

Highlighting the Benefits of a Cross Systems Approach to Working With Grandparent Caregivers: A Model Social Work Internship Initiative

Presented at the 2004 Joint Conference of the American Society on
Aging & the National Council on the Aging
San Francisco, California

April 14-17, 2004

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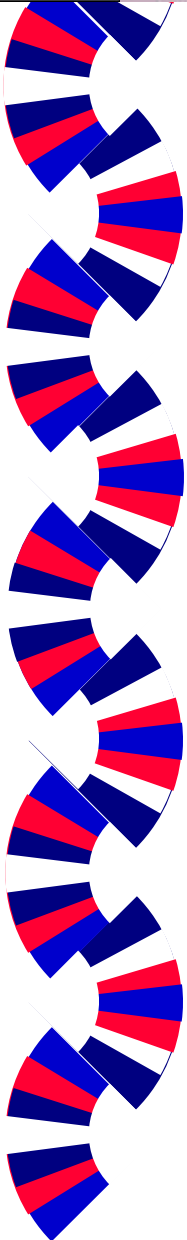
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

- The New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) was established as both a Federal and a municipal entity to represent and address the needs of the elderly residents of New York City. The Department's activities are directed toward the provision of community-based programs and services that foster independence, safety, wellness, and quality of life for seniors.
- DFTA's services include a network of over 335 senior centers throughout the 5 boroughs; congregate and home delivered meals; homecare; transportation; health promotion; caregiver assistance; senior training and employment; information and referral services; and assistance for victims of crime and elder abuse.



SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION INITIATIVE

- The Social Work Education initiative at DFTA has over a **10 year** history and commitment to exposing students to various systems throughout the Department by creating placement opportunities within different parts of the organization.
- Over three years ago a partnership was established with the Administration of Children's Services (ACS) to place child welfare social work interns employed by ACS within our Grandparents Resource Center.
- One of the goals of the ACS and DFTA collaboration was to encourage a cross-systems approach to serving grandparents raising their grandchildren.





New York City Department for the Aging: Social Work Internship Program

2002 – 2003 School Year

- ◆ 13 social worker interns placed within DFTA

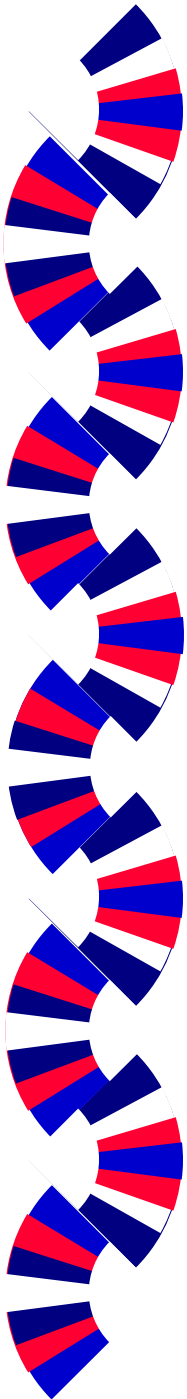
- ◆ 4 clinical
- ◆ 3 community organizing
- ◆ 1 research
- ◆ 4 social administration
- ◆ 1 generalist

2003 – 2004 School Year

- ◆ 16 social worker interns
 - 10 placed within DFTA
 - 6 in community agencies

- ◆ 10 clinical
- ◆ 2 community organizing
- ◆ 2 research
- ◆ 1 social administration
- ◆ 1 generalist

We are projecting the placement of 25 social work interns for the coming school year (this includes 2 Bachelor of Social Work students).



New York City Department for the Aging: Structure of the ACS & DFTA Student Partnership



Organization

- Students are placed within the Grandparent Resource Center (GRC) within the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA).

Days at placement

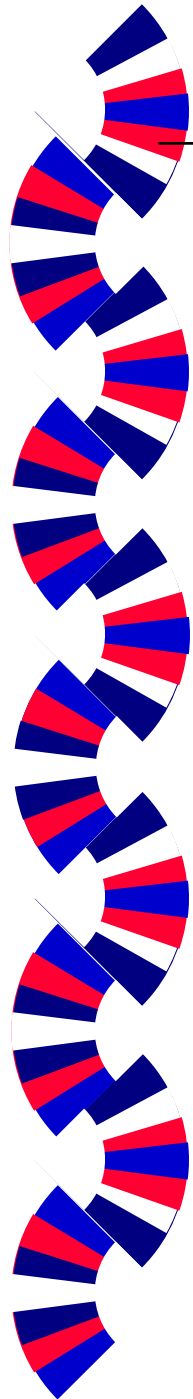
- The students are at school 1 day a week and are at their placement 4 days a week.
- Students meet individually with their supervisor and participate in a group supervisory meeting with other students placed at DFTA.

