

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

107A



FROM: Office on Aging

SUBMITTAL DATE:
November 7, 2011

SUBJECT: Office on Aging-Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force Annual Report FY 2010-2011

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That your Honorable Board:

- 1) Approve the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force Annual Report for FY 2010-2011.
- 2) Instruct the Office on Aging to continue staff support to assist the Task Force in addressing the direction outlined in the report.
- 3) Support the ongoing participation of staff from county departments that serve grandparents raising grandchildren.

BACKGROUND: The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force ("Task Force") was created by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors (Agenda item 3.45 on June 30, 1998) and first convened by the Office on Aging October 1998. The Task Force was directed by the Board of Supervisors to identify a central point of access for grandparents into the county service system, and to address and resolve problems and issues being experienced by grandparents raising grandchildren. The Task Force has been an active force since its inception and continues to report to the Board of Supervisors on an annual basis.

Edward F. Walsh

Edward F. Walsh, Director

FINANCIAL DATA	Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$ 0	In Current Year Budget:	N/A
	Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$ 0	Budget Adjustment:	No
	Annual Net County Cost:	\$ 0	For Fiscal Year:	2010/2011

SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A	Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires 4/5 Vote	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE

BY: *Lani Sioson*
Lani Sioson

County Executive Office Signature

- Policy
- Policy
- Consent
- Consent

Dept's Recomm.:
Per Exec. Ofc.:

Prev. Agn. Ref.: 3.45 06/30/1998 | **District:** ALL | **Agenda Number:**

ATTACHMENTS FILED
WITH THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

2.17



Aging & Disability
**Resource
Connection**
ADRC of RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2010-2011



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force



RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE ON AGING, ADRC



*A Message from the
Director, Riverside County Office on Aging, ADRC*

As we continue to experience economic stress in Riverside County, we have many grandparent families across the county that have felt the full brunt of the economic downturn. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force recognizes the added stresses and strains placed on our already struggling grandparent families and they have expressed renewed commitment and realized a sense of urgency in the work that they do. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force brings together county and community partners who tirelessly dedicate themselves to fostering the security and viability of these often fragile grandparent families.

Truly, our grandparents raising their grandchildren are about the work of caring for their grandchildren, nourishing and encouraging these children as they grow to be productive members of our society. It is only through our cohesive collective partnerships that sustain the Task Force that the Office on Aging is able to respond to the ever-growing needs of our grandparents raising grandchildren whom at many times through great personal sacrifices.

When I review the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Annual Report, I am amazed at the work of the Task Force and what they have been able to accomplish over the last year by sheer determination in the face of shrinking resources. I applaud our county and community partners for their dedicated service to grandparents who give of themselves daily to provide a stable family environment for their grandchildren. Out of abandonment and turmoil, these courageous grandparents have forged a path of security and love for their grandchildren. They deserve all that we can give them to provide that safety net of services and supports around these struggling and often fragile family systems to enhance their chance of success. These grandchildren are our future and we cannot afford to do less. I have every confidence that the Task Force will continue to craft a vision for the future that will support and sustain grandparent families throughout Riverside County.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Walsh". The signature is fluid and cursive.

*Ed Walsh
Director*

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force

A growing number of grandparents in Riverside County are finding that they are parenting again by taking grandchildren into their home and becoming their primary caregiver. In many grandparent raising grandchildren homes, the parents cannot or will not keep their children at home for a number of reasons. In some instances it may be due to illness, death,



*Grandparents
Raising
Grandchildren*

divorce or financial hardships. Some parents may suffer from mental illness, substance abuse or may be involved in abuse, domestic violence or incarceration. In any case, the situation has been a hardship on the child and presents new challenges for the grandparents.

Understanding this role of becoming a parent again can often become complicated depending on the circumstances that brought it about. This relationship can fall into one of two types:

- Informal—is when the family decides that the child will live with grandparents or other kin. In this informal arrangement, a social worker may be involved in helping family members plan for the child, but the child welfare agency does not assume legal custody of or responsibility for the child. Because the parents still have custody of the child, relatives do not need to be approved, licensed or supervised by the County.
- Formal—involves the parenting of the child by the grandparents as a result of a determination by the court and Child Protective Service. The courts rule that the child must be separated from his or her parents because of abuse, neglect, dependency, abandonment or special medical circumstances. The child is placed in the legal custody of the child welfare agency, and the grandparent provides the full-time care, protection and nurturing that the child needs.

The type of role the grandparent has entered distinguishes a broad array of issues that impact the family--what court will decide on legal guardianship, legal fees involved, financial benefits available to the child and to the grandparent and certain educational rights. These variances can be very confusing to the grandparent as they compare their circumstances to other grandparent households.

The Riverside County Board of Supervisors became aware of the large number of grandparents residing in Riverside County who are raising their grandchildren and the difficulties some of these grandparents were having in obtaining the resources necessary to provide for all the needs of the children. In October 1998 a Task Force was formed to

develop recommendations concerning a single point of Information and Referral for the County.

The “vision” for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Program is to serve as a central point of access for information and linkage to available services within county agencies and the community at large. Trained staff are committed to listen, assess, refer and help grandparents seek aid in ensuring the safety and wellbeing for their grandchildren. The GRG program also acts as a clearing house to identify needs, collect data, and advocate on behalf of this population for the development of additional community resources.

Beginning as a collaborative between the Office on Aging and the Department of Public Social Services, (DPSS) the Task Force grew to involve the Department of Mental Health, Public Health, Office on Education, Probation, Riverside Sheriff, other law enforcement, County Supervisor Representatives, other elected officials, and members from community agencies. A key to the success of the Task Force was inclusion of representative grandparents in leadership positions.

