

GRG NEWSLETTER



Montana GRG Project highlighted on CBS evening news

Project Director Sandy Bailey and co-director Bethany Letiecq were recently interviewed by a reporter from the Montana CBS evening news about the Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project. Highlights from the interview were broadcast during the 10:00 evening news all across Montana. Raising awareness about this issue is a key element in helping communities understand that all families can be vulnerable and we all must work together to strive for healthy, hardy families.



Good Luck Fonda! Thanks for all your hard work and caring thoughts!

As some of you are aware, Fonda Porterfield has been one of the driving forces behind the GRG Project for the last two years as she has pursued her Master's degree at Montana State University. She has spoken with and assisted many grandparents rearing their grandchildren, and has worked hard to share her love and compassion with everyone she has touched. Fonda will be graduating this May and leaving the GRG Project, but will always carry in her heart memories of the strong families she has come to know through the project. Her last GRG Project events will be this year's GRG conferences in June. **She will be missed!**

Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project

316 A Herrick Hall

P.O. Box 173540

Bozeman, MT 59717-3540

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

grg@montana.edu

(406) 994-3395

Sandy Bailey, Ph.D.: Project Director

Bethany Letiecq, Ph.D.: Project Co-Director

Aimee Kissel: Newsletter Editor & Project Coordinator

Fonda Porterfield: Project Coordinator

April 2007

Volume 4, Issue 5

Inside this issue:

Montana GRG Project highlighted on CBS evening news	1
Good Luck Fonda!	1
Respite to the Rescue	2
Reminder: Upcoming GRG Conferences	2
Facilitator Training	3
February Newsletter Correction	4
Grandparent Contributions	4
Support Group for parents/guardians of children with disabilities	4
I Don't Speak Cow	5
I Don't Speak Cow Continued	6
List of GRG Support Groups in Montana	7
Inspirational Quotes	8

Respite to the Rescue

The Belmont Senior Center in Butte has been awarded a grant by the Department of Public Health and Human Services that provides Respite Services to caregivers. These services are available to caregivers in the following counties: **Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Granite, Madison, Powell and Silver Bow**. The criteria for eligibility are divided into 3 separate categories:

***Caregivers of persons 60 years of age or older.**

This grant provides respite for the caregivers enabling them to take a much needed break. It helps defray the cost for someone to come into the home and attend to the needs of the senior. In turn, the caregiver themselves are able to get away to take care of their own needs with the peace of mind that their loved one is in good hands.

***Grandparents 60 years of age or older raising grandchildren.**

This aspect of the program will arrange for camps for children and share in the cost, thus providing some respite for the grandparent. We have contacts with a variety of camps touching on different interests and ages. Day care can also be arranged which can give the primary caregiver some much needed time away.

***Parents 60 yrs of age or older who have a disabled child residing with them.**

In these cases as well, the grant will absorb the bulk of the cost to provide services that will come into the home and provide care for the disabled child, thus giving the caregiver time away.

If you are a caregiver who fits these guidelines, or know of someone who could benefit from this program, please contact Marie Walsh at the Belmont Senior Center.

Belmont Senior Center ~ 615 E. Mercury ~ Butte, MT. 59701 ~ (406) 723-7773 or belmontmwash@yahoo.com.

Reminder:

Upcoming Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conferences

Saturday, June 2nd - Billings

Saturday, June 23rd - Great Falls

The second annual GRG conferences are right around the corner, so reserve your spot today. If you haven't received a registration brochure in the mail, and you would like one, please contact Debbie Albin at 406-994-6685 or send her an e-mail request at shanklin@montana.edu.

This year's conference will feature keynote speaker Jane Middleton-Moz, author of *Values from the Front Porch: Remembering the Values of our Grandmothers*.

We are also excited to be offering participants a copy of Jane's book, and a fashionable tote-bag free with registration and attendance. In addition, door prizes will be given away throughout the day. Be sure and reserve your spot today!

Support Group Facilitator Training

The Friday's prior to the GRG conferences in June, The Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project will host a half-day (1:00 to 4:30) facilitator training for support group leaders. This training will focus on starting and sustaining support groups, locating funding sources, and dealing with difficult members.

If you are a facilitator or would like to start a support group, this training is for you!

Registration Deadline is May 15th. Please call the Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project at 406-994-3395 with any questions.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

**June 1st in Billings at MSU
Billings**

**June 22nd in Great Falls at
The Heritage Inn**

Registration cost for this session is \$10.00 and includes an afternoon snack. If you are registered for the GRG Conference on Saturday, facilitator training fee is included, but separate registration is required.

Registration Form

Name: _____ Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Which training will you be attending?

_____ Billings Training on June 1st _____ Great Falls Training on June 22nd

_____ I have enclosed a \$10.00 check or money order payable to MSU Extension to attend one of the facilitator training sessions, since I will not be attending the Saturday Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference.

_____ I will be attending the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference and have already paid for the facilitator training as a part of the conference fee.

