

impact

of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Economic Development and Quality of Life for People and Communities Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Issue

One in ten grandparents has been the primary support of a grandchild at some time in his or her life. In Arizona, 7 percent of all children under age 18 are living in a household headed by a grandparent. Figures reported in the 2000 census show a 73.8 percent increase since the 1990 census with Arizona ranking fourth highest in increase of grandparent-headed households nationally. Many organizations that provide services for both generations are not prepared to deal with the special needs that may arise. Legal options are limited and emotionally draining and financially expensive.

What has been done?

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Southern Arizona Coalition (GRGSoAZ) was formed in 1999 as an outgrowth of the National Satellite Conference on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Coalition members, and representatives from grandparent support groups in Pima, Maricopa, Cochise, Graham and Yuma counties worked together to determine needs and priorities. The coalition

includes 34 agencies providing services to grandparents and grandparent caregivers.

In 2000, twenty coalition members gave approximately 1,032 volunteer hours to complete 700 resource notebooks. These resource notebooks contain material and community resources available in the following areas: support groups, legal and financial issues, childcare and school support, parenting tips, and nutrition and health issues. Notebooks were distributed free throughout the community. The coalition also held an annual conference for grandparents, hired a full-time coordinator, launched a grandparent support website, and opened a new Kinship, Adoption, Resource Education (K.A.R.E.) Family Center in Tucson in October 2001, the first for Arizona and a model for other communities.

Impact

By the end of 2001 the number of monthly support groups for grandparents had increased from 1 early in the year 2000 to 12. Between October and December, the K.A.R.E.

Center had 85 contacts from local grandparents, and distributed 90 resource notebooks to them.

“Even though you’ve been a parent before, you haven’t been a parent to children with special needs in the kind of society we have now. The resource notebook is wonderful and I wish there had been a resource like this when I first received custody of my grandchild eight years ago. There was no place to turn to for help at that time.”

—Tucson grandparent raising her grandchildren

“I found the resources at the beginning of resource notebook to be the most useful especially the section on problem solving and child care school support.”

—program specialist at Area Agency on Aging

Funding

Arizona Cooperative Extension and more than 30 local community agencies
Community Services Block Grants

Contact

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