

GRANDRALLY

Off and Away They Went to Fight for the Children

Contributed by Dionne M. Simmons

On Wednesday, September 14, 2005, seven grandmothers and one grandfather from Montgomery County joined several Wright State University social work students, faculty, and Kinship Navigators for a ride to Columbus to attend **Ohio's Grandrally**. Nearly 200 grandparents and other kinship caregivers from all over the state gathered on the statehouse lawn to express their concerns.

Upon arrival in Columbus, the caregivers were greeted by staff persons from the event's sponsors: the Children's Defense Fund, AARP, and the Ohio Department of Aging. The morning began with an advocacy training facilitated by Barbara Boyd. Ms. Boyd is a former state representative from the Cleveland area. She encouraged the caregivers to become their own advocates. She used the phrase, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." She challenged them to get to know the legislators in their community. They were charged with becoming squeaky wheels by attending city council meetings, showing up at town hall meetings, and inviting legislators to attend kinship caregiver support group meetings.

Ms. Boyd shared with them that while social service providers have advocated for kinship families for many years, caregivers have an immediate responsibility to speak up for the children in their care. She admitted that legislators often think in a box and our legislators need to be educated on the challenges that kinship families struggle with. After this round of encouragement, the crowd marched over to the statehouse to support the

rally. A wonderful lunch was provided to all of the rally participants. Immediately following lunch, the Grandrally began.

Several legislators and caregivers took the stage as the program was ready to begin. Natasha Williams, WHIO TV, channel 7, was the mistress of ceremony for the rally.

Included among the attending legislators were State Representative Linda Reidelbach and Senator Ray Miller. The legislators were given an opportunity to address the rally attendees.



Kinship navigators and kinship caregivers met with Representative Fred Strahorn (center)

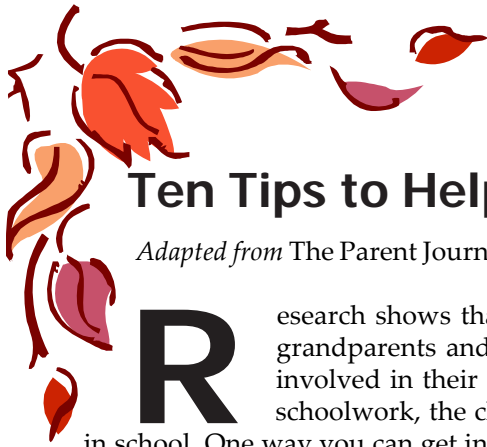
Several caregivers also shared their stories during the rally. The caregivers were passionate about the issues and their stories had some of us reaching for tissues. The caregivers were supportive toward each other. You could see so many of them extend their arms out to provide hugs for comfort. After this portion of the rally, the Montgomery County group of about twenty divided into two groups and went to meet with the legislators from our district.

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Caregivers Corner

Ten Tips to Help with Homework!

Adapted from The Parent Journal, Fall 1994

Research shows that when parents, grandparents and relatives become involved in their children's schoolwork, the children do better in school. One way you can get involved is by helping your child with homework. It will benefit both your child's school work and self-esteem. One important aspect of helping your child with homework is to find out if the homework is appropriate. If your child is reading or doing mathematics below grade level, the homework should reflect this fact. Meet with your child's teacher to discuss appropriate grade levels for your child.

Keep in touch with the teacher or teachers to be fully aware of the quantity and the quality of the homework turned in.

Set a schedule, including both a beginning and an ending time. Most kids need some time to unwind after school before they tackle their homework. Doing it too close to bedtime may make it difficult due to fatigue. Fridays are usually the best day for homework that must be completed over the weekend. Assignments are still fresh in mind and last minute panic rushes are avoided.

Encourage your child to divide the homework assignment into "What I can do myself" and "What I need help with." You should help only with that part of the homework your child cannot do independently, such as using flashcards, practicing spelling tests, and clarifying assignments. This builds responsibility and independence in your child.

Use "Grandma's Rule." Remember that Grandma is reputed to have said that there is no dessert until you are finished with your spinach. Hold off on watching TV and other fun activities until homework is completed.