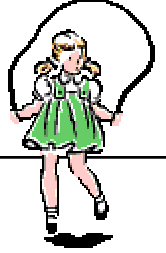
Student interns

- ◆ 9 child welfare work study students have been placed in the three years that this project has existed.
- ◆ Currently there are 2 child welfare work study students in the unit.
- ◆ All students had worked within the Administration of Children's Services (ACS) for at least 3 years. Most of the students had worked for over 10 years.

Concentrations

- Casework/clinical
- Administration
- Community organization
- Group work





Internship assignments

Running support groups

- With grandparents who are raising their grandchildren

Community Organizing

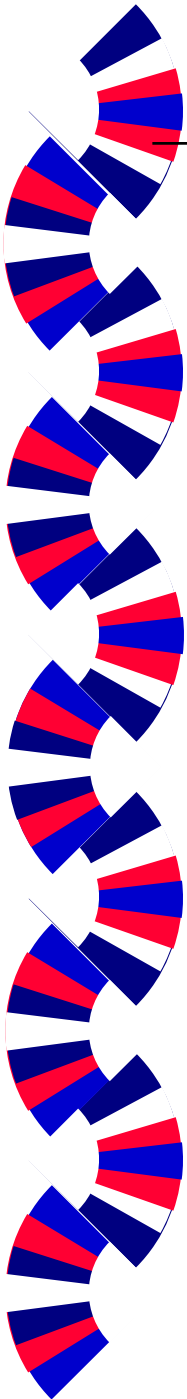
- Coordinate workshops for existing community grandparent support groups
- Assist new groups in their recruitment process
- Work with grandparent coalitions
- Recruit families for a new healthcare project
- Assist with community presentations/represent unit on committees

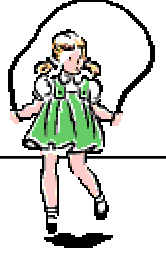
Administration

- Coordinate special activities, such as recognition ceremonies, holiday events, recreational activities, toy drive
- Assist in conference planning
- Develop protocols and assessment tools within unit

Casework/clinical

- Casework Intervention, supportive counseling and crisis intervention with grandparents and their families





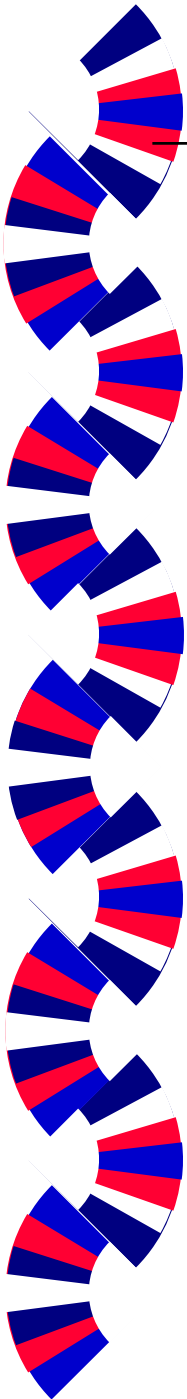
Group supervisory meetings


Role of group supervision

- Case review
- Sharing information on assignments
- Increase knowledge on resources/aging process
- Presentations from DFTA staff

Types of presentations held at weekly meetings

- Elder Abuse
- Planning and budgetary issues within city government
- Health insurance
- Contracting in city government
- Community services in aging
- Benefits and Entitlements
- Legislation and advocacy
- Development and fundraising
- Alzheimer's Disease and Long-term care
- Housing issues
- Intergenerational issues

