



Adjust Your Sails

Jimmy Dean once said, "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination." Since we are in the month of March, we are very aware of wind. It howls in our ears, causes us to shiver, and topples unsecured objects. This past year has been a whirlwind, which has caused us to shriek and to tremble. COVID has blown us off course and demanded us to adjust our sails.

The schools and the Foster Grandparent Parent Program, along with the rest of the world, had to adjust their sails, re-route to safe waters, and adapt to a new way of teaching/a new way of learning. The traditional way: within a classroom, you would find, a teacher, a classroom of kids, and perhaps a Foster Grandparent to help youngsters, who needed a little extra help or some encouragement. But the winds of COVID arose and a new way had to be found. Please, read on, and enjoy the journey of three kindergarten teachers and their Foster Grandparent:

Blue Ridge School District Kindergarten Teachers, Lisa Carpenetti, Jamie Markarian, and April Rhone wrote:

Foster Grandma Carmen Rockwell has been working with our kindergarten students for three years. Carmen has been an asset to each of our classrooms. In the past, she has helped students in all academic areas from mathematics to

reading and writing, as well as, helping them socially and emotionally. With the pandemic and limitations set on visitors in the building, Grandma Carmen has still been eager to help in each of our rooms via zoom. Students that learn remotely at home have enjoyed her company and assistance in reading and writing, as well as, sight word practice. This has been such a great help while teachers have been providing instruction both in school and remotely. Each day Carmen zooms into our classrooms and works one-on-one with students who need additional assistance in learning their letters, sight words, and spelling words. Carmen's great sense of humor continues to come out despite not being able to be physically here, and the children look forward to seeing her every day. We are so fortunate to have Grandma Carmen's energy and loving support in our classrooms each day! We look forward to her joining us back in our classrooms soon.

Foster Grandparent Carmen Rockwell, serving at Blue Ridge Elementary wrote:

Zooming into the school is not only new to the kids, but also to us, the Foster Grandparents. Grandparents find that we can learn new ways of helping too. Working with the kids has been such an exciting new experience and it is so enjoyable to be back working with them on whatever terms are doable.

Zoom has become such an everyday thing to do, part in school and part remote. Is it perfect? No, some kids get distracted, but that happens in the classroom too. It's just a matter of keeping them engaged, the best we can. It has become the new modern world of teaching for now.

The Foster Grandparent Program traditionally was set up for people fifty-five years and older to assist children in local school and Head Start classrooms. Foster Grandparents give children one on one help with their math, reading and writing skills. If a child, within the classroom, is going through a difficult time, the Foster Grandparent do what grandparents do, wipe a tear, give a word of encouragement, and before COVID, a hug of TLC. Only in a few schools are Foster Grandparents able to continue serving within the school classroom during this time of COVID. Others like Carmen are working remotely until the day they can reenter the schools and be the in-person loving grandma or grandpa, they long to be.

Besides being a life boat to a struggling child, the Foster Grandparent Program has perks for income eligible people, who are fifty-five years of age or older. The Foster Grandparent Program also provides Foster Grandparents with a small monetary stipend, transportation reimbursement, transportation (for people who don't drive), paid time off, paid holidays, and rewarding experiences.

To Learn More about the Foster Grandparent Program Call:

(Locally) 570-265-6121 or (Toll Free) 1-800-982-4346

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