

Seniors raising grandchildren find support, friendship in MSPCC's KINnections program

Many seniors in Boston are becoming parents again, stepping in to raise their grandchildren or other relatives when parents are not able to. With the joys of caring for grandchildren also come unique challenges, leaving many grandparents feeling isolated or frustrated by the difficulty of accessing services.

The KINnection's program, run by MSPCC's Deanna Forist and Lori Baeumler, provides support that has become a lifeline to many grandparents. In addition to support groups, the program provides trainings focusing on the well-being of both children and grandparents, like navigating the special education system, bullying prevention, managing the teenage experience, Medicaid services, Alzheimer's education and yoga for seniors.

The program also provides scholarships to camps and afterschool enrichment, group activities for families, and access to everyday essentials like clothing, books, and toys.

“If you ask for help, you will find it here,” Freeman said.

But for some, the most valuable resource they've found through the program is friendship.



Members of the KINnections group with program director Deanna Forist (back row, third from left).

“The program not only helps our kids, it helps us. The events give us a chance to relax with each other and with our grandchildren,” said Deborah Freeman, who is raising her granddaughter.

“You get to meet so many nice grandparents and make friends that you can call if you need to talk.”

The program is not just for grandparents: All family members who are raising kin are welcomed into the group.

Charlene McDonough, who is raising her niece, found the support she was looking for in the KINnections program.

“I was overwhelmed and beginning to feel like I was disappearing. Meeting Deanna and Lori turned my life around,” McDonough said. “When I joined this group, I realized I wasn’t alone. Everyone is so kind, understanding, and welcoming. Our meetings give us a place to open up to others who are in the same boat, share our experiences, and learn from each other.”

Members of the KINnections group want

all seniors who are raising children to know they’re not alone.

“I’ve been through this and I’m here to help other people get the resources they need. If you ask for help, you will find it here,” Freeman said.

If you are a grandparent or relative raising a child, join the KINnections group for a meeting at MSPCC or the Julia Martin House in Jamaica Plain or the Tierney Learning Center in South Boston. For more information please call Deanna Forist at (617) 983-5850.

The Elderly Commission Seniors are you eligible?

Food Stamp requirements have changed for most senior applications.

The Department of Transitional Assistance
no longer counts -

- * savings or retirement accounts
- * your car
- * your home * or other assets

For more information or to complete an application contact:

Lorna Heron at 617-635-4335
or email lorna.heron@boston.gov

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Restrictions Apply

Please call the Fire Safety Program at 617-343-3472 or contact Ernie Deeb at 617-635-2359.

You can also view our website online at www.cityofboston.gov/fire or visit the Boston Fire Department on Facebook.