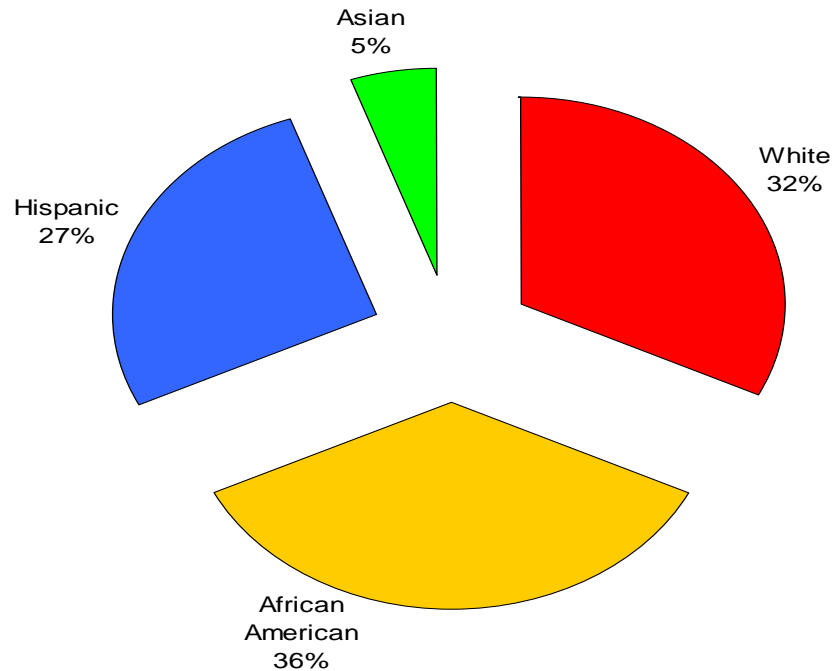




GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN: NEW YORK CITY DEMOGRAPHICS Census: 2000

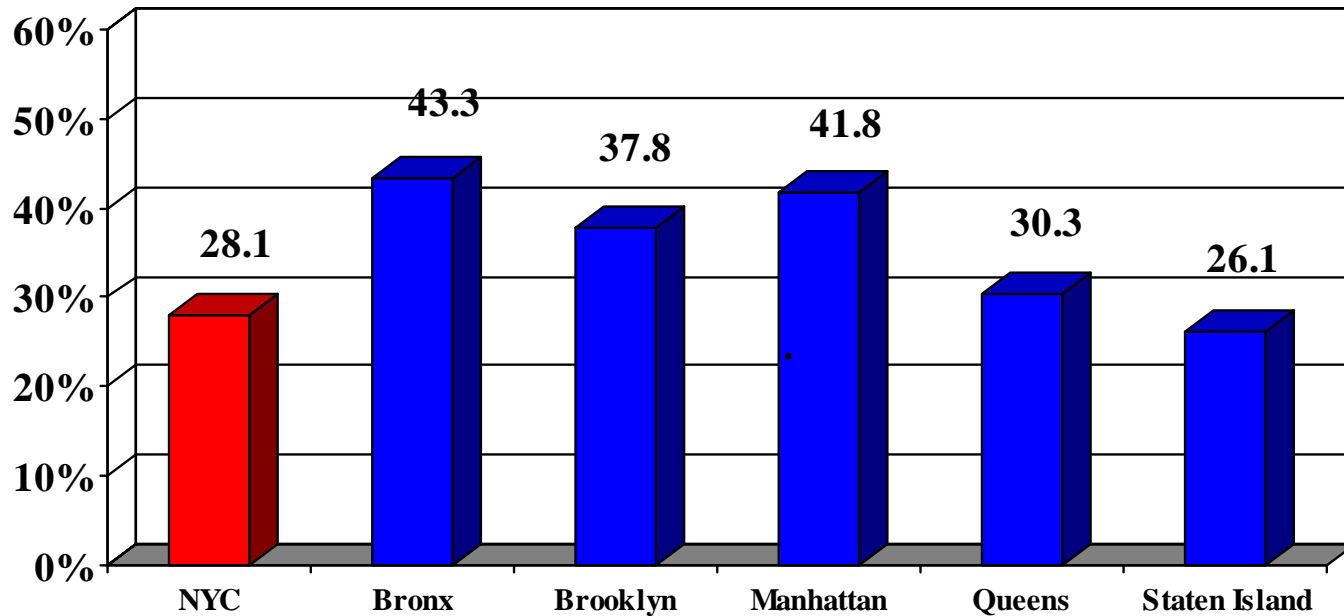
- **299,133 Grandparents are living in households with one or more grandchildren in New York City.**
- **83,946 of these Grandparents have responsibility for raising their grandchildren (28%).**
- **The number of children being raising by a grandparent has increased by 30% within the past decade.**

Race and Ethnicity of Grandparents Responsible for their Grandchild New York State : 2000



- Grandparents responsible for the care of their grandchildren represent all racial and ethnic groups. While over one-third of the grandparents are African American, close to one-third are white, non-Hispanic. In addition, over one-quarter of the grandparents are Hispanic/Latino and another 5 percent are Asian.