The Office on Aging continues to staff the Grandparent Raising Grandchildren (“GRG”) Program and convenes the GRG Task Force on a quarterly schedule. Two subcommittees carry on the work of the Task Force:

The **Legislative/Systems Change Committee** identifies legislative, regulatory, and policy barriers, along with program gaps that impact direct services for grandparents raising their grandchildren, and to propose changes to reduce the various barriers and close the gaps.

The **Program and Public Relations Committee** develops work plans to assess the needs of grandparents, and provides information, education, and leveraging of resources to meet their on-going family needs.

- ❖ **According to the 2010 Census, there are nearly 60,000 households in Riverside County where grandchildren are living with a grandparent.**
- ❖ **Grandparent households represent 10% of all households in the County with children present.**
- ❖ **7% of the State’s total grandparent households reside in Riverside County.**
- ❖ **Over 50% of the grandchildren in these households are age 5 and under.**

2010-2011 Highlights of the Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Task Force and Subcommittees

The **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Task Force** and Riverside County Office on Aging extend a big “Thank You” to Dr. Phyllis McGraw for her leadership and support of the Task Force since its inception. Phyllis retired as Chair of the Task Force having served in that role since 2008. She is also a former member of the Advisory Council on Aging. Phyllis raised her granddaughter and now assists in raising her great-granddaughter. She has shared her insights in articles featured regularly in the GRG newsletter and has been an office advocate for Grand Parents. Effective June 5, 2010 Dianne Lewis, also a grandparent, began co-chairing the Task Force with Opal Hellweg, Legislative Assistant to Supervisor Jeff Stone.



Phyllis McGraw Ph.D.

The GRG Task Force meets quarterly to review the program’s activities, hear community concerns and explore a variety of issues that impact grandparents’ lives.

At the September 2010 meeting Penny Davis, Director of Foster & Kinship Care Education for Riverside City College presented “Why the Discipline That Worked for Us Is No Longer Working in Today’s Culture.” Ms. Davis explained that in the past, society was based on a vertical hierarchy system. In this vertical system, there are superior and subordinate individuals, one who controls and one that is controlled. For the most part, a family unit consisted of a father who was in charge followed by the mother and last in line were the children. Once our culture began a shift toward democratic values, the vertical cultural system shifted to a horizontal cultural system. Children now have many models of equality and expect to participate in decision making. While children in families are equal in value to adults they are not the same and need teaching and training. In the past most children did what they were told without questioning it, this may not be the case in today’s culture and caregivers need to apply a different set of tools in their parenting discipline.

In December 2010, Anita Rufus, Director of Partnership for End of Life Choices, presented the importance of making end of life choices and recording them on appropriate forms. She reported that every state is required to have some type of legislation in regards to advance directives and that many states have their own form and procedures. Everyone has the right to refuse treatment, to designate someone to speak for them if they can’t speak for themselves and to say what treatment they would or would not want. Over 80% of the American public have said that they would not want their lives artificially maintained by machines, but less than 25% of Americans have signed an advance

directive. Ms. Rufus stressed the importance of having this information recorded and included in our medical records. She shared the Five Wishes booklet as an instrument useful in guiding family members through a discussion of end of life choices. This topic is one element of the GRG program's concern that grandparents have plans made for personal emergencies and end of life, particularly since they have dependent children in the home.

Also in that December meeting, Ryan Uhlenkott, Regional Manager for Permanency Programs for the Department of Public Social Services explained Assembly Bill 12 and Senate Bill 654. AB12 provides that foster youth will continue to be eligible for benefits between the ages of 18 and 21 to help them transition to independence. They must reside in a supervised foster care placement and enrolled in school or employed. SB654 offers the same provisions to foster youth who are in Non-Related Legal Guardianships. This is part of a larger issue of helping all of our grandparent families to prepare their youth for independence. The GRG Task Force has agreed to address this issue in the future.

At the March 2011 quarterly meeting, Michele Wilham, Deputy Director of Senior Programs for the Office on Aging, presented the agency's report, "Boomers: Changing the Face of Aging." The report highlights the many aspects of community life that will be affected by this population as it matures. It is projected that between the years 2000 to 2040, the number of Californians 85 years or older will grow by 200%. The need for geriatric services in our communities will grow, along with the need for housing, healthcare, and employment for seniors. In addition, many of these older adults will find themselves in the role of a caregiver for a relative or friend—perhaps a grandchild. Community-based programs will have to find ways to meet the changing needs of older adults.

A number of topics were presented at the June 2011 meeting. Sonja Martin, a representative in the California Senior Legislature (CSL), explained its advocacy role. She committed to being watchful for proposed legislation that may affect grandparents raising grandchildren and bring these to the attention of the Task Force. Stephen Geist, GRG Program Manager, discussed the impact of the cuts in the State budget on GRG families. When our families are depending on multiple assistance programs, they are being hit with cumulative losses in assistance and additional expenses. Mr. Geist also reported on the Supplemental Educational Services (SES) offered through the public schools and funded by the No Child Left Behind Act. SES provides free tutoring to low-income students who attend schools designated by the California Department of Education as under-performing. This program is a special interest to the number of grandparents who identified the need for tutoring in the GRG Needs Assessment Survey last summer.

Program and Public Relations Committee

Programs for the year focused on three key areas: disaster preparedness, nutrition, and parenting.

