



## 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. Currently, six percent of children live in a grandparent-headed household. 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 through focus groups and the development of a strategic plan. The coalition includes 34 agencies providing services to grandparents and grandparent caregivers. The number of monthly

support groups for grandparents has increased from 1 to 7, and the coalition now offers an annual conference for grandparents and/or satellite conferencing.

Program objectives were to establish a network of professionals; to explore core issues and concerns of grandparents raising grandchildren, to collaborate with other agencies to develop a resource notebook, and to develop a model to establish support groups.

### Impact

In 2000, twenty coalition members gave approximately 1,032 volunteer hours to complete 700 resource notebooks, a top priority. 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 to grandparents raising grandchildren; agencies providing assistance to grandparents; family resource and

wellness centers associated with schools in five school districts; public libraries; and to collaborators upon request. Quotes from grandparents and agency representatives providing assistance to grandparents:

“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.*

“This resource notebook has been like a Bible to me and there isn’t anything else like it in the community.”

—*grandparent at a Tucson support group meeting.*

“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 for help at that time.”

—*Tucson grandparent raising her grandchildren.*

### Funding

Arizona Cooperative Extension and more than 30 local community agencies

### Contact

Linda Block, assistant agent  
Pima County Cooperative Extension  
The University of Arizona  
4210 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85719-1109  
Tel.: (520) 626-5161, FAX (520) 626-5849  
Email: lblock@ag.arizona.edu