

# GRANDcares Project

*July 2015 to July 2020*



## Executive Summary



[grandcares.colostate.edu](http://grandcares.colostate.edu)

# Who We Are

Strengthening grandfamilies through promotion of self-care and service provider education.

## Background & Overview

Nearly 3 million children in the U.S. are being raised by their grandparents. Children end up in the care of their grandparents for a variety of reasons, often experiencing trauma in the process. As a result, these children may face significant behavioral and physical health issues. Important benefits come from grandchildren in the care of their grandparents, including protection against trauma and promotion of resilience. Despite the beneficial role grandparents play in the lives of their grandchildren, grandparents face significant challenges of their own, including physical, mental, and emotional health issues, lack of resources, and social isolation. Yet, few interventions exist to help grandfamilies adapt to their unique circumstances.

Therefore, we are working to create an effective, evidence-based program to improve the quality of life for grandparents and their grandchildren, and to connect grandfamilies with local service providers.

This report summarizes the activities completed in the development and testing phase of the GRANDcares project (2015-2020).



GRANDcares Core Team (L-R): Heather Greenwood-Junkermeier, MS, Co-PI; Loriena Yancura, PhD, Co-PI; Nathaniel R. Riggs, PhD, Evaluator; and Christine A. Fruhauf, PhD, PI

# Program Objectives and Accomplishments

This project proposed a systems-based intervention for grandfamilies, GRANDcares, which is based upon family resilience theory. In accordance with this theory, the intervention focuses on strengthening resilience in both grandparents and grandchildren. Because service providers are also an important part of the grandfamily support system, this intervention includes an educational component for professionals who may work with grandfamilies.



## **Objective 1:**

**Enhance grandparents' self-care practices and health and wellness.**

We adapted the Powerful Tools for Caregivers program, an evidence-based highly effective self-care education program for caregivers, to address the strengths and needs of grandparents raising grandchildren. Our Powerful Tools for Caregivers - Grandfamilies (PTC-G) intervention classes are implemented over six weeks, meeting for two hours a week.

Throughout the intervention, grandparents raising grandchildren develop self-care tools to reduce stress, recognize their emotions, set goals, change negative self-talk, deal with difficult feelings, problem solve, communicate their needs, and make tough caregiving decisions.



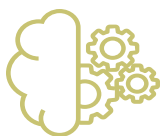
## **Objective 2:**

**Promote youth participants' confidence and leadership skills.**

We developed the GRANDcares Youth Club for grandchildren being raised by grandparents, ages 9-12 years old.

The Youth Club curriculum is based on 4-H Positive Youth Development Theory and provides hands-on learning activities, youth engagement, and opportunities to develop relationships with caring adults, develop leadership skills, and make connections between content and life.

The Youth Club complements the PTC-G and is implemented over six weeks, meeting for two hours a week. During the program, youth develop tools for communication, self-care, leadership skills, critical thinking, goal setting, and resilience.



## **Objective 3:**

**Strengthen service providers' knowledge of grandfamilies and to provide tools to support grandparents and grandchildren.**

We created 12 webinars for service providers and shared them online at [grandcares.colostate.edu](http://grandcares.colostate.edu).

Topics include: strengths-based approaches to working with grandfamilies, working with grandfamilies: taking action, grandfamilies: trauma and resilience, the importance of evidence-based programs when working with grandfamilies, self-care for service practitioners, the middle generation, grandfamilies: microaggressions, reflections from GRANDcares coordinators, and reflections from the project team.

The webinars have been viewed over 240 times and will remain on our website to ensure service providers have the opportunity to learn more about grandfamilies.

# Program Participation - Grandparents

After background research and program development, the GRANDcares project has offered PTC-G and our Youth Club in Colorado and Hawaii. Grandparents report continued use of class tools six months after the classes end. These tools help grandparents manage stress and strain related to raising grandchildren and make changes in their health behaviors. Healthy changes may positively influence grandparents' interactions with grandchildren, spouses, and other family members.