Four workshops on disaster preparedness targeting Family Caregivers of older Adults and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren were offered during the year. The first was at La Sierra Senior Center in Riverside on September 8, 2010. David Ball, Systems Change Coordinator for Community Access Center presented critical information at the workshops. David is a Red Cross Certified Trainer on Emergency Preparedness. In addition to explaining the basic survival kit that every family should have in their home, Mr. Ball made the audience mindful that a variety of critical elements in our daily lives could be impacted in a disaster. He reminded the audience that they will need access to important documents including identification for all members of the family, insurance and financial information and should include copies of these in their kits. He also recommended keeping cash on hand in case electricity was disrupted and ATM machines and banking are affected.

More importantly for this audience of family caregivers and grandparents, Mr. Ball addressed necessary preparations for the special needs of those receiving care. For instance, the survival kit should include extra supplies of prescription medications; and assistive devices should be readily available and have directions for operation in case an emergency worker has to assist. Some assistive devices may require an alternative power source in case electricity is not available. Descriptions and photographs of children and family members with dementia should be available in case they are separated from their caregivers. In addition to having a kit on hand, each family should have an emergency plan for evacuation and shelter and be aware of the civic emergency plans for their community.



A second workshop was held at Country Village Retirement Community on September 16, 2010 with 151 community members in attendance. Besides a repeat of Mr. Ball's presentation, the program also featured Ms. Zuzzette Bricker, Emergency Services Coordinator for Riverside County Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services. In addition to emergency preparedness, Reverend Vincent McMorrow-Purcell, Hospital Chaplain at Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, discussed "Life Care Planning" reminding the audience that an important part of

preparedness is to designate a health care agent who can make medical decisions on behalf of injured or ill and are not able to relay desired wishes.

A third workshop was held at the Office on Aging on April 7, 2011 targeting East Riverside, Moreno Valley and Perris. Ms. Gina Perez, Community Preparedness Coordinator for the City of Riverside Fire Department, provided the information on developing a family plan for emergencies. Dr. Chutima Ganthavorn, Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor for UC Cooperative Extension, talked about food safety and focused on safe handling and consumption of food that remains in the home after a disaster.

On April 27, 2011, a workshop was held at the Wildomar Senior Leisure Community & Assisted Living. Nancy Hazidakis, Client Services Supervisor for the Riverside County Chapter of the American Red Cross, provided perspective by reviewing some of the disasters we have experienced over the past several years and then provided instruction on developing a family plan and emergency kit. Ms. Penny Davis, Director for Foster & Kinship Care Education for Riverside City College, did a presentation on the impact of trauma on a child's brain and their ability to respond during an emergency. Grandparents need to be aware of how to provide instruction and comfort during and after a localized incident or disaster.

Participants at each event were given a head start on their disaster preparedness being provided with a starter emergency kit. Caregivers received a back pack of supplies prepared by the American Red Cross. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program provided grandparents with a unique starter disaster kit containing basic items, as well as items useful when caring for younger grandchildren. Additional emergency kits were donated by Inter Valley Health Plan and distributed to attendees.

Ms. Penny Davis, Director of Foster & Kinship Care Education at Riverside Community College, offered two parenting workshops in the Coachella Valley. The first was held on October 12, 2010 and titled "Surviving Adolescence" in which she shared information about why the discipline of our grandparents' generation is not effective with today's teens and how to rethink how we communicate with teens. She provided tips on how to help teens develop "cause" and "effect" thinking about behaviors. The second meeting was held on November 9th and titled "Impact of Abuse and Neglect on Learning and Behavior." Ms. Davis described how the basic building blocks for normal infant development are formed and how neglect and trauma affect that development.

In addition to the workshop on safe handling of food, Chutima Ganthavorn Ph.D., Nutritional Advisor for the UC Cooperative Extension, and her associate made a presentation on "Smart Snacking" to members of the Temecula Support Group on January 20, 2011. Talking first about the alarming rise of obesity in our culture, the team then provided useful tips on choosing better snack foods for our families. A dozen grandparents participated and shared additional tips with each other on how they make healthy snacks more appealing to children.

To further the goal of providing information, services, and resources addressing the needs of grandparents raising grandchildren, 1500 copies of the GRG newsletter are distributed quarterly. The newsletter offers useful tips on health, safety, nutrition, and activities for children.

Highlighted titles this year include:



- Drowning Prevention
- The Epidemic of Childhood Obesity
- Nutrition Tips
- Healthy Snack (recipe)
- CalFresh Helps Families Eat More Fruits & Vegetables
- Catch your Child in the Act of Doing Good
- Make your Grandchild a Super Hero
- Building Self-Confidence in Children
- Five Ways to Survive the Holidays
- From a Grandmother's Heart
- Support Groups
- Grandparent Support Services

Generous Community Partners Make the Season Bright

The staff and families of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program are very grateful to the community for the many donations received to brighten the holidays. Most of the grandparents in our program thought they would be enjoying retirement and their “golden” years, but instead find themselves raising a second family—providing food, clothing, education, emotional support and discipline. This responsibility can often challenge the grandparent financially, emotionally, and physically. In a survey conducted this summer, a number of grandparents commented on feeling sad and disappointed that they could not provide their grandchildren with any of the little extras that children enjoy and deserve. The holidays are particularly challenging for those grandparents and they are deeply grateful for the community’s response to lend a hand.

The Youth Advisory Council of Supervisor John Benoit’s district kicked the holidays off by collecting food on Halloween to share with a dozen families in the Coachella Valley for Thanksgiving. Members of that Advisory Council from the Blythe area adopted two families in Blythe and provided them with a full Thanksgiving feast.



Supervisor John Tavaglione's Youth Advisory Council prepared beautiful Thanksgiving baskets with all the 'fixings' for dinner for eight families in District Two.

The Youth Advisory Council from Supervisor Jeff Stone's district adopted two families providing them with holiday treats of gifts, food, and stuffed Christmas stockings.