Provide a home study center for your child with adequate light and few distractions. If your child concentrates better with "white noise" (music), provide that help. Also, a dictionary, paper, pens, etc., should be readily available.

Use direct praise for doing the homework and even more for accomplishment. "You've spelled 18 out of 20 words correctly—that's the best you've done this semester!"

Be available when your child is doing homework, so that you can answer a question if there is confusion. If possible, it is better for you to be in another room, so you are easily accessible and yet not a distraction.

Look over the homework when it is completed. Do not correct it unless you have checked with the teacher. Seeing the pattern of errors is often helpful to a teacher.



Study groups are often a good strategy. Your child may benefit from studying with one or two classmates. However, make sure they are using the time to study.

Allow bathroom, drink, and/or snack breaks, but insist on completion of tasks.

Free Tutorial Programs:

Albert Merritt Learning Center, 736 Superior Ave., Grade 1-6, Call to register at 937-222-7891

Dakota Center, Homework Club, 33 Barnett Street, Grade K- 11, Contact: Debra Green at 937-228-8961

Dayton Urban League, 907 W. Fifth Street, Grade 1-6 , For additional information call Ms. Darden at 937-229-7930

Nehemiah Xtreme Tutoring, Gospel Mission Inc., for additional information contact Eric Schroeder at 937-223-4513 or 937-718-5375

The Learning Club, TLC, Miami Valley Literacy Council, for addition information contact, Jennifer Davis or Carol Lynn at 937-223-4922

**Analysis of
Am. Sub. H.B. 66*
126th Ohio General
Assembly
(As Passed by the Ohio
Senate)**

Legal Talk



Reps. Calvert, Flowers, Martin, McGregor, Peterson, Schlichter, Webster, Aslanides, Blasdel, Coley, Collier, Combs, DeWine, Dolan, C. Evans, D. Evans, Hagan, Kearns, Kilbane, Law, T. Patton, Seaver, Setzer, Wagoner, White, Widowfield, Husted. Sens. Amstutz, Goodman, Clancy, Carey, Jacobson, Harris

Department of Job and Family Services

Kinship Permanency Incentive Program

(Primary R.C. 5101.802; ancillary R.C. 3125.18, 5101.35, 5101.80, 5101.801, and 5153.16; Sections 206.67.08)

The bill creates the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program. Under the Program an initial one-time incentive payment is to be given to a kinship caregiver [134] to defray the costs of initial placement of the minor child in the kinship caregiver's home. The Program may provide additional permanency incentive payments for the minor child at six-month intervals for a total period not to exceed 36 months. The public children services agency in each county is to make all initial and ongoing eligibility determinations for the program under the supervision of ODJFS. The Director of ODJFS may terminate or reduce funding for the program if the Director determines that federal or state funds are insufficient to fund the program and the Director of Budget and Management approves the termination or reduction. A kinship caregiver may participate in the program if all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) The kinship caregiver applies to a public children services agency;
- (2) The child the kinship caregiver is caring for is a child with special needs as determined under existing ODJFS rules [135];
- (3) A juvenile court has adjudicated that the child is an abused, neglected, dependent, or unruly child and determined that it is in the child's best interest to be in the legal custody of the kinship caregiver or the probate court has determined that it is in the child's best interest to be in the guardianship of the kinship caregiver;
- (4) The kinship caregiver is either the child's legal custodian or legal guardian;
- (5) The child resides with the kinship caregiver pursuant to a placement approval process;
- (6) The gross income of the kinship caregiver's family does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty guidelines for a family of the same size.

Definitions

[134] *A kinship caregiver is a person 18 years of age or older, caring for a child in place of the child's parents, and is related to the child in one of the following relationships: grandparents (including great-, great-great-, or great-great-great), siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews (including great-, great-great-, or great-great-great), first cousins, first cousins once removed, stepparents, stepsiblings, spouses or former spouses of any of the above, and the legal guardian or custodian of the child (R.C. 5101.85, not in the bill).*

