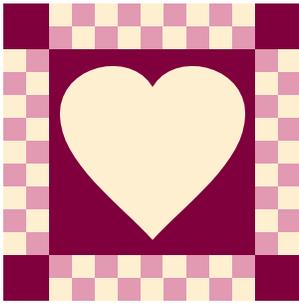


# The GRG :

*A Newsletter for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*

*Montana State University Extension Service: Family and Human Development*



## Inside this issue:

Free Publication to Help Seniors Save on Taxes	2
Identity Theft: How to Avoid Becoming a Victim	2
What is Power of Attorney?	3
I Do It for Me: An Activity to Encourage Independence	3
Celebrate Black History Month	4
Tips on Cooking With Kids	4
Re-committing to Your New Year's Resolutions	5
Teaching Grandchildren to Save	5
Letter from the Editor	6

## Wanted: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren!

MSU Extension Family and Human Development is currently seeking grandparents who are raising grandchildren (GRG) in Montana to be a part of a study to examine how parenting a second time around affects grandparents and how to best provide support.

### Why is MSU studying grandparents?

Grandparents raising grandchildren is becoming more prevalent in society today, and in order to meet the needs of this new family, more information is required which can only be obtained by speaking to the experts... grandparents!

### How much time is involved if I choose to participate?

To participate, you will be asked to fill out a survey about your experiences as a grandparent. After four months, you will be given another survey to fill out, and then you will be asked to participate in an interview which will cover some additional questions about your grandparenting experience. The surveys may each take about 30 minutes, and the interview would last about a

1/2 hour depending on how long you speak about your experiences.

### What kind of grandparents are you looking for?

MSU is seeking any grandparent who helps raise a grandchild across the state of Montana. We need to have grandparents who are attending support groups as well as those who are not in a support group.

### What will I get out of participating?

You will help the Montana GRG Partnership learn about the needs of grandparents raising grandchildren in Montana. You will be a part of something that will hopefully make a positive impact on GRG families in Montana. In addition, you will receive a \$20 stipend as a thank you for your time and participation in this study.

### How do I participate?

If you would like to be a part of the GRG study, or if you have questions, please contact Annie Conway at (406) 994-3395, via e-mail at [aconway@montana.edu](mailto:aconway@montana.edu), or send a letter to the address on the back of this newsletter.



## Free Publication Helps Seniors Save on Taxes

Sen. Larry Craig, chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, has just issued the latest edition of "Protecting Older Americans Against Overpayment of Income Taxes."

This year's publication includes a checklist for itemized deductions, such as medical and dental expenses, a standard deduction table and additional information,

such as how to ask the Internal Revenue Service for help.

This publication also provides information about the Earned Income Tax Credit, IRS Publications that can be ordered by phone or mail and the numbers for special IRS programs that offer free assistance. It is available free of charge by calling 202-224-5364 or visiting: <http://aging.senate.gov/03tax.pdf>.

## Identity Theft: How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Identity theft is a serious crime and has been on the increase in the United States in the last decade. In October of 2003, the Federal Trade Commission published a booklet to "help raise consumer awareness of identity theft."

Listed below are some helpful hints from the booklet that may help you avoid becoming a victim of identity theft.

- ◆ "Place passwords on your credit card, bank and phone accounts.
- ◆ Secure personal information at home if you have roommates or are having service work done in your home.
- ◆ Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or you are sure you know who you are dealing with.
- ◆ Guard your mail and trash from theft. Deposit your outgoing mail in post office collection boxes instead of an unsecured mailbox. If you are planning to be away from home and can't pick up your mail, call the U.S. Postal Service at 1-800-275-8777 to ask for a vacation hold. Shred or tear up charge receipts, old bank statements, insurance forms, physician
- statements and expired charge cards.
- ◆ Keep your Social Security card in a secure place, and give your SSN only when absolutely necessary
- ◆ Limit the identification information and credit cards that you carry. Keep your purse or wallet in a secure location at all times.
- ◆ Keep virus software for your computer updated. Viruses can extract personal information from your computer.
- ◆ Check your credit reports for inaccuracies or unusual entries. Credit bureaus are allowed to charge up to \$9 for a copy of your credit report." See Credit bureau info below:

Equifax- [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com), 1-800-685-1111. Experian-[www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com), 1-800-EXPERIAN. TransUnion- [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com), 1-800-916-8800.

For a copy of *ID Theft: What's It All About?*, visit [www.consumer.gov/idtheft/](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/). The booklet is there in downloadable form. If you have concerns or questions about ID theft, you can call 1-877-ID THEFT, the FTC's toll-free ID Theft Hotline. For additional information, contact Al Ward, AARP Montana, at (406) 441-



## What is a Power of Attorney?

Power of attorney is “a written, notarized document in which one person gives another the power to conduct certain acts on his or her behalf.”

