. They also would like to have an educational topic every meeting to discuss and receive information. They want to have a social get-together occasionally that includes the grandchildren and support each other in whatever situation is going on in each individual's life.



**Resources**

**Grandparents—Don't Neglect Your Other Relationships!**

Having children in the house again is a blessing, but it can also be a cause of stress that we may take out on our other loved ones. Don't let your relationships with your spouse or partner, your other children and grandchildren, and your friends suffer! Extension MontGuides, written by Sandra Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE, Family & Human Development Specialist, can help you recognize and resolve negative feelings and behaviors before they affect your life and family.

**Couple Relationships: Communication and Conflict Resolution**

All couples have conflict at some time. This is because we have a strong emotional connection with those we love. Conflict is not bad if the couple works through the problem and are respectful of one another in communication and action. When couples are unhappy, resolving conflict is more difficult. Unhappy couples often have miscommunication. Here are some things that cause miscommunication:

**Not focusing on the problem that we need to address.** Some people try to change the subject so that they don't have to focus on the problem. Others may try and bring in all of the problems the couple ever had to avoid the original issue.

**Not listening to our spouse or partner causes problems.** Interrupting your spouse or partner is one way to tell the person you are not listening.

**Assuming our spouse or partner can read our mind.** The other person will not know how we feel unless we let him or her know.

**Finding fault** with everything our spouse or partner brings up as a solution is not helpful.

**Competing with your spouse** to try and make your problem seem worse does not help when there is conflict.

**Displaying a negative attitude** does not help when there is conflict. This includes: mocking or insulting the other person, being defensive, withdrawing from the conversation, and being aggressive or belligerent.

Conflicts need to be resolved. Those that aren't will "simmer" between partners and eventually boil over into a larger problem. Resolving conflicts can be done in a constructive way. Some good strategies to use when there is a conflict include:

**Using active listening skills.** "I" statements are less offensive to the other person. For example instead of saying, "You never spend time at home with me," say, "I would like to spend more time with you. I get lonesome when you are gone so much. Can we think of a way to be together more often?" Acknowledge the other person's feelings. For example, "You sound upset." Check to make sure what you heard is what the other person is saying. For example, "Am I hearing you correctly, that you would like to find a different job?" The other person then has the chance to clarify if needed. Focus on the topic of the conflict. Don't bring in other problems.

**Saying what we mean.** Be clear in our messages and ask the other person what they heard.

**Being polite and staying cool.** If the situation is too tense, take a break and come back to the issue later. Be sure to set a specific time when the issue will be revisited otherwise it may be left unresolved. Allow at least a few hours to pass before revisiting the issue. For example, "I need to think about this, let's talk about it after dinner."

**Offering respect and validation.** Even if the couple disagrees, being respectful and validating one another's feelings is important in a relationship.

**Asking yourself whether or not the issue is important enough for a conflict.** Sometimes we argue over small issues that can be resolved by agreeing to disagree.

**Other Titles of Interest**

*Managing Anger for Better Health and Relationships*

*Positive Family Communication*

*Family Mealtimes*

*Handling Challenging Times*

See these MontGuides, and many more, in their entirety at [http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/msu\\_montguides.html](http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/msu_montguides.html)





**Health & Nutrition**

**Stretching Grocery \$\$\$ With Great Tasting Food & FREE Classes**

*-Phyllis R. Hansen*

Are you trying to stretch those food dollars to feed hungry tummies living in your home? There is help available! The **Montana State University Extension Nutrition Education Programs** offer a series of FREE classes to help you stretch food dollars while nutritiously feeding those precious grandchildren. The classes give you fast, easy-to-prepare recipe ideas that include the five food groups.

One idea to consider – buy chicken breast on sale and cook it ahead of time and freeze it. Now you have a great source of protein that is ready to go into a quick main dish, salad or casserole. This Chicken Club Salad is a quick-to-prepare dish perfect for a summer evening.