[135] *To be classified as a child with "special needs" under these rules, the public children services agency must have determined that the child cannot be returned to the home of the child's parents and has one of the following conditions or factors that would require the child to receive adoption assistance or medical assistance: (1) the child is in a sibling group that should be placed together, (2) the child is a member of a minority or ethnic group, (3) the child's age, (4) the child has remained in custody of the public children services agency for more than one year, (5) the child has a medical condition, physical impairment, mental retardation, or a developmental disability, (6) the child has an emotional or behavioral problem, (7) the child has a social or medical history, or the child's family has a social or medical history, that may place the child at risk of acquiring a medical condition, a physical, mental, or developmental disability, or an emotional disorder, (8) has been in the home of the prospective adoptive parent(s) as a foster child for at least one year and would experience severe separation and loss if placed in another setting, (9) has experienced previous adoption disruption or multiple placements (Ohio Administrative Code §5101:2-47-30)*

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Montgomery County Combined Health District Adolescent Wellness Center

Contributed by Diana Medlock

Finding the right doctor for a teenager can be a challenge! **The Adolescent Wellness Center (AWC)** is the only medical office in the

Montgomery County specializing in health care for teens and pre-teens, ages 10 through 18. The Center offers primary health care including physicals for sports or work, sick care, care for chronic conditions such as asthma, gynecological care, pregnancy prevention, testing and treatment for STDs, and testing for HIV/AIDS.

Prior to 1993, when the AWC opened, there were no medical services directed to the adolescent patient. The only medical resources for teens were pediatricians or family doctors. Although these physicians provided quality care, they were not attuned to the special needs of the adolescent patient. AWC not only provides quality medical care, but also works with the adolescent patient to help them understand how to appropriately use the medical system.

Social services are also available for teens that need to talk to someone. The Center is staffed by professionals who know adolescent development and who understand the adolescent personality. Most insurance is accepted including Medicaid and CareSource. A sliding fee is available for primary care for Montgomery County residents who do not have insurance. The sliding fee is also available for gynecological care for patients outside of Montgomery County.

Hours of operation vary. Patients need an appointment on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. On Tuesday and Friday, patients can walk in between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. without an appointment. They will be seen on a first come, first served basis. When there are enough walk-in patients registered for that day, walk-in will be closed and patients still waiting will be rescheduled for another day or have the option of coming back the next walk-in day. The central location of AWC in the YWCA (141 West Third Street, Dayton) makes the Center readily accessible by car or bus.

Call 937-222-WELL (937-222-9355) for more information.

Shining the Light on Our Children

By Dionne M. Simmons, Program Director, Kinship Caregiver Coalition

The Kinship Navigators wish to highlight some of the wonderful stories that are shared by grandparents and other relatives caring for kids. **Please share your success stories with other caregivers through your newsletter, *Links*.**

We want to promote the successes of our children living with grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles, and other family members. Now is the time to brag about your children! Please share with us the excellent report cards, improvement with a tutor, participation in sports or church activities, awards, scholarships or

jobs. We want to hear about the successes of your children.

Write 2-3 paragraphs outlining what is so terrific that your child has done. We will include these stories in the *Links* newsletter. You can e-mail the information to me at dionne.henderson@wright.edu.

Links

is a quarterly publication of the Kinship Caregiver Coalition (KCC), an initiative of the Center for Healthy Communities.

For more information or to make suggestions, please contact Dionne Simmons, Program Director, Kinship Caregiver Coalition, at the Center for Healthy Communities, 140 E. Monument Avenue, Room 315, Dayton, Ohio 45402; (937) 775-1116.

In addition to the direct and in-kind support provided by our academic and community partners, the Center for Healthy Communities is funded through the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), Montgomery County Children Services Board, Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Mental Health, Planned Parenthood of the Greater Miami Valley, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Charter funding: *The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Community Mutual Insurance Company, Ohio Board of Regents Action Fund, Ohio Department of Health, and the Dayton Foundation.*

Grandrally, continued from page 1

We had an opportunity to meet with Representative Fred Strahorn and Senator Tom Roberts, and Senator Jeff Jacobson's aide. The legislative meetings went extremely well. Rep. Strahorn and Sen. Roberts were particularly interested in hearing from the caregivers. Rep. Strahorn was very interested in the difference between payments to kinship caregivers versus foster parents. The caregivers returned to Dayton filled with words of encouragement from their legislators and other caregivers.