Supervisor Bob Buster gave a generous grant to the program to support the families in District One. The money was used to purchase warm clothes, shoes, and toys from the children's wish lists. In addition, Sandy Isom from Supervisor Buster's office, shared information about the program with the Montessori School in Corona and they collected nearly \$300 in gift cards and cash for GRG needy families.

Holiday treats, such as holiday blend coffee and mugs, cookies, and body lotions for the grandparents and gifts appropriate for older children were purchased with a generous cash donation received from the Riverside County Information Technology department (RCIT). Every year the RCIT hosts a golf tournament to raise money that is then distributed to county programs and charities.



The GRG families also received support from a variety of local organizations and individuals that stepped forward. The Over the Hill Gang, a classic car club in Temecula Valley, responded to a presentation about the GRG Program with over \$400 worth of gift cards. Friends at Sherry Mesa The Salon in Palm Desert adopted a family that had just received three young grandchildren. GRG Task Force Subcommittee Chair, Mary Hrinko, and her family shared the Christmas spirit of giving by adopting two families with very young children. Additionally six grandparents received gifts from the Inter Valley Health Plan's Senior Santa program. Community support was further demonstrated under the leadership of Bobbie Roberson as friends at the San Jacinto Senior Center donated 81 knitted hats and 7 handmade quilts for children in the GRG child care program. And finally, a gift from Hemet Ramona Valley Lion's Club helped fill last minute requests from grandparents with a myriad of needs including a Hemet grandmother caring for six grandchildren.

By mid-December, the Office on Aging training room illustrated holiday generosity at its best. Overflowing with Razor Scooters, safety helmets, dolls, and sports equipment, it looked like Santa's toy shop with many donations received from Toys for Tots and Riverside

Fire Department. While Riverside County residents have faced some difficult economic times, the GRG Program was overwhelmed by the spirit of giving that helped make a special holiday for some grandparents and grandchildren in Riverside County. In many homes, these were the only gifts the grandchildren and grandparents received.

Legislative/Systems Change Committee

The Legislative/Systems Change Committee of the GRG Task Force completed two ambitious projects during FY2010-2011. A Needs Assessment Survey was conducted over the summer months to update the Task Force on grandparents' concerns and priorities. After careful review of this information, an update of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource & Information Guide with expanded information was developed and distributed to participants.

2010 GRG Needs Assessment Survey

The survey consisting of eleven questions was designed to gather information about what type of arrangement the grandparents have with the children, critical issues faced raising grandchildren, personal issues for the grandparent, prioritizing needs in the household and challenges grandparents faced with legal systems and education.

During Strategic Plan development this opportunity to send surveys rendered nearly 10% return of 950 surveys. 98% of the respondents identified themselves as having primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren--88% of these grandparents still report they are Legal Guardian, 2% a Foster Parent, and 10% Informal Caregivers. However, committee members acknowledged that many times grandparents believe they are Legal Guardians because they have physical custody, but in fact the courts have not been involved.

The largest age group of the children being raised by these grandparents was identified as 2 years and under (19%). The survey indicated that the number of grandchildren in other age categories declines as the ages of the children increase. This decrease may reflect some of the challenges we have heard from grandparents about continuing care for teenagers or perhaps due to reunification with parents.

The most frequent response for length of caregiving is 4 years (17%). 34% of respondents reported that they are raising a grandchild with a disability or special needs. Grandparents were asked to note if the disability is physical, emotional/mental, learning or developmental. Many selected more than one category resulting in 15 physical and 19 each for emotional/mental and learning/developmental. When asked if they would benefit from

assistance in planning for placement of a child in case of an accident/death of the main caregiver, 51% of grandparents responding reported they would be interested.

Asked to rate the level of importance of housing, education, child care, financial assistance, resources for special needs, legal guardianship, transportation, food/clothing, health care/Medi-Cal, and emotional support, grandparents identified education as a very important issue (88.5%) and 34.4% ranked it as #1 in order of importance.

Results from the written comments were compiled into the categories of grandchildren needs, grandparent needs, financial concerns, child care, education, legal, parent roles, and specific grandparent suggestions.

- For grandchildren needs, 48 (53%) grandparents noted the need for a counseling/mentoring program to help their grandchildren deal with a loss, behavioral problems or special needs.
- Health concerns were the need most mentioned by grandparents for themselves followed closely by the loss of self-identity and self-care.
- 32% of the surveys had a comment on financial concerns with the majority of them regarding welfare benefits, housing, and lack of employment.
- Child Care concerns included financial assistance, a need for providers that work non-traditional hours, and care for children older than 5.
- The main concern related to education was help with tutoring. Grandparents felt that they were unable to help the children with their homework. They also expressed their frustration with Individualized Education Plans and the school system for failing to identify their grandchild's need for special education. It was noted that the Hemet & Temecula School Districts received positive remarks by grandparents.
- Legal matters addressed the equalization of benefits, rights for grandparents, and cost of legal fees.
- Parent involvement had 12 negative mentions and 3 positive mentions. The negative mentions included statements regarding grandparents and children dealing with the stress of having the parent in and out of their lives. Also disconcerting to these grandparents is the harassment they endure by the parent leading to some grandparents' belief that parental rights of the biological parent should be terminated once the courts are involved. On a positive note, some grandparents want the biological parents involved in the child's life and are hopeful for reunification. Two grandparents mentioned that there is not enough mental health help available for their children, the biological parent of the grandchild.