**Please send the Registration form with payment to:
Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project
Montana State University Extension
P.O. Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717**

**Grandparents
are Great Parents**



Newsletter Retraction from February 2007

The GRG February 2007 newsletter had a misprint regarding the Older Americans Act. The age limit to qualify for services was only lowered for the portion of the act covered by the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP), not for the entire Older Americans Act. Sorry for the confusion!

Also, the web-site listed to have legislative updates e-mailed to you was missing the end. The correct web-site address to check up on any legislation during the current Montana legislation session is:

<http://leg.mt.gov/css/default.asp>

From the Montana legislature homepage you can click on **BILLS** in the left hand column, and then click 2007 regular session. This will send you to a page where you can either look up a bill by the #, or you can look up bills by subject and then request e-mail updates on bills related to a particular subject. For example, if you want information on all the bills in this session pertaining to families, click the spot that says, "Clicking here and choosing subject". This will bring up in alphabetical order all the subject titles the system uses. From that list you can click family law and follow the web-sites further directions to look at all the family law bills the legislature is considering this session.

Again, I apologize for any inconvenience or confusion either of these misprints may have caused!

TV turnoff Week

Join millions of people from around the world in turning off your television and computer screens from April 23-29. This is a great opportunity to reconsider the role these technologies play in your families lives and make healthy changes. You can find more information on TV turnoff week at www.tvturnoff.org.

Grandparent Contributions

If you would like to highlight something special your grandparents raising grandchildren support group is doing please send an article or information to grg@montana.edu for possible submission in the newsletter. We would also love pictures and poetry. Please remember if you send in pictures you need permission from all the people in the pictures. You can request a picture release form from the GRG project by e-mailing us at grg@montana.edu or calling 406-994-3395.



Support Group in Bozeman For Parents of Children With Disabilities or Special Health Care Needs

DATES: Second Saturday of every month **TIME:** 11:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m. **LOCATION:** St. James Episcopal Church, Parish Hall (**basement**) Downtown Bozeman: Corner of S.Tracy & W.Olive

WHO: Parents and Guardians of children of all ages who have any type of disability/diagnosis and who want to connect with other parents for support and information.

WHAT: Parents in Gallatin County and surrounding counties have expressed the desire and need for a free support group for parents to link with each other for information and support. Parents Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK) is currently facilitating this monthly meeting. All welcome...please join us! **Contact:** Rebecca Adams at 1-877-847-8890 or radams@pluk.org PLUK also has offices in other parts of Montana. To find out more about what PLUK is up to in your neighborhood, just give them a call at 800-222-7585 or e-mail plukinfo@pluk.org.

The following story was written and submitted by a grandmother in Montana, who with her husband, are raising two young boys. Enjoy!

I Don't Speak Cow....

By Nancy Dyba

Last weekend was Mother's Day, and most of you had a celebration of some sort. We were out in the country again, and the celebration and gift part was a little short, but it was a glorious time nonetheless. Cristian made a card and a hand print at preschool and was sooo excited about giving them to me. No mention of mommy anywhere in the scenario. When he got home, he raced through the house searching for me, and was very disappointed to find that I wasn't home yet. It is sad that mommy is missing all of the excitement, love and happiness that goes with the position, as well as the little perks like the cards and handprints and snuggles.

The weekend itself was great. We woke up in the night at one point because it was too quiet. No birds talking sleep talk, no planes, trucks or trains, no cow calling their babies, or even coyotes gossiping over the evening catch. It was a strange feeling after this many years of noise and mind pollution, but we managed to endure. The only use for the television is the occasional video, as we are too far from anywhere to receive a signal. We don't have a radio we want to listen to, so we listen to each other. That is sometimes a novel experience. We don't even listen to the kids very long at night, as they are so dead tired they can't keep their peepers open. Going to bed with grubby faces and hands doesn't bother them in the least, and they often fall asleep with their bedtime snacks in their fists. Of course the evening silence doesn't benefit the two grownups much, as we are almost as tired as the kids are.

This country life is genuinely different for the boys, and is stretching a long way back for both Grumpy Grampa and myself. It is a different language, a different way of thinking, and lots of different things to do. We moved to town almost thirteen years ago, and left our "other" way of life in a box on a shelf for many years. We bought the RV and a boat, and had the leisure to use them as well as the cash. We raised a huge garden, and that was the extent of our farming, but we did it as gardeners in a town, paying dearly for the water and the acreage. We enjoyed it, but if a summer storm ruined our playground, oh well, we could go to the store and re-stock. Then sometime recently two small urchins moved into our house and hearts. As they grew, so did their need for space. I think it grew geometrically as their height grew in inches. Our backyard filled with tricycles, all manner of toys, swings and small barking animals. Our use of the RV and boat was restricted as there was no way these two could be trusted near water. This big old house became too small, and then the yard became vulnerable as they learned to climb fences and unlatch gates. We became very aware that our "other" way of life wasn't something of the past, but was a needed thing now. When we became aware that more help was needed on the ranch, we opened the box on the shelf and found that it refurbished nicely. We made a commitment to ourselves to give as much of this way of life as possible to the little boys each year, but I think we are giving as much or more to ourselves. Thus, our treks to "camp" each weekend started at the end of April, as soon as the roads had dried out enough to herd the Behemoth safely down the dirt roads. Last weekend found us living the country life again. This included gates to open and close, animals to keep out, and a wary eye to be kept on kids, cows and dogs that they don't mix too precipitously.

