



FGP News!



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Meet Susan Harding

Susan was born in Manchester, NH, the eldest of two girls. Nearly everyone in her family, including her parents and grandparents worked in the local shoe factories and textile mills. Susan was the first in her immediate family to attend college, where she met Rick Harding, her future husband at UNH in 1968.

The couple married in Portsmouth, NH in 1969 and had two children, Joshua and Amy. Josh is currently a safety inspector for a major food distributor in Chicago. He has two teenagers, one who just won a prize at her high school science fair, and the other who is a freshman at Perdue University. Her daughter, Amy, works in interior design for commercial real estate in San Francisco, CA. Amy's husband is a composer whose work was featured at the Sundance Film Festival. They live in Oakland and have two

children. In 1979 Susan went back to college at St. Anselm's, earning a degree in philosophy in 1980.

That fall the family moved to Cambridge, MA where Susan studied at the Episcopal Divinity School and her husband taught school in Dedham, MA. When she graduated in 1983, Susan was ordained Deacon and served as an Assistant at Grace Church in Manchester, NH.

Unfortunately, the marriage did not survive and Susan went on to train as a hospital chaplain in Carolina and served there and in churches in Wyoming and Vermont before retiring. Susan has also worked as a substitute teacher, guidance counselor, in sales and in garden shops in the years since she left the ministry. But Susan says nothing gives her more satisfaction than helping as a Foster Grandparent.



Susan Harding

"I feel I am making a difference and still using the training I received in a new setting," says Susan. Susan has served at Northwest School and she currently serves at the Rutland Intermediate School with Jean Mee.

Susan's current passion is history, and family history in particular. She is enrolled in Ancestry.com and Ancestry.dna, but she finds that reading the history of the background helps to sort out fact from fiction, and helps to make things make more sense.

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"There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age."

~Sophia Loren

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Susan Harding (cont. from page 1)

Susan was an avid reader as a child and she also wanted to be a writer when she grew up. She wrote some short mystery stories in middle school that the teacher had her read to the class. She also won a couple of school writing contests. Her one regret in life is that she did not pursue a career in writing. Her favorite teacher was her 7th grade teacher, Miss Bernadette Benard, who at the end of the school year would choose two students who got to go with her to meet her Maryknoll cousin and learn about missionary work. Susan was delighted to be chosen. At the end of the school year her teacher wrote in her yearbook, "Noblesse oblige" which Susan took to mean that she had a responsibility to use her talents for good things in life. Years later she was very moved that Miss Benard showed up at her ordination to be a Deacon.

Susan is one of those grandparents who not only shares her knowledge and experiences in life, but likes to learn along with the children things that she does not know a lot about or that have been challenging for her—like the "new" way they teach Math! Susan and Mrs. Mee have had a challenging class this year, but both of them have hung in there and refused to give up, even on the hard days. We are very pleased that Susan and Mrs. Mee have developed a supportive relationship of mutual trust and understanding and we are glad that Susan decided to become a FGP with our program!

Hobbies: Genealogy, reading, history

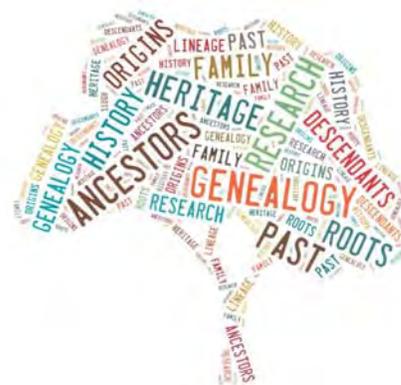
Likes: Cheesecake, ice cream, bagels and cream cheese

Dislikes: Lactose intolerance

Favorite Author: Ruth Rendell (aka, Barbara Vine) Margaret Atwood and Shirley Jackson. Mystery stories.

Favorite Music: Classical

Favorite Movie/Actors: Masterpiece Theater



FGP Openings

Tapestry—After School Programs West Rutland 3:00 to 5:30 & Proctor Elementary 2:15 to 5:15
Castleton Elementary School—Library position to include shelving books, helping children find books, computer assistance.

Sacred Heart School—Bennington, positions available in classrooms. Must complete safe environment protocol and background checks through the school.

Grace Christian School—Bennington, Combined 3rd/4th Grade classroom needs grandparent to work with students

VAC — Red Room (2 year olds) and Brown Room (4 year olds) Blue Room (3 year olds). Very active children need loving, consistent grandparent as role models and mentors. Patience, kindness and tolerance a plus.

Grace Preschool—Preschool age children need a caring, attentive grandparent who takes initiative and work well with staff and others.

RCPC—Brandon and Rutland sites need active grandparents willing to volunteer with pre-school, 2-3 year olds and younger children. Lots of play, action and up and down abilities involved! Patience and flexibility a plus.

Northeast School— K-3 Grandparent needed to read to children all day! 10 hours per week minimum.



Notes from Alix

Happy Spring! I am so thankful that the temperatures are climbing again and that we are headed towards longer days and more sunshine. We will also be finished with our criminal history background re-checks by the end of this month! That means you can all go back to doing what you do best - being amazing role models for the children in your communities. The silver lining of this experience, for me, was that I got to visit all your schools and see the value that you add to your classrooms. I am grateful for the many wonderful things that I saw and heard as we visited your schools.