Specific grandparent suggestions included:

- A GRG cooperative that would bring together grandparent families so they would be able to share child care, transportation or even participate in activities together;
- A respite drop-in center that would allow them an opportunity to get away for a few hours;
- Allowing aided children to save for college without jeopardizing their qualification for welfare benefits;
- Legal Guardian I.D. card so that they would no longer have to carry along court papers identifying them as legal guardians;
- Not taking the grandparents social security into consideration in calculating the amount for food stamps;
- After two years of custody, legal guardianship should be granted automatically;
- As legal guardian, be able to add grandchildren to their social security so that they would be entitled to survivor benefits;
- Also mentioned was the need for housing for seniors with children in their care; and
- There are not enough free park and recreation programs that include teens.

The committee members are utilizing these results to identify priority issues and address the goals from the 2011-2012 Strategic Planning update. The issue of equalization of benefits continues to be raised by grandparents and a topic of concern for the committee but may recognize the economic hardships facing California.

2011 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource & Information Guide



This year, the committee began updating the Resource & Information Guide that had been distributed to grandparents for several years. Much of the information was in need of updating because of legislative changes and fiscal changes to State and County programs. Some of the resource referral information was also outdated because providers relocated or discontinued services. The committee also determined that the original Guide was written from the perspective of the juvenile system and the new Guide should include the additional information about guardianships through the probate system.

Unlike the previous edition, the new Guide was produced in a three-ring binder allowing updates and new information to be added easily. Also this edition has added more information about the education system, probation, health, and mental health. To help raise grandparents' awareness of current issues, the Guide includes warning signs for important topics like trauma, depression, suicide, bullying, cyber bullying, gang activity, tagging, and substance abuse. The Resource Guide is a valuable tool not only for grandparents, but also for professional service providers.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program Highlights

Child Care



A grant from First 5 Riverside, funded through Proposition 10, allowed the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program to provide child care and respite assistance for grandparents raising grandchildren ages 0-5. The GRG Program was awarded \$576,019 for fiscal year 2010-2011 to support child care for 70 low to moderate income, children ages 5 and under. Assistance for full-time child care is provided to working grandparents to sustain grandparents in the work force and to support the family. Respite care provides opportunities for the grandparents to take care of family errands, medical appointments and provide needed rest.

In the final monitoring review by the First 5 staff, the GRG Program was reported to have met or exceeded all target goals. During the funding period, the GRG Program provided services to an aggregate of 133 children and 124 grandparents. Of those served, 20 are children with special needs having been diagnosed with disorders like autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic syndrome, learning deficits or physical challenges. Thirty families in the Child Care Program were also referred to other health and education services through the assessment and care planning services of the GRG Program.



The First 5 Commission developed a new strategic plan for the next three years. Several Office on Aging staff and 6 grandparents involved in the GRG Program participated in four

focus groups held by First 5 to hear public input to help establish priorities for this new strategic plan. First 5 announced that there will be a reduction in funds available in the future.

Funding for First 5 is provided from Proposition 10 funds, which is the tobacco tax. Subsequent to these focus meetings the governor announced a proposal to move \$1 billion from current First 5 funds and target 50% of future funds raised from the tobacco tax into the State general fund. This had a severe impact on First 5 strategic planning process and decisions about the funding for local programs. The GRG representatives were able to share the importance of the scholarship program to allow some grandparents to remain in the workforce to support their new families and to provide respite for other grandparents who need to take care of their health so that they can be better parents to their grandchildren.

The GRG Program is very pleased to report a contract award for \$447,560 funding for fiscal year 2011-2012. Although at a reduced amount, the staff is currently working on modifications to sustain the current number of participants if possible.

This is an example of the child care program and the services it provides:

A grandmother contacted the Child Care program in response to receiving a GRG flyer at a health fair. She was raising an infant granddaughter who had been in her care since birth. The GRG Childcare Coordinator visited the grandmother in her home to complete the application and learned that the grandmother was near eighty years old and had disabilities that made mobility difficult and even carrying the infant a challenge. She was asking for childcare assistance to give her time for doctor's appointments, shopping, and other chores without having to try to take the baby along.

The application for child care was approved but another challenge presented itself. The grandmother was no longer able to drive and would not be able to transport her grandchild to a day care. The Childcare Coordinator researched and provided information on care facilities in the area that would transport the child. The grandmother contacted them and found a provider that fit her needs and would provide transportation. The grandmother was referred to the Office on Aging for further support services for herself.

After more than a year in the program, this toddler is thriving, and interacting with other children in the day care which has helped with normal child development and learning social skills. The grandmother also received assistance with parenting skills. Now that her granddaughter is walking and talking the grandmother finds it easier to provide care and enjoys raising her granddaughter.



Support Services

One of the primary missions of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program is to provide emotional and practical support to the grandparents as they face the challenges of being parents to their grandchildren. This support comes in a variety of forms from a team of caring professionals—information and assistance, care management, education and support groups.



The majority of the grandparents served are aided with information and assistance by telephone or a personal visit. Grandparents are provided information on services available in the community including programs of other County agencies and often can be linked with specific professionals or with partners that support the GRG Task Force. The GRG staff provided

support service through 914 telephone calls during the fiscal year 2010-2011.

For those families facing complex issues, the GRG social worker provides one-on-one personal support to the grandparent. After an in-depth assessment of the needs of the grandparent and their grandchildren, a care plan is developed to resolve the concerns, provide support, advocacy and linkages to resources that may be needed to be successful in parenting their grandchild.

Through a staffing change this year, a bi-lingual social worker joined the program providing more effective service to grandparents.