## Colorado Grandparents



**114 Grandparents  
in 17 Cohorts**

Caring for 175 grandchildren in their homes

## Hawaii Grandparents



**35 Grandparents  
in 10 Cohorts**

Caring for 68 grandchildren in their homes

## Significant Outcomes



Increases in self-care behaviors



Decreases in depressive symptoms



Increases in caregiver confidence



Increases in awareness of support services

***"What I've learned is self-care is really important because if I don't do that, all bets are off. They [grandchildren] also are observing I'm taking care of myself. I've even noticed my granddaughter will say 'I need to go to my room now and get some quiet time'. It's like 'Yay!' good for you, so role-modeling is a very important part of this process for myself and for them."***

***-Grandparent, Larimer County, 2019***



Participants often comment about the importance of finding other grandparents who understand their experiences. Many grandparents build and sustain a network of friends and support after completing the program.

# Program Participation - Grandchildren



## Colorado Grandchildren



**17 Grandchildren  
in 4 Cohorts**

## Hawaii Grandchildren



**14 Grandchildren  
in 3 Cohorts**

## Significant Outcomes



**Increases in  
youth social-  
emotional health**

**Grandchildren learned about:**

- \* Getting along with others
- \* How to set and achieve goals
- \* Making good decisions
- \* Treating others with respect

***"It's really helpful for real life, it teaches you how to use different tools. I used to be really shy, but now since I've been here, I've been learning how to talk to other people and I've made a lot of new friends."***

***-Grandchild, Larimer County, 2019***



Youth club participants appreciated making friends with other kids being raised by grandparents. Many wanted to continue getting together after the youthclub ended.

## **Future Directions**



We plan to develop intervention booster classes to address specific grandfamily needs such as parenting teens, relationships with the middle generation, drug and alcohol prevention, etc.



We look forward to presenting GRANDcares program information to interested community agencies and discussing expansion plans. We would like to extend GRANDcares outreach by continuing to offer intervention classes through the ongoing support of community partners.



Efforts are underway to translate classes and materials into Spanish.

**For more information, contact:**

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For grandfamily resources and service provider webinars, visit our website at:  
[grandcares.colostate.edu](http://grandcares.colostate.edu).



# Acknowledgements

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**Adams County, CO:**

Adams County Extension Office  
Anythink Libraries  
Aurora Mental Health Center  
Catholic Charities  
St. Anthony's North Family Medicine  
Thornton Recreation Center

**Larimer County, CO:**

Early Childhood Council of Larimer County  
Good Samaritan Society  
Grand Family Coalition, Inc.  
Heart of the Rockies Christian Church  
Larimer County Alliance for Grandfamilies  
Larimer County Extension Office  
Larimer County Office on Aging  
Mountain View Presbyterian Church  
Poudre and Thompson School Districts  
Realities for Children  
SummitStone Health Partners

**Hawaii County, HI:**

Greenwell Family Development Center  
Hawaii County Office on Aging  
HOPE Services Hawaii  
Imiola Church  
Kohala Elementary School  
Liliuokalani Trust  
Partners in Development Foundation  
UH Manoa, Hawaii County Extension  
West Hawaii Habitat for Humanity, Ulu Wini

**City and County of Honolulu, HI:**

After-School All Stars Hawaii  
Catholic Charities Hawaii  
Family Programs Hawaii  
Hawaii Public Radio  
Kokua Council  
Liliuokalani Trust  
Partners in Development Foundation  
UH Manoa, Oahu Extension

**Maui County, HI:**

Catholic Charities Hawaii  
Hooikaika Partnership  
Legal Aid Society of Hawaii  
Makawao Library  
Maui County Office on Aging  
Maui Family Guidance Center  
Maui Food Bank  
MEO HeadStart  
Partners in Development Foundation  
UH Manoa, Maui County Extension

**THANK  
YOU!**



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