If you have not been finger printed yet, please remember to schedule your finger printing appointment once you receive your packet from Fieldprint. Also, please don't forget that you should not write on your Fieldprint cards.

April 7 -13th is National Volunteer Week and I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your service. Every year we hear from your teachers how much you impact the classrooms you volunteer in. We cannot thank you enough for your time and dedication to serving your communities.

Enjoy the sunshine!
Alix



New Foster Grandparent



Rhea Cayia

Rhea Cayia lives in Proctor and in her past life worked for RAV-NAH as an LPN for 28 years. Rhea grew up in Barre, VT and has always been a wonderful caretaker. She has a daughter, Maria, and she loves to read. Rhea started at Grace Preschool on March 11 volunteering with Jacki Walker and Deb Wisell. Welcome Rhea!



Tai Chi In-Service



Our March in-service guest speakers were Nan Hart, certified Tai Chi instructor and her team mate, Marie. Nan and Marie demonstrated to grandparents the basic warm up moves for Tai Chi and talked about the value of Tai Chi. Tai Chi's slow movements help with balance, meditative and calming energies and stress. Grandparents were able to follow along with the exercise easily and many commented afterward that they enjoyed the movements.

Above & below: Grandparents practice their Tai Chi warm up.



Marie & Nan Hart demonstrate Tai Chi movements to grandparents.

Bone Builders for Strength



Pat Facey, Bone Builders

Our April in-service was another one that focused on taking care of ourselves as we age and the benefits that RSVP Bone Builders classes have with participants.



Pat Facey, Bone Builders Coordinator, cited several studies and statistics about people who age well and the three things they have in common: staying active, avoiding disease, and socialization. Bone Builders classes insure that participants are both healthy and active, but socialization is a big factor as well. Grandparents participated in a beginner class at the in-service. The exercises are done slowly starting out with no weights, and then increase weights in one pound increments as participants gain strength.

Keep Moving to Keep Brain Sharp as We Age

Staying active in old age may help preserve your memory and thinking skills, a new study suggests. In fact, older people who were physically active kept their minds sharp, even if their brains showed signs of lesions or other markers linked to Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, researchers found. "Physical activity may provide cognitive reserve" that helps preserve the brain even in the face of dementia, said lead researcher Dr. Aron Buchman. He's professor of neurology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Lifestyle appears to play a major role in keeping the mind sharp as we age, he said. Other studies have found that keeping socially and mentally active also improves mental skills. "Together, these suggest that a more active lifestyle, including physical, cognitive and social activities, may help maintain cognition in older adults," Buchman said. Buchman said he doesn't know how these factors protect the brain, what kind of exercise is best, or how much is protective. Only an association was seen in the study, and more research is needed."

Even if we don't have treatments for Alzheimer's disease, there's a benefit to having a more active lifestyle that can protect [the brain]," Buchman said. Keith Fargo, director of scientific programs and outreach for the Alzheimer's Association, agreed. "In some sense, we don't care why it works," he said. "That it works is good enough." For the study, Buchman's team looked at 454 older adults. There were 191 who had dementia and the rest did not. Participants had physicals and tests of memory and thinking skills every year for 20 years. All agreed to donate their brains for research after death. When participants died, the researchers looked at their brains for signs of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The average age at death was 91. About two years before death, each participant was asked to wear a device called an accelerometer, which measured their physical activity around the clock. Their activities included cleaning house and exercise routines. Researchers found that participants who were the most active had better thinking and memory skills than those who led more sedentary lives.

People who had better motor skills -- ones that help with movement and coordination -- also had better thinking and memory skills, the study found. The link between higher activity and better thinking remained consistent whether a participant had dementia or not. And even a small boost in activity helped, lowering dementia risk by 31 percent. Increases in motor skills were linked to a 55 percent lower risk, Buchman's group found. Buchman said physical activity and motor abilities accounted for 8 percent of the difference in participants' scores on thinking and memory tests.

Even people who are very old and have lived a sedentary lifestyle can see a benefit from exercise, said Fargo, who wasn't involved with the study. He added that based on other studies, aerobic exercise seems to be the most beneficial. Aerobic exercise increases a person's breathing and heart rate. It includes activities such as walking, swimming and cycling. "The time to really begin thinking seriously about your brain health to have the best outcome is, if not your entire life, at least by early middle age," Fargo said.

"I tell people, it's never too late to start and it's never too early to begin," he added.

(The report was published online Jan. 16 in the journal *Neurology*.)





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Our Sponsor:



Green Mountain Foster Grandparents are people age 55 or over who provide one to one and group assistance with children. Grandparents serve as mentors, tutors and role models to youth. Foster Grandparents provide 15–40 hours of volunteer service each week. They receive a modest stipend and other benefits. Foster Grandparents provide services in a variety of settings. These include daycare, elementary schools, high schools, Head Start Programs, libraries, after school programs and recreation centers. This program serves Rutland, Addison and Bennington Counties. It is the goal of the program to enable limited income persons 55 and over to remain physically and mentally active and to enhance their self-esteem through continued participation in needed community service. In addition, this will enable children to achieve improved physical, mental and social development, as well as assistance with their educational needs. The Foster Grandparent program is funded through the Corporation for National & Community Service.