Care management was provided consisting of 574 client contacts during the year. Contacts include face to face visits, phone contacts, consultations with other service providers such as mental health, physicians, education providers and other social service agencies on behalf of the grandparents. 54% of those grandparents were between the ages of 55 and 65. The oldest grandparent was 78 and raising three grandchildren. 72% of the grandparents were single and nearly half of the households had multiple grandchildren residing with their grandparents. The largest grandparent household included five grandchildren ranging in age from 5 to 15.

The most prevalent issue presented by these grandparents was financial need. Many grandparents required home repairs they could not afford, or personal needs such as eye glasses. These needs were often put aside in order to provide for the basic needs of the grandchildren. Many of the families were dealing with children with special needs and the challenges of finding services for them. Few grandparents had a back-up plan or alternate

caregiver identified to take responsibility in the event something happened to the grandparent.

The social worker reviews complicated cases with the **Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)**. This MDT works to streamline the process for the client to obtain appropriate services through their combined expertise, partnering leverage, and resources. The members of this team represent a spectrum of county agencies: Riverside County Child Protective Services (CPS), Riverside County Adult Protective Services (APS), Riverside County Mental Health, Riverside County Public Health, Riverside County Probation Department, and California Family Life Center's Kin Care Program. This collaboration and assistance from community partners in the MDT and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force continues to be critical to the success of the GRG care management program.

A couple with three grandchildren became involved with the GRG Program after having worked with county agencies in two states to get custody of the children and to secure financial assistance. The children had been taken into the care of the juvenile system in the state in which they were living with their parents who were incarcerated on drug charges. When the grandparents were notified they immediately traveled to retrieve the children and were required to make several additional trips for court appearances to secure custody. They were led to believe that they would be receiving financial assistance from that county on behalf of the children.

When the children were brought back to California they did not enter into the juvenile system of Riverside County and the originating county stopped the services they had been offered. The grandparents were experiencing financial hardship from the traveling expenses and providing clothes and care for the three children and were seeking assistance from Riverside County. Initially the grandparents were working with multiple County agencies, the court system, the County Supervisor's office and State representatives that were providing the grandparents with information and assisting in explaining related roles and regulations. This became confusing for the grandparents and eventually they became overwhelmed.

The grandparents became involved with the GRG Program through participation in a Support Group and were then enrolled in case management by the GRG social worker. A Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting was scheduled with the agencies and representatives that had been involved with their case. Together, this team identified the specific issues to be addressed and the grandparents' goal. An action plan was developed with roles assigned to complete the plan and support the grandparents through the process. This process ensured that the grandparents knew what each agency was assisting them with and also eliminated duplication of efforts. The GRG social worker was able to coordinate all the services resulting in positive outcomes for the family.



Support Groups

Support Groups are an important resource to discuss and resolve family dilemmas with peers who are going through similar situations. Grandparents can learn more about other community resources, create a network connection, and have an opportunity to share their circumstances with people who really understand and will not be judgmental.

Through partnership with California Family Life Center's Kin Care Program, six support groups meet monthly in Temecula, Riverside, Cathedral City, Beaumont, Perris and Hemet. These groups are facilitated by staff from the two programs that often bring in experts from community partners to share information with the grandparents.

The Riverside Support Group had been meeting in the evening to accommodate working grandparents. Unfortunately, the attendance was dwindling because grandparents needed to provide dinner and take care of their grandchildren after work. A survey was done of the grandparents in the Riverside area and they favored moving to a daytime hour. The Janet Goeske Senior Center was able to provide space in the morning on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Ms. Penny Davis from Riverside City College Foster & Kinship Care Education helped to initiate the new time slot by offering parenting classes in the first two monthly sessions.

Kinship WarmLine

The WarmLine is an "800" telephone number staffed by an experienced social worker who provides emotional support, education, information and referral services to relative caregivers, particularly grandparents. It is funded and staffed by the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and was established to assist these relatives in breaking through barriers to accessing services and to improve service delivery to this population. The DPSS social worker on the WarmLine has experience with Children's Services, which enables her to assist in answering grandparent concerns and working with staff from multiple DPSS programs to collect information and devise solutions to grandparent issues.



During the past year the WarmLine responded to 414 calls on a broad range of topics. Those relating to guardianship include: obtaining the guardianship; rights of the grandparent after reunification and rights to placement when children are in CPS custody; welfare benefits; harassment from the biological parent; process to upgrade to adoption; and how to rescind guardianship when a grandparent feels they are no longer able to care for the child. This can be due to multiple reasons such as the grandparent's declining health, financial

difficulties or the child's behavior becoming out of control. Financial issues include: help with child care; financial assistance with household expenses; medical coverage for the child and for self; low cost legal assistance; and low cost housing. Several callers had made CPS referrals and were hoping for information, unaware that issues of confidentiality prohibit CPS from sharing information regarding outcomes.

Community Education and Outreach

The GRG Program Staff has been given many opportunities to share information about the program with a variety of community partners:

- A presentation on the GRG Program was given at the community center in Blythe in September 2010. Hosted by Task Force member, Dianne Lewis, the meeting was also used to test interest in developing a support group in Blythe;
- A presentation on the GRG Program was given in Spanish at the Community Settlement Association in Riverside;
- Family Health Night at Boulder Ridge Middle School in Menifee;
- Literacy Festival sponsored by First 5 Riverside and Riverside County Libraries held in Desert Hot Springs;
- A presentation on the GRG Program was given to the Over the Hill Gang Car Club of Murrieta and Temecula that resulted in financial support for holiday gifts;
- The presentation on the GRG Program was given to the Temecula Valley/Murrieta Valley Unified School District (USD) Interagency Council;
- The GRG Program was introduced to the Nuvview USD Interagency Council;
- GRG and Kinship WarmLine staff met with Judge Irma Asberry and Commissioner Kenneth Fernandez from Family Court in Riverside to discuss GRG issues in Probate Court;
- The GRG Program was introduced to participants at community networking breakfasts held by both Mid County and South West County Child Care Consortium Councils;
- Week of the Young Child Resource Fair sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse and the City of Perris;
- Health and Safety Fair at Riverside County Medical Center;
- Day of the Young Child sponsored by First 5 Riverside and Mount San Jacinto College;
- Community Resource Fair sponsored by Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (D.A.C.E.);
- Community Health Fair sponsored by Nuvview Unified School District;
- Riverside County Office on Education annual parent conference at the Riverside Convention Center;
- Stephen Geist, GRG Program Manager offered one of the featured workshops at the Family Services Association's 38th Annual Children's Conference; and
- Community Resource Fair sponsored by the Family Resource Center in Rubidoux.