Grandrally in front of the Statehouse, Columbus, Ohio

For those of you who did not participate in the Grandrally, it is not too late to make a difference. You can write letters, send emails, or call your legislators. Share your personal story of how you are parenting for the second time. Election time is near, when politicians are visiting your churches and senior clubs. Be sure to ask them how they feel about grandparents raising grandkids, and other relatives raising children. Now would be a good time to educate them on kinship family issues.

Montgomery County Legislators

Representative Arlene Setzer, House District 36, 77 S. High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-6111, (614) 644-8051, district36@ohr.state.oh.us

Representative Dixie Allen, House District 39, 77 S. High St., 10th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215-6111, (614) 466-1607, district39@ohr.state.oh.us

Representative Fred Strahorn, House District 40, 77 S. High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-6111, (614) 466-2960, district40@ohr.state.oh.us

Senator Tom Roberts, 5th Senate District, Senate Building, Rm. 048, Columbus, OH 43215, (614) 466-6247, troberts@maild.sen.state.oh.us

Senator Jeff Jacobson, 6th Senate District, Senate Building, Rm. 138, Columbus, OH 43215 (614) 466-4538, jjacobso@mailr.sen.state.oh.us



Kinship caregivers met with Senator Jeff Jacobson's aide

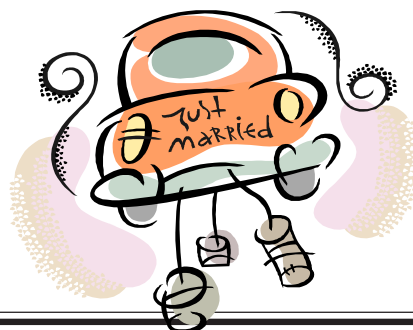
Senator Steve Austria, 10th Senate District, Senate Building, Rm. 132, Columbus, OH 43215 (614) 466-3780, sd10@mailr.sen.state.oh.us

Kinship Caregiver Coalition Director Has a New Name

No, we haven't had a personnel change! **Dionne Henderson**, Program Director for the Kinship Caregiver Coalition, became **Dionne Simmons** on September 3, 2005 when she married Charles Simmons. Congratulations and best wishes to Dionne and Chuck!



Note: Not everything has changed. Dionne has kept her e-mail address as dionne.henderson@wright.edu

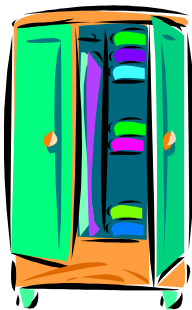


Kinship Resources

Kinship Kloset Update

As the winter months approach, we are in need of some winter children's clothing. We are desperately in need of boys and girls clothing size 10 to 20. In particular, we need school uniforms (navy pants, navy sweaters, and white tops). Also, we are need of new socks and undergarments, all sizes. Call 775-1144 or 775-1145 to donate items.

At this time we are no longer accepting adult size clothing.



The cleaner the air, the warmer the heat will be that is produced. There is no need to purchase expensive filters as long as you keep changing them regularly. However, not changing filters regularly could result in having to purchase a new furnace.

3. **Keep all interior doors open to ensure proper heating throughout the house.** Closing off rooms that seem colder than others actually causes the furnace to shut on and off more quickly, which makes the house heat unevenly. On the coldest days of the year, the furnace should seem like it never shuts off. This is a good thing; it does not waste energy like you may think.

4. **Don't use your fireplace.** Believe it or not, the fireplace is one of the most inefficient ways to heat your home. A roaring fire can exhaust as much as 24,000 cubic feet of air per hour to the outside, which must be replaced by cold air coming into the house from the outside. Your heating system must warm up this air, which is then exhausted through your chimney.

Free Dental Assistance

The Dayton Dental Collaborative is providing free dental services to low income families on **November 23, 2005**. Free services include extractions, fillings, and cleanings. Adults and children are welcome. Services will only be provided to individuals without dental insurance.



Call Tonya at 937-435-5163 to schedule an appointment.