Grandparents raising grandchildren may seek out a power of attorney from the grandchild’s parents in order to have the ability to make certain decisions on behalf of the grandchildren in the absence of the parents.

Power of attorney does not cover all instances where a grandparent may need authority. It is wise to seek out the ad-

vice of an attorney in order to decide whether power of attorney will suffice, or if legal actions such as guardianship, or custody are needed.

For more information on power of attorney, please see the MSU Extension Montuguide entitled, *Power of Attorney*, at [www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt9001.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt9001.pdf), or visit your County Extension Agent for a free copy of this guide.



## I Do It For Me: An Activity for Encouraging Independence

Helping children take care of themselves is an important step in their growing independence. Below, you will find an activity that will take advantage of your child's growing independence while emphasizing healthful responsibility and self-reliance.

### What you'll need

Paper  
Marker or crayon

### What to do

With your child, make a chart that lists healthful responsibilities:

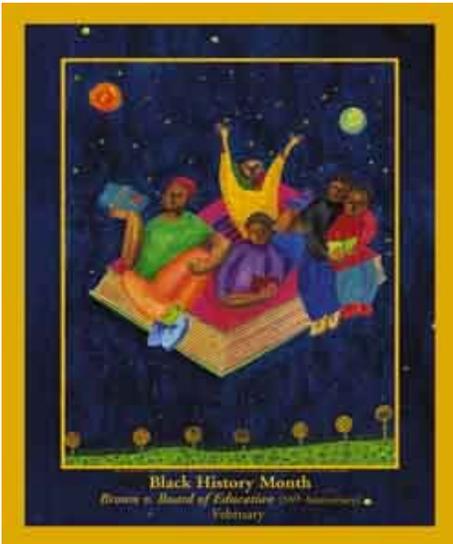
- ◆ I take a bath.
- ◆ I wear clean clothes.
- ◆ I brush my teeth at least twice each day.
- ◆ I wash my hair.
- ◆ I wash my hands before eating.
- ◆ I wash my hands after going to the bathroom.
- ◆ I use my own brush or comb and don't let anyone else use it.
- ◆ I get plenty of sleep.

The list can include other items that you and your child think should be on the list such as household responsibilities or positive interactions with others. Make a box for each day of the week after each responsibility and have your child check off the items that were accomplished each day. At the end of the week, put a sticker over the week, or a positive note about the child’s achievement.

It is important that children learn to take responsibility for the care of their bodies. For this and other activity ideas, visit [www.kidsource.com](http://www.kidsource.com).

[www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/healthy.html#face](http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/healthy.html#face)





## Celebrate Black History Month

Early American history classes in U.S. schools have a tendency to describe the trials and tribulations of the European settlers and their struggle to free themselves from England and its church. The era of the Civil War brings into focus the conflict over slavery and the plight of the African American people. February is Black History Month, and there are several ways you can teach your grandchildren about the rich history and tradition that African Americans brought to this nation.

Black History Month was first celebrated in 1926 as Negro History Week. Dr. Carter G. Woodson began promoting what later became Black History Month as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of black people throughout American history.

February was chosen as the month in which to celebrate because it was the birth month of two revolutionary supporters of the African American struggle for freedom: Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. In addition to

these famous birthdays, February also includes several important dates integral to the history of the African American people.

### “February 3, 1870:

The 15th Amendment was passed, granting blacks the right to vote.

### February 25, 1870:

The first black U.S. senator, Hiram R. Revels (1822-1901), took his oath of office.

### February 12, 1909:

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded by a group of concerned black and white citizens in New York City.

### February 1, 1960:

In what would become a civil-rights movement milestone, a group of black Greensboro, N.C., college students began a sit-in at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter.

### February 21, 1965:

Malcolm X, the militant leader who promoted Black Nationalism, was shot to death by three Black Muslims.“

[www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com)

*“Black History Month began as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of black people...”*

## Tips on Cooking With Kids

“Teaching your kids to cook involves a lot more than showing them how groceries become dinner. Through cooking, they can learn nutrition, organization and a bunch of other important life skills. Take full advantage of this time together in the kitchen by being prepared. Here's a few tips to get you started.

