



Green Mountain Foster Grandparent Program
6 Court Street
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FGP News!



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Meet Tom Estill

Tom (aka Mr. "E") was born in Chicago, IL and grew up in Albuquerque, NM. He received a BA degree from San Jose State University in CA, and a MEd in Environmental Science Education from Plymouth State College in NH.

Tom started teaching middle school science in 1976 at a private military academy in California, then moved to NH and taught at Oxbow HS in Bradford, VT for 13 years. He then taught middle school science in Lyme, NH for 9 years. Tom moved to CA in 2001 to be near family and worked as a Public Programs Specialist at Chabot Space and Science Center where he ran planetarium shows, and was a Flight Director for their Challenger Center, simulating missions to Mars, the Moon, and a Comet. In 2006, he was hired to work as an Aerospace Ed Specialist at NASA's Goddard Spaceflight Center in Greenbelt, MD. When

the program ended, he spent two years working as a science teacher at Christ the King School in Rutland, VT. He says his NASA job was something he had been working for most of his life. "It was a dream come true. Challenging, interesting work, and I was always learning." he says.

Tom's mother was a homemaker and RN, while his father was a Chemist for Sandia Corp.

Tom has 4 brothers and one sister, and one brother who passed on a little over a year ago.

All his brothers and sisters live in Oregon. All his brothers are retired—oil exploration scientist, Livermore Lab scientist and radioactive wastes specialist and postal service carrier—but his sister still works as a nurse at a local hospital. Tom is a middle child.

Tom is a widow. His wife, Peggy, worked as a nurse anesthe-



Tom Estill

tist at RRMC, and she passed on in 1998. Tom has two children, Courtney and Christopher, and 3 Grandchildren who are the loves of his life. Tom's daughter works as the Assistant Director of the Environmental Law Center in S. Royalton, VT and his son works as an electrical engineer at Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in NY helping build America's next generation submarines.

Tom's current hobbies are nature studies, and collecting Space historical Exploration memorabilia. Tom spends a lot of time

**"I've learned a lot of Math, Science, and English, but I will never forget what I learned about love."
— Anonymous**



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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.

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Tom Estill (cont. from page 1)

at Pine Hill Park, recording all the birds, mammals, wildflowers and other wildlife he observes, and recording that information in his nature journal. He then sends a seasonal summary of what he sees to the Pine Hill Park Partnership who puts it on their website. One of the most dangerous things that ever happened to Tom was coming face to face with a huge black bear in Haverhill, NH. After about 10 min. of the two of them just staring at one another, the bear finally turned and walked away!

Tom belongs to the Audubon Society and American Chestnut Foundation, and enjoys leading monthly "Star" parties at Christ the King School.

Tom says he is most proud of how well his children have turned out to be. "I think the values, morals, thoughts and ideas my wife and I gave our children as they were growing up paid off in the long run."

Tom's one big regret in life is never having served in the military. "I've tried to serve my country in other ways though, and have tried to live a life which gives honor to my 2 uncles who died in World War 2, my Navy Vet father, and my brother who served in Vietnam."

Years ago, while teaching H.S. biology at Oxbow H.S. in Vermont, Tom set up a terrarium with frogs, toads and salamanders, with one of the frogs being a large bullfrog, and another being a small leopard frog. Well, suddenly, as the students are watching, the bullfrog grabs the leopard frog and swallows it. So, Tom turned it into a learning moment talking about the food chain. 15 minutes later, while in the middle of a lecture, one of the students calls out to Tom to see what was happening in the terrarium. The bullfrog looked like it was going into contortions, when finally its mouth slowly opens, pushed open by the legs of the leopard frog which then jumps out to safety! The one thing in his life Tom would do different would be to have gotten married in a formal ceremony rather than have eloped.

As a child Tom dreamed of working in the outdoors or working with NASA. (Guess those dreams came true!) As a child he loved playing with toy soldiers because they reinforced his sense of adventure and fair play, & his feelings towards courage and honor.

The most influential people in Tom's life were one of his College Professors, Dr. Christopher Clarke, his parents, his first grade teacher, St. Marie Dominic, and his wife, Peggy. The most important lesson Tom has learned in life is that if you have a dream, hold onto it, work hard towards that dream, stay the course, and it will come true. Be kind and be humble. And never forget the poor and needy.

Tom's favorite thing about being a Foster Grandparent is that he gets to bring joy and exciting activities to so many students. "Most of all I'm made to feel needed and appreciated. The children keep me young at heart and sharp of mind!" says Tom.

Hobbies: Hiking, camping, working out at Holiday inn gym

Likes: Daquiri Ice Cream, popcorn, hot dogs with chili and mustard, playing with my grandchildren, and dressing up to go out to dinner on Friday night to the Palms Restaurant!

Dislikes: Pretentious people, overpaid professionals, sauerkraut, pollution, and crowded, noisy cities

Favorite Music: New Age & Sacred Choir

Favorite Book/Author: Count of Monte Cristo & Jack London



Our Grandparents at Work & Play



"Kale Day" at Clarendon Elementary had the girls posing with Grandma Maggie Holden.



Not to be outdone, the boys had to have their picture taken, too, but the little guy on the left wasn't too sure about Kale!

You KALE
me with kindness!



Kale'in
it



Our Wonderful Grandparents Celebrate the Holidays!

Our Grandparents at Work & Play



Gung hay fat choy!
(Happy New Year!!)
Grandma Rhea is teaching the pre-school class about the traditions of the Chinese New Year!
How cool!



One of Grandma Rhea Cayia's students helps to spell her name in clay at Grace Preschool.



New Grandparents



Please welcome Dawn Smith-Pliner, as a new volunteer grandparent. Dawn started on December 5 at the Wells Elementary School. She previously worked in adoption services for 30+ years.

Linda Laberge will be returning after a year of caring for her ailing mother. She will be going back to the Otter Creek Child Care Center in Middlebury. We are very pleased to have both of you with us!



Notes from Alix

Warm winter greetings! I hope you are all busy working with your students creating Valentines, love themed bulletin boards, and of course planning Valentine's class parties. Did you know that February is also designated as American Heart Month? Give your heart some love this month and eat some nutritious foods and take a few extra steps a day.



In addition to celebrating love and heart health, February is also the start of Tax Season. Our friends at RSVP & The Volunteer Center have once again partnered with AARP and are offering free tax preparation services starting February 10th and running through the beginning of April. Appointments are required. If you are interested in scheduling a tax appointment, please call the RSVP office in Rutland County at 775-8220, or Addison County at 388-7044. When filing your taxes remember that stipends are not subject to federal, state, or local taxes, nor can they be treated as wages or compensations for the purpose of unemployment, temporary disability, retirement, or public assistance. Stipends cannot reduce the level of, or eliminate eligibility for receiving benefits under federal, state, or local government programs.

One last thing, our number of volunteer hours continues to be below our federally funded mark. We would appreciate you sharing your experiences with other people in your community who might be interested in FGP. You are our best recruiters!

We look forward to seeing you in March and Happy Valentine's Day! — Alix

PS. Bring your answer to the following riddle to the March in-service. Think of a number, double it, add six, divide it in half, and subtract the number you started with. What do you get?

Holiday Party



Foster Grandparents were entertained at the annual holiday party by Gary Young and Julie Tucci, a husband and wife team who sang old songs, Christmas carols and had some of the braver and energetic grandparents dancing in the aisles! Yummy holiday appetizers, too!