In addition to these opportunities to share information about the GRG Program, staff members are active in a variety of provider networks:

- C.A.R.E. Team
- First 5 ABCD Task Force
- Inland Empire Disabilities Collaborative
- Metro Region (CPS) Community Partners
- Mid County Child Care Consortium
- Nuview USD Interagency
- Southwest County Child Care Consortium
- Temecula Valley/Murrieta Valley USD Interagency

Future Activities

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force will continue its commitment to address issues facing grandparents. The Task Force will also continue its commitment to identify additional resources and explore funding to assist grandparents raising grandchildren in Riverside County.

Key activities planned for fiscal year 2011-2012 include, but are not limited to:

- Advocate with federal, state, and local officials and key community stakeholders to expand information and assistance and care management services for elders, grandparents raising grandchildren and other relative caregivers and individuals with disabilities.
- Continue coordination efforts with Board of Supervisor representatives, local officials, County departments, Riverside County Youth Commission, Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, and other key community networks, such as California Family Life Center—Kin Care, to address changing/emerging needs and make appropriate influences on the service delivery.
- Expand support groups for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program countywide.
- Expand outreach to underserved grandparents raising grandchildren in Riverside County, such as: the limited English speaking; residents of rural areas; and disabled who are currently underserved.
- Organize and coordinate a countywide series of regionalized training seminars and/or collaborative expert resource fairs related to issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

Conclusion

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force successfully took on two large projects this year. The team work and energy given to these projects by Task Force members demonstrates the continuing commitment to the mission of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

Through the Needs Assessment Survey our grandparents identified the issues most important to them and helped the Task Force set its priorities for the near future. It is not surprising that one of the most critical issues for GRG families is the financial capacity to maintain the household providing for both the children and the grandparent. This is a challenge for families throughout the County and the resources for assistance are diminishing. The GRG workers have to be more creative about identifying resources and alternatives to cash aid.

The revision of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Information & Resource Guide was an ambitious project accomplished within a short time frame and funded through the Older Americans Act. The committee engaged in a dynamic process of interagency conversations and educating ourselves about how the difference between formal and informal caregiving impact the GRG families. The members had to explore benefit eligibility issues, grandparent rights, and court procedures and philosophies. Beyond the differences, the Guide addresses the common experiences of education, health, mental health and protecting children from some of society's dangers.

The GRG Program continues to provide support and nurture for the grandparents throughout the County who have taken on the role of parenting again. The Child Care program exceeded goals in number of grandparents assisted, making it possible for many participants to maintain jobs to support their family. Over 1,300 callers received valuable information and linkages to other services through the GRG staff and the DPSS Kinship WarmLine. The bi-lingual social worker was able to serve the diverse population of the County providing in-depth assessments, problem solving and referrals. She was able to help grandparents enroll for benefits, address school issues, receive medical assistance and work on behavior issues with difficult teens.

Together with stakeholder involvement we will continue our collaborative efforts to provide the critical components to increase awareness, provide needed information and assistance, as well as, streamline processes and improve service delivery in our participating agencies throughout Riverside County.



Grandparent Feedback

I am a grandparent that is grateful, not only satisfied. Your program was so helpful to me. I will always in my heart be so thankful for this program. Dorothy, my first coordinator was a very caring and attentive person. Donna Pierce has been my coordinator now. I have enjoyed speaking with her. She is a very reliable person. You can always count on her returning your call.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Helen

*Muchisimas gracias por su ayuda. Dios los bendiga.
Muy contenta por todo lo que me dieron gracias.*

Blanca

(Thank you very much. God Bless you. I'm very happy with all you've given me.)



Dear Stephen,

A million thank yous for your helpfulness in referrals, info. It has helped me tremendously. When one is new to the foster care system, it is a gigantic maze! I'm so grateful to you and the organization that you represent. Blessings upon blessings to you and your staff.

*Warmest Regards,
Alma*



We have been members of the Temecula Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program for the past 3 years. We were previously with the Hemet Grandparent Group since June of 2004 but it is easier to attend meeting in Temecula.

This (sic) past years has not only been turbulent for ourselves but also four our 3 grandchildren. We were blessed when Steve Geist was hired as a replacement for Valerie Wheat. We were doubly blessed when Veronica Castro was hired to be the Social Worker, Care Manager for GRG Program.

Veronica has a very special quality about her that makes one feel that she is in tuned with what you are going through and even though she does not show it on the outside. She inwardly cries with you and somehow helps you get through that moment of hopelessness. We cannot tell you how much we appreciated Veronica's help, support and guidance. Our battle for our grandchildren is not yet won but we can manage the heartache because of Veronica and for this we will be eternally grateful.