Percent of Grandparents who are Responsible for Care of a Live-in Grandchild by Borough: 2000 N = 229,133



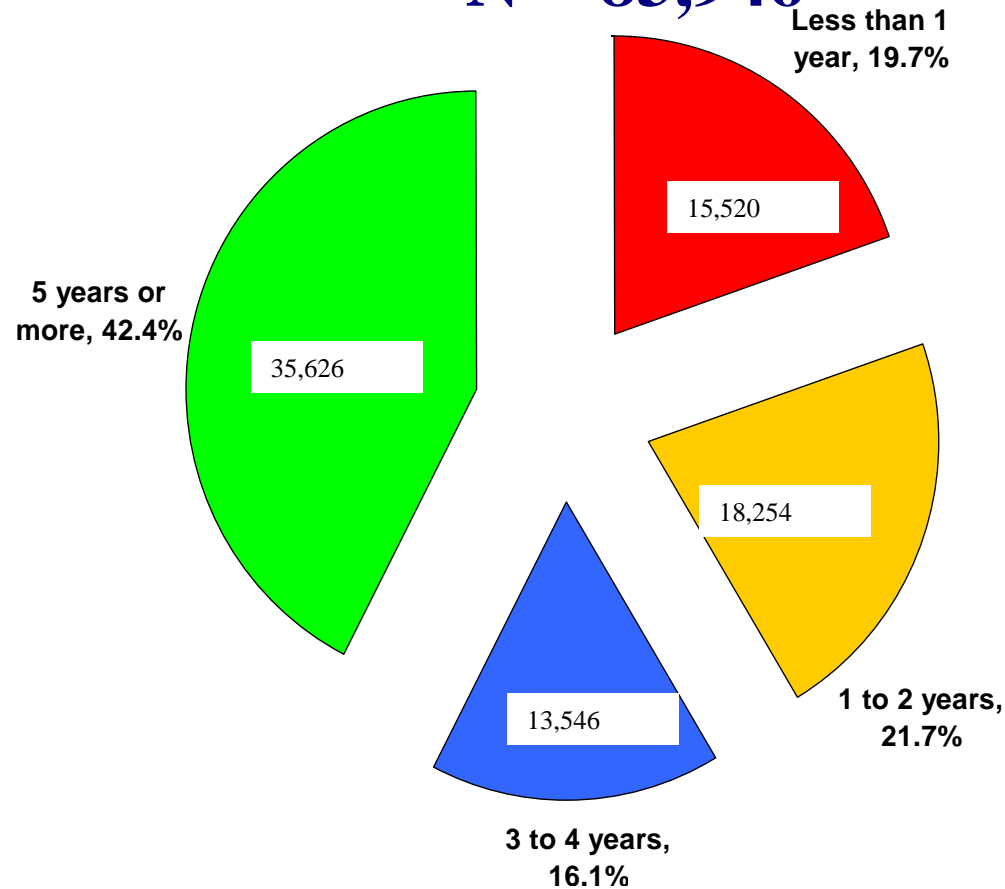
Borough	Total Number	Number responsible for care
N.Y.C.	229,133	83,946
Bronx	43,827	18,970
Brooklyn	77,554	29,285
Manhattan	29,812	12,451
Queens	69,317	20,986
Staten Island	8,623	2,254

• Over one-quarter of the New York City grandparents have grandchildren living with them and are responsible for their care.

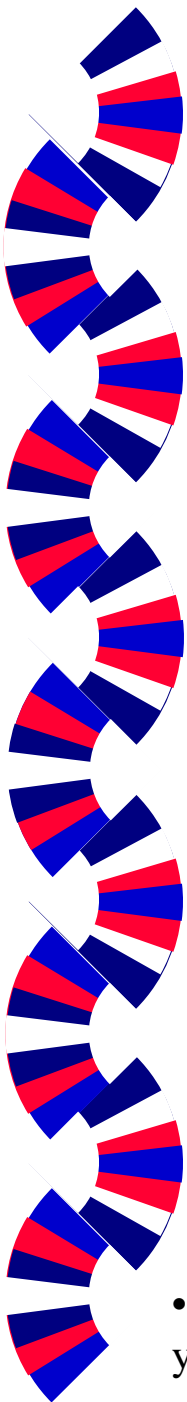
Grandparents Responsible for their Grandchild by Length of Time

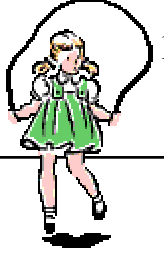
New York City: 2000

N = 83,946



- Just under one-half of the grandparents raising their grandchildren have done so for 5 or more years.