- ◆ Before you begin, read the recipe through with your kids and make sure everyone understands it. Follow directions exactly.
- ◆ Have kids collect and set out all the ingredients on a tray. As you use each item, have the kids wrap and put away the remainder.
- ◆ Teach kids how to measure carefully and accurately. They should spoon, not scoop, flour and confectioners' sugar into dry measuring cups, and level these ingredients gently with a knife.
- ◆ For liquids, use glass or plastic cups with a pouring spout. Show them how to read the measurements at eye level.
- ◆ Give kids their own workstations. Plastic cutting boards seem to work the best.
- ◆ Be sure to teach kids how to handle equipment and knives safely before you get started. Monitor their proficiency as you work together.
- ◆ Clean as you go, especially spills. “

[www.familyfun.go.com](http://www.familyfun.go.com)



## Re-committing to your New Year's Resolutions

Each year, millions of Americans start the new year with lofty aspirations and goals to improve themselves and their lives. Having goals can make people feel good about themselves, however resolutions can also bring people down and make them feel unsuccessful or unhappy if they are unable to stick to the resolutions. Here are some tips to help you evaluate and re-commit to your resolutions.

This year, try and be more broad with your resolutions. Instead of saying you will lose 20 lbs. by the end of the year, vow to eat healthy this year.

Don't try to change your whole life based on resolutions. This year, set one goal for yourself. It is much easier to focus your energy on one goal than it is to cut out everything that you want to change starting on January 1st.

Many people get caught up in unrealistic expectations of themselves. It is important that resolutions are challenging yet achievable.

Sit down and think of something you want to change about your life. Don't trap yourself into changing something about your physical appearance or health as many people do. Think about ways to improve your relationships with family, friends, neighbors, and co-

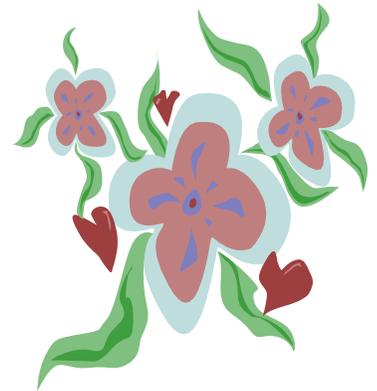
workers. Think of ways you can help people in your community through volunteer efforts. New year's resolutions don't have to be about improving yourself, they can also be about improving the lives of those around you.

Take time to think about all of the good deeds you do already. If you are reading this newsletter, you are most likely a grandparent who is raising your grandchild(ren). As such, you are doing the best job you know how to help raise them. If you are already doing all that you can, a resolution could be to continue to be the best grandparent you possibly can.

If at first you don't succeed, try again. By the time this newsletter reaches you, a month will have passed since you first thought of a resolution for this year. If you have stuck to your goal, congratulations. If you have been hit and miss, take a moment to re-commit to it, or pick a new goal for yourself.

For additional information on goal setting see the Montguide entitled *It's Your Choice: Decision Making and Goal Setting* at [www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt9011.html](http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt9011.html), or visit your County Extension Agent for a free copy.

Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy.




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*"Many people get caught up in unrealistic expectations of themselves."*

## Tools and Techniques to Help Children Save Money

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April 22, 2004 is National Teach Children to Save Day. As a prelude to this national event, MSU Extension will be bringing Marsha A. Goetting, Ph.D., CFP®, CFCS, Professor and Extension Family Economics Specialist to present training sessions in March on how to teach children to save their money. Workshops will be held in Missoula on March 9th, and in Billings on March 11th. Workshops will be held from 1:00 pm-5:00 pm.

### The workshops will include:

- \*Information on using the Money on a Bookshelf curriculum for children
- \*Blue, the Money Savvy Piggy bank for your grandchild.
- \*A packet of resources on money management and savings specific to Montana
- \* Cost: \$10.00. Scholarships to attend are available.

If you are interested in attending or if you would like more information, please contact Annie Conway at (406) 994-3395.





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## Letter from the Editor: The Goal of the GRG Newsletter

Thank you for reading the second edition of the GRG Newsletter. This newsletter is intended to provide useful and valuable information to grandparents who are raising grandchildren in Montana.

If you know of anyone who would benefit from this newsletter, please feel free to pass it along to them, or contact me so I can send them a copy .

I would love to hear from grandparents and Montana agencies regarding story ideas. If you have any helpful tips, ideas, or things you think would be interesting, please contact me. I am willing to do research on story ideas to make this newsletter as informative and valuable as possible.

[aconway@montana.edu](mailto:aconway@montana.edu)

Articles in this newsletter that have an internet citation under them, have been adapted or information has been taken directly from the website.

For additional information on Human Development and Families, or for helpful links to internet sites, please visit the [MSU Extension Website](http://www.extn.msu.montana.edu/) at [www.extn.msu.montana.edu/](http://www.extn.msu.montana.edu/). For additional information, or if you do not have access to the internet, please visit your local County Extension Agent.

I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.

- *Bill Cosby*