GRG Program is blessed with Veronica and Steve Geist. We hope to continue the monthly meeting in Temecula and will be sure to look up Veronica whenever we are in Hemet for the many court hearings we will probably got through but pray the outcome will be the adoption of Mary and John. Jane will always be a daughter to us even though she wishes to remain a granddaughter at this time.*

Thank you all for your help and support,

*David and Janet**

** Names have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.*



WARMLINE STATISTICS FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011*

Total Calls

July	54
August	45
September	42
October	30
November	25
December	24

January	51
February	23
March	33
April	34
May	30
June	23

Total: 414
Average Monthly Calls: 35

Percentage of Identified Callers by Region

Month	Riverside**	Moreno Valley	Mid-County ***	Desert ****	Southwest *****	Other
Jul	22%	7%	11%	17%	24%	19%
Aug	13%	13%	11%	7%	18%	38%
Sept	38%	14%	19%	5%	17%	7%
Oct	27%	13%	17%	3%	23%	17%
Nov	12%	16%	16%	16%	28%	12%
Dec	4%	42%	8%	0%	21%	25%
Jan	6%	27%	27%	10%	25%	4%
Feb	30%	17%	13%	9%	13%	17%
Mar	21%	9%	9%	6%	18%	36%
Apr	18%	9%	18%	15%	26%	15%
May	23%	7%	23%	13%	33%	0%
Jun	35%	13%	9%	4%	22%	17%
Average	21%	16%	15%	9%	22%	17%

*Data provided by Department of Public Social Services, GRG/Kinship WarmLine

**Riverside, Rubidoux, Norco, Corona, Mira Loma

***Hemet, San Jacinto, Nuevo, Homeland, Romoland

****Blythe, Cathedral City, Coachella, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, Thousand Palms, Desert Hot Springs

*****Wildomar, Murrieta, Temecula, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Anza, Quail Valley, Winchester, Perris

Ethnicity

Month	African American	American Indian	Caucasian	Latino	Asian	Pacific Islander	Declined to State
Jul	12	1	27	13	0	1	0
Aug	10	0	19	9	1	0	6
Sept	10	0	17	13	0	0	2
Oct	5	1	9	12	0	0	3
Nov	8	0	5	9	0	0	3
Dec	10	0	3	10	0	0	1
Jan	8	1	21	15	2	0	4
Feb	7	0	8	8	0	0	0
Mar	6	1	19	3	0	0	4
Apr	9	0	11	9	0	0	5
May	6	0	10	10	2	1	1
Jun	6	0	11	5	0	0	1
Total	97	4	160	116	5	2	30
%	23%	1%	39%	28%	1%	<1%	7%

Gender

Month	Female	Male
Jul	47	7
Aug	40	5
Sept	36	6
Oct	29	1
Nov	23	2
Dec	23	1
Jan	43	8
Feb	21	2
Mar	29	4
Apr	32	2
May	24	6
Jun	21	2
Total	368	46
%	89%	11%

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force

Committee Chairs:

Diane Lewis & Opal Hellweg, Task Force
Mary Price, Legislative/ Systems Change Committee
Mary Hrinko, Program & Public Relations Committee

Board of Supervisor Grandparent Representatives:

District I:	Vacant
District II:	Donna Johnston
District III:	Fran Vigil
District IV:	Phyllis McGraw, Ph.D.
District V:	Vacant

Elected Officials Representatives:

Senator Anderson:	Tom Rogers
Senator Emmerson:	Gina Gonzalez
Assemblyman Nestande:	Jennings Imel
Supervisor Buster, District I:	Sandy Isom
Supervisor Tavaglione, District II:	Karen Christensen
Supervisor Stone, District III:	Opal Hellweg
Supervisor Benoit, District IV:	Noel Loughrin
Supervisor Ashley, District V:	Robin Hastings

Riverside County Departments:

Adult Protective Services:	Lue Thao
Probation Department:	Andria Bartkowski
Probation Department:	William Waite
DPSS/CPS:	Ryan Uhlenkott
DPSS/CPS:	Ken Lapioli
DPSS/WarmLine:	Tamara Williams
DPSS/Foster Care:	Teresa Hendricks
Mental Health:	Debbie LeFevre
RCOE:	Stephan McPeace
RCOE:	William Cooper
Public Health:	Craig Demers
Office on Aging/FCSP:	Mary Hrinko

Community Agencies / Organizations:

First 5 Riverside:	Jean Alexander-Booth
Kin Care:	Mary Snow
Family Service Association:	Aaron Perez
California Senior Legislature:	Sonja Martin

Education:

Riverside City College	Penny Davis
University of California Cooperative Extension	Chutima Ganthavorn, Ph.D.
Temecula Valley Unified School District	Marilyn Skrbin

Advisory Council on Aging:

Barbara Brown
Dianne Lewis
Luella Thornton

Office on Aging Staff:

Ed Walsh, Director
Michele Wilham, Deputy Director, Senior Programs
Vikki Neugebauer, Coordinated Care Programs Manager
Stephen Geist, GRG Program Manager
Veronica Castro, GRG Social Worker
Donna Pierce, GRG Child Care Coordinator
Carmen Cornejo, GRG Office Assistant

Support Groups:

Cathedral City	Cathedral City Senior Center
Riverside	Janet Goeske Senior Center
Temecula	Mary Phillips Senior Center
Hemet/San Jacinto	Hemet Senior Service Center
Beaumont	Chatigny Community Center
Perris	Perris Valley Family Resource Center



Riverside County Office on Aging, ADRC

6296 River Crest Drive, Suite K
Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 867-3800
1 (800) 510-2020
TTD (951) 697-4699

Hemet Service Center
749 North State Street
Hemet, CA 92543
(951) 791-3573

Kinship WarmLine
1(800) 303-0001

www.rcaging.org
www.riverside.networkofcare.org

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