Following these few tips will help keep costs down as you heat up your house. In addition, Community Action Partnership's Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) helps low-income residents save money on the high cost of heating and cooling their homes by providing energy assessments and installation of energy-saving materials in the homes and apartments of qualifying individuals. For more tips on energy efficiency, or to have your home weatherized, **contact the HWAP department at 937-341-5000**.

Energy Savings Tips from Community Action Partnership

Contributed by Ioy Williams, Communication Specialist

The winter season can be one of the most expensive times of the year. Not only do we experience an increase in spending during the holidays, but we are also plagued with a rise in heating bills. Below you will find a few tips on how to keep heating costs down this winter season.

1. **Make sure your furnace is free of dirt and debris.** Have a professional clean and tune your furnace regularly.

2. **Be sure to change your air filter once every month.** If you have pets, you should change it twice a month. Your furnace needs clean air just like you to function properly.

Kinship Caregiver Coalition Web Site

Students from Wright State University's MIS 495 course, under the guidance of Dionne



Simmons and Annemarie Halfpap, Research Support Technician for the Center for Healthy Communities, constructed a web site specifically for kinship care for their 2005 spring quarter class project.

The web site is located on the Center for Healthy Communities web site, hosted by the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine. The site features resource information, links to state and national agencies involved in kinship care issues, legal forms that can be downloaded, a list of support groups, and a calendar of events. Please be sure to visit the new site at: <http://www.med.wright.edu/chc/kinship/>

Make a Difference Day October 22, 2005

Submitted by Bonnie Grooms, Kinship Navigator

October 22, 2005 was **Make a Difference Day**, which is an annual event. It was created by USA Weekend Magazine and is observed nationally. This is a day of celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. Make a Difference Day is held the fourth Saturday of every October. In 2004, three million people worked to make a difference in their communities.

The Kinship Caregiver Coalition had the honor of being chosen by the **American Legion Post #776** to be its Make a Difference Day project. The American Legion purchased a van-full of supplies for donation to the Kinship Kloset. The Kloset is a resource for Kinship Navigator clients located in space provided by First Baptist Church and East Third Street Baptist Church. The Kloset provides free new and gently used clothing, school supplies and other items to clients. In 2004, the Kinship Kloset provided clothing to nearly one hundred children.



Members of American Legion Post #776 and Kinship Navigators at the Kinship Kloset, First Baptist Church

We want to say to the American Legion Post #776 – you make us feel so good when you choose the Kinship Caregiver Coalition as your project. We can't thank you enough for all of the supplies.

Winter Payment Assistance Programs

PUCO Winter Reconnect Order 1-800-686-7826

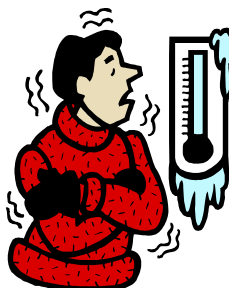
If you have natural gas or electric service disconnected for nonpayment, you can use the Winter Reconnect Order to reconnect service by paying the amount you owe or \$175.00, whichever is less, in addition the service reconnection fee of \$20 or less.

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) 1-800-282-0880

If you are income-eligible and need help paying your winter heating bill, HEAP may be able to assist you. The amount of assistance will depend on the size of your household, your total income and the type of heating fuel you need.

Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (EHEAP) 1-800-282-0880

From November 1st to April 15th, if you are unable to pay your energy bill or have less than a 10-day supply of heating fuel, EHEAP may provide funds to continue or restore your service for up to 30 days. You may also be



able to use the funds to help repair a heating system. For longer-term assistance, see the information about HEAP.

Ohio Energy Credit Program (OECF) 1-800-282-0880

If you are an income-eligible senior or have a physical disability, the Ohio Energy Credit Program may be able to help pay a percentage of your winter heating costs.

DP&L's Medical Certification Program 937-331-3900

If you receive care for a serious medical condition and need help paying your energy bill, you may qualify for this program. You must be a permanent resident and you must be certified by a licensed physician or by a local Board of Health physician. DP&L can defer payment for 30 days, up to 90 days per permanent resident.

The Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2 is available to come to your home and help you complete applications for the following programs: HEAP, EHEAP, PIPP, HWAP. Call Evelyn Axt, Community Service Coordinator at **937-341-3018** or **1-800-258-7277**.