(Story Continued on page 6)

(Story Continued from page 5)

The oldest terrorist is mostly fearless, but critters the size of big black cows are more than a little daunting, and their unpredictable behavior leaves him a little untrusting. When I took him with me to close a large gate last week, one of those economy-sized hamburger factories was just coming in for water. Little person saw the cow coming his way with her loud beller and was taken aback. Mama cow saw little person, and was taken aback also. He didn't know what to expect of something so large and noisy, and she didn't know what to expect of something so small and noisy. He thought she might run over him, and she thought he was going to trap her away from her baby who was still out in the pasture. Mama Cow picked up the pace, bellered a little louder, and looked sideways at us as we stood in the gateway. Little person gripped my hand tighter, stood closer and looked up at me. "I don't speak cow!" he demanded, "What did she say?"



It took me some time to get him to understand that Mama Cow was as frightened of him as he was of her, and that she was merely in search of her baby. Her wild-eyed bellering was simply her way of calling baby back to her side because he was out of sight. This seemed to content the child. The next time the cows came in for water, he was content to sit in the RV inside the yard and watch the cows make a beeline back to pasture. His way of explaining? He was watching the cows go back to their "nests".

The other child, 'Chocolate Boy', is another story. He doesn't like worms, bugs are okay as long as they are on the ground and there is a magnifying glass between him and the bug, but fresh cow manure is simply beyond his ability to cope. I enjoyed watching him roll the tricycle down the same path where, as children, we had put many miles on our own trikes. But the third trip created a real scene. It seems he had gone through the gate and out into the yard where the cows had been coming and going to water. When he brought it back up the path into the yard, he noticed some smelly stuff was stuck to the wheel and it was making him unhappy. In his words, through the tears, it was very very icky.

Later, when the cows had come and gone he was outside the gate in the yard with me while I was cleaning up weeds and debris. I noticed that he wouldn't get on the ground, but was keeping his feet securely on top of the ATV, away from any danger of contaminating them with that 'icky' stuff, and it intrigued me. I watched for a moment or too, and then asked him what the problem was. He pointed to some smelly stuff on the ground, explaining that it was squengy and green. I should explain that most of us recognize the green stuff for what it is, and probably refer to it as B.S. rather than squengy!

Granted, the boys don't speak "Cow", but if we persist and work at it, we can teach them to recognize it. I think speaking it comes naturally.

Grandparent Support Groups Across Montana

Billings

Bernie Mason
P.O. Box 35021
Billings, MT 59107
256-2828

Bozeman

Fonda Porterfield
316 A Herrick Hall
Bozeman, MT 59715
994-3395
grg@montana.edu

Browning

Carrie Jackson
Eagle Shield Center
P.O. Box 76
Browning, MT 59417
338-7257

Butte

Butte 4C's
Terri Bolstad
101 E. Broadway
Butte, MT 59701
723-4019
800-794-4061

Colstrip

Jennifer Anderson
P.O. Box 65
Forsyth, MT 59327
346-7320

Dillon

723-4019
800-794-4061

Glendive

Pete Bruno
Parents Resource Center
200 S. Kendrick
Glendive, MT 59330
377-7515

Great Falls

Gerri Laubunetz
Healthy Mothers,
Healthy Babies
1100 6th Avenue South
Great Falls, MT 59403
268-6762
Jona McNamee
Cascade Extension
454-6980

Helena

Jeanette B. Mattfeldt
562 Broadway
Helena, MT 59601
442-8207

Lewistown

Denise Seilstadt
712 W. Main
Lewistown, MT 59457
535-3919

Kalispell

Melody Domphe
The Nurturing Center, Inc.
146 3rd Ave. W.
Kalispell, MT 59901
756-1414

Missoula

Barbara Cowen
Families First
721-7690

Kathy Revello, MSU Extension
Missoula County Agent
256-4208

Poplar and Wolf Point

Ardis Oelkers
MSU Extension
Culbertson, MT 59218
787-5312

Ravalli County

Brenda Fisher
Family Resource Specialist
108 Pinckney
Hamilton, MT 59840
363-1961 ext:107

Rocky Boy Reservation/ Box Elder

Peggy Riotar-Aquino
395-4875

Rocky Boy Reservation/ Agency

Evelyn Gopher
395-4875

Townsend

Nancy Marks 226-3710
Jerri Paulk 266-4249

Becoming responsible adults is no longer a matter of whether children hang up their pajamas or put dirty towels in the hamper, but whether they care about themselves and others -- and whether they see everyday chores as related to how we treat this planet.

~ Eda Leshan

To nourish children and raise them against odds is in any time, any place, more valuable than to fix bolts in cars or design nuclear weapons.

~ Marilyn French