



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## WASHTENAW COUNTY HONORS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM AT APRIL 19 RECOGNITION LUNCHEON

WASHTENAW COUNTY, MI., April 25, 2018 – Washtenaw County Administrator Greg Dill, Washtenaw County Commissioners Andy LaBarre, Jason Morgan, Michelle Deatrick, Ricky Jefferson, numerous members of the Washtenaw County Community Action Board, teachers and administrators from area public schools, preschools and Head Start Programs gathered with more than 50 volunteers and their guests celebrated the **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Foster Grandparent Program in Washtenaw County** at the annual Recognition Luncheon at Kensington Hotel in Ann Arbor.

Foster Grandparents began serving in Washtenaw County in 1968. Over the past 50 years, hundreds of seniors have participated in the program, touching the lives of thousands of children. The program is unique in creating intergenerational relationships between a child and an older adult and helps build self-confidence and self-esteem in children who need extra support.

“Foster Grandparents are mentors, role models and friends. They build nurturing relationships with children that lead to social, emotional, and academic growth. At the same time, the Foster Grandparent Program keeps older adults active and engaged in meaningful service, resulting in emotional and physical health benefits”, said **Sandy Bowers, Foster Grandparent Program Supervisor, Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED)**. “It’s a win-win and a real benefit for our community.”

Last year Foster Grandparents volunteered 53,000 hours, providing one-on-one support to 300 children and youth. Foster Grandparents serve at 20 different sites in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, including public schools, day care centers, Head Start programs and preschools. Foster Grandparents provide much-needed support in classrooms and develop strong bonds with the teachers and staff at our partner sites. **Ypsilanti Estabrook Elementary School staff member, Shoshana DeMaria**, said this of one of the Foster Grandparents: “She is respected and loved by ALL staff and students. Her students look forward to her assistance and wish that she was with them on Fridays. She is gentle, kind and empowering to them.”

“Our Foster Grandparents reflect the best of our community – they have committed their time, wisdom, and energy to improving the lives of our youth,” said **Andrea Plevak, Director, OCED**. “Their work is a gift not only to our young people, but to our entire community.”

Volunteer sites report academic and social/emotional gains of the students matched with Foster Grandparents. **Cathy Gleib, Kindergarten Teacher, Ann Arbor Eberwhite Elementary School and host to Foster Grandparent** said: "Thank you for directing this amazing program that pairs seniors with kids to make a difference," after sharing a success story.

"When I hear these stories, and observe the Foster Grandparents, I know that they are making a difference in the lives of children, and that the Foster Grandparent Program benefits everyone it touches," said Ms. Bowers.

Honorees at the Recognition luncheon include:

Outstanding Service Award: Glorestine Davis

Role Model Award: Anna Napier

Dedication Award: Janet Smith

Inspiration Award: Hazel Smith

Shining Star Award: Harriet Hicks

Shining Star Award: Karen Meyer

Other Honorees included:

1 Year of Service
• Jacqueline Browder
• Florence Lawson
• Rebecca McKenzie
• Beverly Adams
• Njeri Ali
• Rochelle Tanter
• Priscilla Rice
• Barbara Boothe
2 Years of Service
• Glenn Bound
• Aletha Fortune
• Metta Leonard
• Sonia Leslie
• Leotha Letang
• Karen Meyer
• Calisa Reid
• Beverly Simms
• Dorothy Williams
3 Years of Service
• Claudia Gardner
• Barbara Owens

• Joyce Troy
• Mary Tucker
4 Years of Service
• Latrall Phelps
• Harriet Hicks
• Patricia Taylor
• Teresa McCullough
• Joanne Whitfield
5 Years of Service
• Rubye Ogburn
6 Years of Service
• Ivory Gaines
• Queen McLaughy
• Eileen Moore
• Edward Ruffin
• Janet Smith
• Judith Webster
7 Years of Service
• Beatrice Balmer
• Rose Marie Brown
• Glendia Edwards
• Gloria Lewis
• Anna Napier
• Gwendolyn Palmer
8 Years of Service
• Patricia Lee
9 Years of Service
• Hang Lang
• Phyllis Patterson
• Ruth Kilbury
• Michelle McClellan
• Virginia Robinson
10 Years of Service
• Gladys Beaty

11 Years of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barbara Gray</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larnell Randell</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maria Lawson</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LaBarbara Whitehead</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elsie Elloie</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glorestine Davis</li> </ul>
12 Years of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazel Sanders</li> </ul>
14 Years of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edith Cunningham</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanaa Ghobrial</li> </ul>
16 Years of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shawkey Ghobrial</li> </ul>
18 Years of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoraida Reyes</li> </ul>

For more information about the Foster Grandparent Program, or upcoming presentations, please contact Sandy Bowers, Foster Grandparent Program Supervisor, at Washtenaw County's Office of Community and Economic Development at [bowerssk@washtenaw.org](mailto:bowerssk@washtenaw.org) or (734)544-3040.

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**About Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED)**

We believe that Washtenaw County is stronger when all people are able to fully participate in our community and economy. To that end, OCED is committed to stepping out of traditional government roles to drive long-term system changes that increase equity and opportunity. Informed by data and resident voices, we deliver services, invest resources, shape public policy, lead initiatives, and amplify the impact of community partners to that end. To learn more, visit [www.ewashtenaw.org/oced](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/oced)