Focus groups

Methodology

3 focus groups

- Incoming students
- Directly at the end of their year at DFTA
- 2 years after being placed at DFTA

Sample questions for Interns

- How long have you worked for ACS and in which areas have you worked? Describe the nature of your work.
- Had you heard about DFTA before being placed here? Did you know about services for older adults before being placed at DFTA? Which services were you aware of before coming to DFTA?
- When you hear or think of the word old, what other words come to mind?
- How did your DFTA placement help you to become more sensitive to the needs of the aging population/grandparents?
- Since returning to ACS, how have you used the skills you gained while at DFTA?

Student Responses to Questions:

*How long have you worked for ACS and in which areas have you worked?
Describe the nature of your work.*

- The majority of the students had worked for ACS for a considerable number of years, most working for over 10 years. Years in service ranged from 3 to 17 years.
- Students worked as administrators, case workers and trainers. Many had previous involvement with grandparents in their work with ACS. Older adults were seen as a resource for them in their work placing children.

Quotations from Students:

“Protective gets grandparents, because we need to remove the natural parents we look for the grandparents. We work with the grandparents in these situations. We see them as a resource. We make sure that the home is fit for children, talk to the grandparents, introduce them to the court.”

“One of things we do in child protective, if there is a need to remove the kid, we look for a resource and it usually falls upon the grandparent and they tend to take care of the kids. Even if we aren't sure about the situation yet we can ask the grandparent to take care of the kids while we get a better handle of the situation. Some of them are pleasant some of them are not pleasant. And, I can understand why they wouldn't be pleasant. If their child has a substance abuse problem and they have tried to get them out of that situation and they keep coming back, when they see us coming, that anger they have is that they are retired and don't want to do this again but in the end they will take care of their Grandchildren because they don't want them to be in the system.”

Had you heard about DFTA before being placed here? Did you know about services for older adults before being placed at DFTA?

- **Although a couple of the students had heard about DFTA before their placement, none of the students were aware of what services DFTA offered. Very few of the students knew of services for older adults, and those that did focused on services for the vulnerable.**

Quotations from Students:

“Whenever I needed services for grandparents I went to Adult Protective Services (APS). I would call them and they did whatever, I don’t know what they would do.”

“I knew they (APS) had services they gave to grandparents. I knew they did protective services for them. Otherwise, that was it – anything that was needed we called adult services.”

“Yes. I did not know about services for older adults. I heard about DFTA through other students that have been placed here, but I didn’t know about what specific services DFTA would provide.”

When you hear or think of the word old, what other words come to mind?

- **Students initially saw older persons in terms of their disability and vulnerability. However, through the placement, their worldview changed and they began to see the strengths in older adults.**
- **Some of the students came to the placement with a positive view of aging, often the result of a strong tie to a maternal grandmother. In one case, the student had been raised by her own grandmother and experienced this as a very positive experience.**

Quotations from Students:

“ I was raised by my grandmother. When she came to this country she didn't know the language, but even though she lacked these skills she always made sure that we would have what we needed, our education. She was strong – always had a meal, even if she needed to take what she had and hock it”.

“Seniors, I saw them as frail, pushed to the side and ignored and that people didn't really care about them and people felt that they are annoying”.

“Respect, knowledgeable, strong”

“Before I would think frail, dying, incontinent but not anymore, now I think metaphor – people may be old but they are not old, it is a state of mind.”



*How did your DFTA placement help you to become more sensitive to the 16
needs of the aging population/grandparents?*

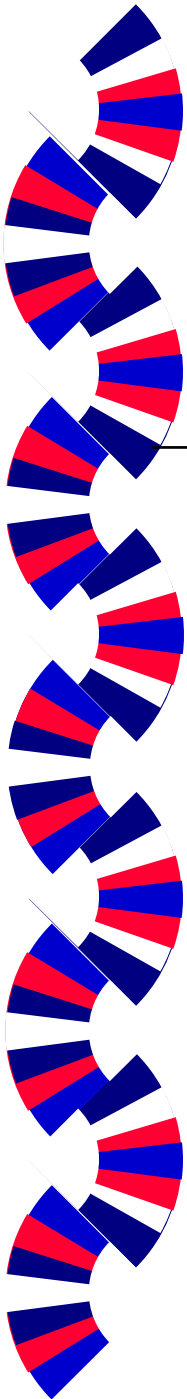
- **At the end of the placement students stated that they learned a tremendous amount about aging services in general, and were able to be more sensitive to the needs of grandparents.**

Quotations from Students:

“I learned a lot about services while I was here because I didn’t know. I didn’t know about all the different things for grandparents existed, such as services to help pay rent, about to be evicted”.

