

Gateway Grandparents/Kinship Network is a collaboration of organizations & agencies in the St. Louis Metro Area working to enhance the lives of grandparents and relative caregivers and the children in their care.

#### MEMBERS

- AARP
- Cardinal Ritter Senior Services
- Children's Home Society of MO
- Cry Out Youth Ministries
- Jennings School District
- Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
- Let's Start Caregivers Group, St. Vincent de Paul Church
- Mid-East Area Agency on Aging (MEAAA)
- Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division
- Parents as Teachers
- St. Louis Area Agency on Aging (SLAAA), Department of Human Services
- University of Missouri Extension

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[extension.missouri.edu/  
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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/  
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# KinCare Connections

*A newsletter for grandparents and other relatives in a parenting role*

## It Takes a Village...First the Seed, Then the Harvest

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**The seeds.** In the beginning there were seed monies. Starting in 2001, the first monies to facilitate the formation of support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren were sought and obtained by Cardinal Ritter Senior Services (CRSS) from the Brookdale Foundation. Two groups, Keepers of the Flame and Proud Grandparents, met monthly to provide socialization and support to senior adults who were just starting or in the middle of the journey of raising grandchildren and those who had raised their grandchildren. In early 2003, the Chiara Corporation provided funding which enabled CRSS to help the groups celebrate members birthdays and special events like Thanksgiving and Christmas. Down the road, in 2004, additional seed monies were received from a private fund, the Lence Charitable Fund, Inc., which further enabled CRSS to provide refreshments for the group meetings, assist with transportation expenses, and cover the costs of an annual picnic for the grandparents and their grandchildren.

Along the way, CRSS collaborated with and joined the Gateway Grandparents Network, now known as the Gateway Grandparents Kinship Network, which reaches out to larger numbers of grandparents and relatives who are raising relative children.

Their outreach efforts include newsletters, informational forums, and an annual picnic for these non-traditional families. The next gap that needed to be addressed was how CRSS could assist when a grandparent did not fit community qualifiers or there was not an agency resource for a problem, like the phone being disconnected. A CRSS social worker developed the idea and initiated a new program through the generosity of a local insurance group (who prefers to remain anonymous) and began a Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) Direct Fund. This fund is only used for assistance that no agency presently provides, therefore avoiding duplication of community resource efforts. I am happy to add that this past October, the Gateway Grandparents Kinship Network made a donation to our existing RAPP Direct Fund through a grant awarded by the Brookdale Foundation.

**The harvest.** For the last four years, Jinnie E. has been attending our south side St. Louis Keepers of the Flame monthly group at 5 Star Senior Center.

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# Money Talks! Have You Heard?

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Here are ways to save money during tax time:

1. Be sure to claim the tax benefits you have earned. The following credits can reduce the amount of income taxes you owe and even workers who owe no taxes can qualify.

**Earned Income Tax Credit** – if you were married and earned less than \$37,000 in 2008, you may be eligible for up to \$2,917 (up to \$4,824 if you earned less than \$41,700 and raised more than one child). Attach Schedule EIC.

**Child Tax Credit** can be worth up to \$1,000 per child. Attach Form 8812.

The **Child and Dependent Care Credit** is a percentage, based upon your adjusted gross income, of the expenses you paid for care for a dependent child 13 years or younger so you could work or look for work. Complete Form 1040A or Form 2441 with Form 1040.

Qualifying children include foster children and grandchildren that have lived with you for more than half of the year. The child must also have a valid Social Security number. In some cases, you may need to be able to claim the child on

your tax return.

**Note:** If you were eligible in the past but did not claim the credits, you can file for them up to three years back and get the money you missed out on.

2. If you pay the costs to maintain a home lived in for over half the year by a qualifying child and were unmarried at the end of the year, you may qualify for **head of household status**.
3. **Get your taxes prepared for free** by IRS certified volunteers. Visit <http://extension.missouri.edu/hes/taxed/vitasites.htm> to see if there is a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) or a Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) site near you.
4. **File your Federal tax return free by using Free File.** Free File is a Federal income tax preparation and electronic filing program for eligible taxpayers, developed through a partnership between the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a group of private sector tax software companies. Start at the [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov) website. Income guidelines apply.
5. **Avoid costly extras - Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL),** are often advertised as “fast cash refunds” or “instant refunds.” When you get a RAL, you’re borrowing against your refund, not getting your refund earlier. RALs are expensive and can cost up

to \$100. Ask for a list of fees up front.

**Refund Debit Cards** are available for receiving and using a tax refund or refund anticipation loan. The card can be used for purchases, bill payments and ATM withdrawals anywhere debit cards are accepted. You can add money to your card through payroll direct deposit or at participating retail reloading locations. This convenience comes at a price – watch for the numerous fees involved. For more information, go to: [http://extension.missouri.edu/ecregion/grandparent/Tax\\_refund.pdf](http://extension.missouri.edu/ecregion/grandparent/Tax_refund.pdf)

6. Use **E-File** and **direct deposit** to get your refund quickly and safely.



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Jinnie is a 68 year old great-grandma who has been raising her 6 year old great granddaughter, Faith, since she was just a few months old. Faith's mom left and her father has never been a part of this child's life.

