

# Celebrating Grandparents and Kinship Caregivers in September

Grandparents play an important role in every family. For some, they are the keepers of family traditions, while for others they are caregivers for their grandchildren. No matter the role, there's no question that for all families, grandparents are a source of love.

National Grandparents Day is celebrated every year on the first Sunday after Labor Day to pay tribute for all the great things grandparents do for their families. The month of September also celebrates another important member of the family – kinship caregivers. Kinship Caregiver Month recognizes the unique and often demanding role of kinship caregivers, who are aunts, uncles, cousins, adult siblings or grandparents who care for children in their family.

The [NYC Department for the Aging's \(DFTA\) Grandparent Resource Center](#) recognizes the important role and challenges that grandparents who are also kinship caregivers face. The Grandparent Resource Center supports these older New Yorkers through community-based services including referrals, information, community support groups, and more. The program also works



*The Department for the Aging's Grandparent Resource Center provides support to grandparents taking care of teens and children.*

within 15 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments with neighborhood residents to help reduce crime through programming for older adults and grandparent caregivers, making it beneficial for everyone.

Like many DFTA programs during COVID-19, the Grandparent Resource Center has transitioned from in-person services to virtual or phone-based services, including case assistance, support groups and trainings, intergenerational programming,

advocacy, and more. To connect older kinship caregivers with these virtual programs, it launched a tech readiness program and distributed 374 free computer tablets equipped with internet access. With the help of DFTA partner Older Adults Technology Services (OATS), kinship caregivers can get technical help and support to access these online programs.

This month, the Grandparent Resource Center is offering an Empowerment Training series on Zoom to help grandparent

caregivers strengthen their parenting and communications skills with their grandchildren and learn how to stay connected to their community and support network during COVID-19. Anyone who is a grandparent or older relative taking care of children can sign up for the course by calling the GRC at (212) 442-1094 or emailing them at [GRC@aging.nyc.gov](mailto:GRC@aging.nyc.gov). To learn more about activities and services that support grandparents and kinship caregivers, visit the [Grandparent Resource Center online](#).

In addition to the Grandparent Resource Center, DFTA also has the Foster Grandparent Program, which supports intergenerational programming between older and younger New Yorkers. For 45 years, the Foster Grandparent Program has partnered with community-based organizations, including elementary schools, hospitals, and head-start programs, to connect low-income older adults with part-time volunteer positions.

At Queens Centers for Progress' APPLE Preschool, 87-year-old Delores Ford has been volunteering as a foster grandparent for almost 23 years. "My favorite thing about volunteering is to get outside of the house and do something different,

and see different people and younger people. As a foster grandmother, I love being with the children," said Ms. Ford. For their service, program participants are paid a small stipend for their time.

During National Grandparents Day, Kinship Caregiver Month and throughout the year, DFTA is proud to support all grandparents who fulfill what many call, "the best job ever." For more information about all services that support older New Yorkers, call DFTA's contact center Aging Connect at 212-244-6469.



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