Dear Friends:

The year 2005 will mark a decade of service and accomplishments for Project Healthy Grandparents (PHG). I offer my sincerest gratitude to everyone who has made Project Healthy Grandparents a success, especially the grandparents who assume responsibility for their grandchildren despite financial, emotional, and physical challenges. Also, our success would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors, including Georgia State University, various state and federal agencies, private foundations, and individual donors. And last but by no means least, a special thanks to the exceptional staff of PHG whose commitment and enthusiasm have garnered the project a reputation for outstanding service. Thank you all for helping to enhance the lives of intergenerational families.

Susan J. Kelley, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Health and Human Sciences
Director, Project Healthy Grandparents

One Grandparent’s Story

If you ask Annie Johnson how she manages to care for an aging mother, a daughter with special physical needs, and three teenage granddaughters, she will tell you, “You never realize your own strength until you try.” Native of Georgia, longtime resident of Atlanta, mother of two, and grandmother of seven, Annie Johnson is no stranger to adversity. After losing her husband of 15 years to lung cancer in 1981, Mrs. Johnson also fought to triumph over a work-related spinal injury, liver disease, and a family struggling to cope.

In 1997, Mrs. Johnson’s youngest daughter, Carolyn, 31, was crippled by a series of severe strokes. With the grandchildren’s father in prison and the threat of state custody for Carolyn’s three young girls looming, Mrs. Johnson took over as their primary guardian. “It was my responsibility to step in and try to be a parent for the kids.” Mrs. Johnson told her granddaughters, “I’ll do anything I can to take care of you, until your mother can take care of you again.”

In 2002, Mrs. Johnson was introduced to Project Healthy Grandparents (PHG). “The support group was the best thing for me.” There, Mrs. Johnson says, she benefited from the interaction with...
(Grandparent’s story continued from page 1)

and support from other grandparents raising grandchildren and the educational programs that helped her learn how to take care of herself both physically and emotionally and to raise children of the 21st century.

“This is a different generation. We’re from the old school and tried to do things the old way, but it wasn’t the right way for these kids. Through the educational programs, we learned how to be good grandparents and how to take care of and understand the children. Most important, I learned how to listen.”

When Mrs. Johnson has to discipline her grandchildren she tells them, “I do what I do because I love you—unconditionally. I believe if you show love, you get love.” Mrs. Johnson saves special praise for the social worker assigned to her...}

National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren National Symposium

“A Second Chance for Children: Embracing the Future,” May 11-12, 2005
Wyndham Atlanta Hotel — Atlanta, GA

A symposium of best practices in research, policy, and practice for professionals, researchers, policy makers, academics and others interested in the growing phenomenon of grandparents raising grandchildren and other intergenerational kinship care issues.

Presenting sponsor: Freddie Mac Foundation
Other Sponsors: Georgia State University, Healthcare Georgia Foundation, Hasbro Children’s Foundation, AARP

For more information: 404-651-1049, email: nationalcenter@gsu.edu, website: www.chhs.gsu.edu/nationalcenter

A Decade of Milestones: 1995-2005

(Milestones continued from page 1)

2003 The Youth Leadership Program begins for grandchildren ages 12-16.

2004 Fordham University in New York City is identified as the third national PHG replication site.

Program data indicates that PHG has served more than 450 families and over a 1,000 children.

Eighth Annual Grandparents Day Luncheon held at G SU.

2005 The National Conference on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, hosted by the National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren at GSU, will be held in Atlanta in May.

Plenary Topics

- Increasing Life Chances for Disadvantaged Children - Geoffrey Canada, President/CEO, Harlem Children’s Zone
- Child Abuse Trauma: Theory and Treatment of the Lasting Effects - John Briere, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Southern California
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Physical and Mental Health - Meredith Minkler, Ph.D., Professor, School of Public Health, University of California
- Children’s Rights to Protection: Are We Doing Enough? - Don Keenan, Esq., Keenan Law Firm

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