“Be more understanding. I always had respect for them but now I have more understanding. Once you give a child to a grandparent, find out what this grandparent has to go through in caring for this child because they come with their own problems like everybody else. They may need to make their doctor’s appointment. I think we need to make everything available to the grandparent where they don’t have to walk so far to get the services, because to me they are seniors and they have done what they have to do. We need to do more for them”.

“I was always sensitive but it did help more because some of them I would think that they (grandparents) had an attitude but I can see now why they had an attitude because they get a lot of running around. Because a lot of time they aren’t explained the procedure about public assistance and for this reason I am able to spend more time with them and explain to them their options”.



Since returning to ACS, how have you used the skills you gained while at¹⁷ DFTA?

•Students having gained a tremendous amount of knowledge about aging, were seen as resources with their colleagues at ACS both from a professional and personal point of view.

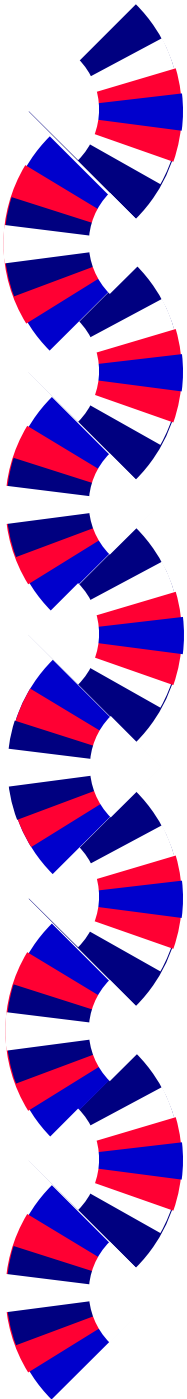
Quotations from Students:

“When I left and they found about I was coming to DFTA, the first thing they said, make sure you bring information back with you so you can share with us information about what to do with the seniors”.

“I give out material to the grandparents, I give out the resource book for support groups. I tell them to call Doris (support group leader). I share material with other staff. I give them the material and sometimes they say – go talk to C.. They know that I worked at DFTA and have this information. They see me as a resource”.

“Talk to them, don’t pass stereotypes, listen to what they say”.

“About 2 weeks ago a colleague had a father who is ill, the worker didn’t know what to do – so I suggested that he go to DFTA, and that DFTA will help him get back on his feet. When I hear people talking in the community about what they might need – I refer them to DFTA. I don’t think too many people know about what Department for the Aging does. I give them the general information number, even if they are unsure what their issues are – I tell them to talk to them”.



Since returning to ACS, how have you used the skills you gained while at¹⁸ DFTA? (CONTINUED)

Quotations from Students:

“My sister asked me to come to church because they have a lot of seniors. I took all the information I have for seniors. They had problems with housing. I told them to call this number and someone will talk to the church. They sent a lot of information and it helped a lot”.

“The flyer that was given to me by Cheryl, I have actually copied it and given it out to people who I know could use it because I informally know people who I know can use it. The secretary of my unit had a child who unfortunately had just died of AIDS and so she now has her grandkids, informally, and I said, hey you might want to call this number and I gave her the flyer, and she said, hey I think I can use this and I think she did make contact with you guys”.

“So, I gave some (flyers) to my mother and she gave it to her church”.



Conclusions

Positive feedback from Interns through focus groups:

- ☺ Interns learned a tremendous amount about services for older adults
- ☺ Interns were seen as aging resources for their child welfare colleagues
- ☺ Interns talked about being more sensitive to the needs of older grandparents
- ☺ Interns expanded their view of aging
- ☺ Interns were generally positive about their year at DFTA

Positive feedback from Grandparent Resource Center staff:

- ☺ Expanded the resources of the unit to include such services as home visiting of grandparents
- ☺ Improved ability to outreach for services within child welfare system