Jinnie is challenged by the many financial and emotional stressors of raising Faith but *never quits*. She also has multiple health issues of diabetes, dislocated disc, heart disease, arthritis, and high blood pressure, yet, she *never ever quits*. Not only does Jinnie continue to provide ongoing love and care for her great granddaughter and daily attention to her own health issues, she has just completed an adult's Earn-A Computer Program through Byte Works Computers.

Each Saturday for the last couple of months, she and Faith would ride on two buses to attend this program. Jinnie said, "I just want to learn." After successfully completing this program, she received a desk top computer complete with a Microsoft operating system. Once she earned this, guess what came next? Well, now Jinnie is enrolled to complete her GED. She says "I want more education to help out Faith and be a role model." She has brought this excitement to the south side Keepers of the Flame group and now has inspired another grandparent raising their grandchild to enroll. *Never quit* – that's Jinnie.

## 2009 Gateway Grandparents/Kinship Network Meetings

- February 25, 2009** Speaker: Sharon Minoff, Family Support Division  
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
121 S. Meramec, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Clayton, MO 63105  
314-615-2911
- April 29, 2009** Speaker: Diane Hall, AARP on the topic of Quick Links  
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
121 S. Meramec, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Clayton, MO 63105  
314-615-2911
- August 26, 2009** Speaker: Rich Krueger, Community Action of St. Louis County (tentative)  
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
121 S. Meramec, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Clayton, MO 63105  
314-615-2911
- September 19, 2009** Picnic for Relatives as Parents  
Shaw Park  
Clayton, MO  
11 – 3 p.m.
- January 2010** To Be Announced



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**Raising your grandchildren? Do you have parenting questions?**

**Call: 1-800-552-8522 or visit: [www.extension.missouri.edu/parentlink](http://www.extension.missouri.edu/parentlink)**

Parents and professionals can call ParentLink's toll-free WarmLine to access nutrition information, parenting information and receive problem solving support. The WarmLine is available in English and Spanish and answered Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. by a family support specialist.

***Need information? Don't know where to go?***

**Call a Warm-Line!**

### **Relatives As Parents/Grandparents Information Warm-Line**

▶ **St. Louis area: 314-961-8000, ext. 242**

**Answered by:** Cardinal Ritter Senior Services

**Sponsors:** Cardinal Ritter Senior Services  
Legal Services of Eastern Missouri



Get answers to questions on custody, guardianship, adoption issues, public benefits, legal services, support with groups and other community services. When you call, be prepared to leave a message and contact number. Within 2 days, you'll receive a follow-up call.

*This service is not for emergencies.*

**Kincare Connections** is written and published by Gateway Grandparents/Kinship Network for grandparents and other relatives in a parenting role in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Contributing writers are staff members of member organizations of the Network. **Articles may be reprinted for educational purposes. Please credit as follows:** Author, Organization, *Kincare Connections*. Kincare Connections is available in print or on the web. **To subscribe**, contact Elizabeth Reinsch, Human Development Specialist, 121 S. Meramec, Suite 501, St. Louis, MO 63105, Ph: (314) 615-7605, Email: [reinsche@missouri.edu](mailto:reinsche@missouri.edu)

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## **St. Louis Metro Area Support Groups**

### **St. Louis City**

**Carver House Grandparents Group**

Contact: Brenda Manon 314-652-8485

**Cry Out Youth Ministries**

Contact: Selena Stiles, 314-868-3161

**Grandparents as Parents Program**

Contact: Darnell Fowler, 314-754-4483

**Grandparent's Circle, Parenting a Second Time Around**

Contact: Williestean Fulks, 314-383-0836

**Keepers of the Flame**

Contact: Kathleen Mc Aleenan, 314-961-8000 ext. 302

**Let's Start Caregivers Group**

(Grandparents raising kids of incarcerated or chemically dependent parents)

Contact: Cynthia Stevenson-Johnson, 314-241-2342

**Parents and Grandparents of Drug Abusers (PAGODA)**

Contact: Eddie Mae Binion, 314-432-0109

**Proud Grandparents**

Contact: Kathleen Mc Aleenan, 314-961-8000 ext. 302

### ***St. Louis, Jefferson & Washington Counties***

**Blankets of Hope, St. Louis City/County**

Contact: Miss Hair, 314-872-4155

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,**

**South St. Louis County & Jefferson County**

Contact: Alvin Huther, 636-296-0768

**Kimble Cares Relatives As Parents Program &  
The Boyhood Initiative of Missouri**

Contact: Huey Hawkins, Jr., 314-882-6840 or  
Ericka Webb 314-882-6830

**KYDZ LaCASA Learning Center**

Contact: Harriet Ball-Stanburri, 314-443-4842

**University of MO Extension, Washington County**

Contact: Maudie Kelly, 573-438-2671

**Villas of Grace Senior Living Center**

Contact: Trymiah Miller, 314-363-5422