**Chicken Club Salad**

Yield: 4 servings

Courtesy of Iowa State University Extension, 2009 Calendar

- 1 cup uncooked whole wheat small pasta, such as macaroni or rotelle
- 6 cups well washed and torn romaine lettuce or spinach
- 2 cups chopped fresh vegetables (green pepper, celery, cauliflower florets, cucumber, carrots)
- 2 cups chopped tomatoes (about 2 large)
- 1½ cups cubed cooked skinless chicken (one half pound skinless, boneless poultry)
- ½ cup lowfat Italian dressing
- 1 hard cooked egg (optional)
- ¼ cup shredded cheese or cheese crumbles

1. Wash hands.
2. Cook pasta according to package directions; drain and cool.
3. Place 1½ cups of the romaine in each of 4 large bowls or plates.
4. Combine chopped vegetables, chicken and pasta.
5. Add dressing; toss lightly to coat. Divide evenly among the 4 bowls.
6. Top each serving with a few egg slices, if desired, and 1 tablespoon of the shredded cheese.



Go to <http://www.buyeatlivebetter.org/> to learn about all the MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs (NEP) and find and register for the FREE classes in your area.

**Phyllis R. Hansen** has been the Extension Agent for Nutrition Education programs in Yellowstone County since 1998. Her office is in Billings and has been presenting EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) in Yellowstone County for nearly 40 years. There are 4 nutrition educators with MSU Extension who teach about 300 adults per year. They also teach nutrition education to over 1000 youth in schools having 50% or more students on free and reduced meals.



## Useful News

### Discipline With Kindness and Love

For many people, “discipline” suggest a harsh or unpleasant action. It is often thought to mean punishment. But if you see yourself as one who teaches and guides your grandchildren, rather than one who punishes, you will search for techniques that resolve conflicts without loss of dignity for the child or for you. It is vital to remember that if you have a warm and loving relationship with your grandchildren, and if you communicate well with them most of the time, that is what is most important. Here are seven principles to help guide you.

#### **Tell children what they can do instead of what they can't do, or focus on the dos instead of the don'ts.**

If your language is overloaded with negative words (no, don't, stop it, quit that, cut it out, shut up) your grandchildren may decide to tune you out. If you limit use of negative words to situations of great importance, they are more likely to hear and respect them when they are used.

#### **Protect and preserve children's feelings that they are loveable and capable.**

Children need to give and receive love. They must also be able to learn how to function well in the world. You can help them by respecting them and letting them know we think they are capable.

#### **Offer children choices only when you are able to abide by their decisions.**

Children usually take you seriously when you offer them a choice. Often a difficult situation occurs because you offer choices you don't really mean.

#### **Change the environment instead of the child's behavior.**

Sometimes grandparent/child conflicts happen because some part of the physical surrounding is too old for young children (example: breakable objects on a coffee table) or because you expect more grown-up behavior or choices than the child can handle.

#### **Work with children instead of against them.**

Taking a moment to stand back and watch children and then figuring a way for them to do what they are trying to do can turn a battle into a pleasant (or at least tolerable) time for you both.

#### **Give children safe limits they can understand.**

Recognize their feeling without accepting their actions. Maintain authority constantly and consistently. When children break rules, allow them to experience the gentle consequences of their behavior. Children see the world differently from adults. Behavior and safety rules must be stated clearly and simply. It's not fair to scold for breaking rules they do not understand.

#### **Set a good example.**

Speak and act only in ways you want your grandchildren to speak and act. The importance of grandparents as models cannot be stressed strongly enough.

Information adapted from *Discipline is Not a Dirty Word* by Jennifer Birkmayer, 321HDFS51  
Parenting the Second Time Around, Third Edition  
Cornell Cooperative Extension

**Looking for age-specific tips on discipline? Check out these Extension MontGuides at**

[http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/msu\\_montguides.html](http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/msu_montguides.html)

*Discipline: A Parent's Guide for Infants and Toddlers*

*Discipline: A Parent's Guide for Preschoolers*

*Discipline: A Parent's Guide for Infants and School-Aged Children*

*Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Navigating Adolescence*

# Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana

## Western Region

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

**Lake County—Ronan**  
Nori Pearce  
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**Lewis & Clark County—Helena**  
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Council, Head Start  
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**Madison/Jefferson Counties—  
Whitehall**  
Andrea Sarchet  
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(406) 287-3282

**Ravalli County—Hamilton**  
Brenda Fisher  
Family Services  
(406) 363-1961 ext. 107

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

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

## Central Region

**Blaine County—Harlem & Fort  
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**Cascade County—Great Falls**  
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**Hill County—Havre**  
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## Eastern Region

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Jacinta Stewart  
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## Eastern Region, cont.

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Parent Place  
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**Big Horn & Rosebud Counties—  
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<http://www.msuextension.org>

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# 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*