



Green Mountain Foster Grandparent Program
16 North Street Extension
Rutland, VT 05701



AmeriCorps
Seniors
Green Mountain FGP

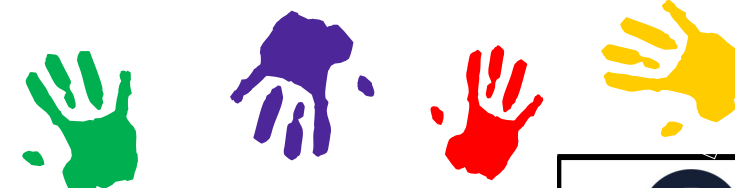
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Our Sponsor:



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 10–40 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.



FGP News!



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Meet Jody Liebhaber

Born Joanne Parker in Springfield, VT, her father wanted all three of his daughters to use "Parker" as their middle names, which they did!

Jodi grew up in Proctorsville in the town of Cavendish. Her father was a Foreman at General Electric in Ludlow and Rutland. Her mother was a homemaker and mother to five children. Jodi was the eldest and all her other siblings were two years apart except for her younger brother. She loved her hometown, swimming in the old swimming hole and sledding in winter.

Jodi started taking trumpet lessons when she was 8 and she was the shortest and the youngest in the Proctorsville Drum Corp. They played and marched locally and in other towns in New England. "Whew! Those heavy uniforms were very hot, but we marched on gladly!" she laughs.

She attended Black River High School, class of 1968. In her Senior year she was named Ludlow's first Junior Miss, singing "The Sound of Music" as her

talent contribution to the pageant.

Jodi started classes at Castleton University in September 1968. Her maternal grandmother attended Castleton Normal School, which it was called in the 1920's & 30's. Her grandmother taught in a one room school house in Cavendish. Jodi's two daughters also attended CSU.

Jodi graduated with a BA in Music. Having sung in the chorus at Castleton throughout her years there, she continued to sing in that chorus after graduation. "My childhood dream was to be a back up singer," she notes.

After graduation, Jodi worked at GE, where she met her future husband. They were married for 34 years until he passed away a month after retiring from GE as a toolmaker. The couple has two daughters, Hope, born in 1973 and Elizabeth (Liza) born in 1978. Hope has a degree in Psychology and is married to a successful chiropractor in MA. They have two children, a daughter Ame-



Jodi Liebhaber

lia 19, and a son, Charlie 17. Hope homeschooled the children for a few years, is an excellent jewelry maker and has her own business.

Liza has a wonderful partner, Scott, who is an emergency room nurse at a Veteran's Hospital. Liza works at a Jaguar dealership in CT. She enjoys helping care for Scott's daughters.

Jodi says she has always had cats. Her last cat was a sweet tuxedo. She passed away two years ago. Jodi decided "No more pets for me. Too difficult to say 'goodbye.'"

Jodi started venturing out to work after her girls were a little older. Her first position was as a

"The Earth laughs in flowers."
Ralph Waldo Emerson



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Jodi Liebhaber (cont. from page 1)

teacher's aide at Sunshine Nursery School in Proctor, VT in the 80's. After a few years, she found a position at ABC House across from the Rutland Hospital. She cared for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. She then went to Rutland County Parent Child Center in the 90's. She did outreach for a time, helping families by installing children's car seats and also delivered Welcome Baby Bags, which were full of helpful items, goodies and information to families with newborns. Jodi changed direction after that and worked at the Sunset Home in Rutland for 3 years. "It was a place for 12 lovely elderly ladies to reside in and receive health care," she smiles. She was a Certified Nursing Assistant and performed duties in the dining room. Jodi's last ventures were working with a little boy with Downs Syndrome one-on-one helping him integrate into the classroom and caring for a young boy after school hours, helping him with the use of his right hand and bringing him to therapy sessions.

Jodi has been widowed for 17 years now. Her passion is singing, which began while growing up with musical parents. She and her sister sang in church and at school events. She currently sings in the Rutland Area Chorus, where they perform the "Messiah" and various spring concerts. She also sang in a "gem of a group" called the Young at Heart Senior Chorus, a volunteer program under RSVP. They sang at nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the Rutland Area twice a week. They had to disband because of COVID, but they try to keep their connection alive by meeting for singing and pot lucks.

The most influential person in Jodi's life was Mr. Stan Firkey. "He was the most caring person and a steadfast fan of mine throughout grade school and high school, and kept tabs on me throughout college. He was our friend and neighbor in Proctorsville building forts and such. I noticed how helpful and selfless he was as a person, a friend of my family (continued on page 5)

Hobbies: Singing, music, drawing, calligraphy, scrapbooking, walking and reading, chair yoga

Likes: People who are good listeners, beef stroganoff, chocolate, flowers and her condo

Dislikes: People who are selfish/self-centered, lima beans, smell of cigarette smoke

Favorite Singer: Etta James, Celine Dion, Andy Williams, Josh Groban, Grace Potter, Andrea Bocelli, and Michael Buble'. Composers Cole Porter and John Ritter and their songs are favorites.

Favorite Author: Mary McGarry Morris

Favorite Book: Songs in Ordinary Time



Volunteer Possibilities

Tapestry—After School Programs West Rutland 3:00 to 5:30 & Proctor Elementary 2:15 to 5:15

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

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

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

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

Other: Other openings possible dependent on school needs.



Dewitt Jones—March In-service



Our March in-service featured a video of National Geographic photographer, Dewitt Jones' "Celebrate What is Right in the World." His superb photography enhanced the presentation and left everyone feeling very hopeful and positive in light of our world issues today. It was a nice uplifting experience for sure!

Goodbye From Lynn

It has been such a privilege to be a part of RSVP and The Green Mountain Foster Grandparent Program. I have loved meeting and working with so many interesting, talented and inspiring people and knowing we are providing much needed and appreciated support to our local organizations and those they serve. I truly admire your compassion, commitment and willingness to help others and enrich our community. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Maryesa, Pat, Deb and Tammy for so many years, and will miss everyone! Thank you for all you do and best wishes. ~~ Lynn



Jodi Liebhaber (continued from Pg. 2)

A teacher, and ultimately as a guidance counselor at my high school," Jodi says.

As sad as it was, the event that changed her life was the death of her husband. "It woke me up. I saw the many things in my life that I could change for the better. And, of course, that life is too short as they say." Be more involved in life and embrace it.

Jodi's favorite toy as a child was a baby blue piece of furniture with a turntable on the top and a place for records on the bottom. One of the songs she played and sang along to was "The Campbells are Coming Hurrah, Hurrah!" She was determined that the "Candles" were coming, no matter how much her mother tried to tell her it was the "Campbells!"

Among the many lessons she has learned is that her health in every respect is most important to her and helping others and being kind is very important too.

Jodi volunteers at Lothrop Elementary School in Pittsford in Kayla Desabrais's 1st and 2nd grade classroom. She started there in the fall. This is her first year as a volunteer Foster Grandparent. Jodi says, "I volunteer at Lothrop because I can be helpful to children and their teacher. The program helps me feel useful and gives me something to look forward to each day. I also enjoy the in-services! I'm very grateful to Deb Roy and the Foster Grandparent Program for finding this experience for me!"

We are so pleased to have Jodi as a Volunteer Foster Grandparent with our program. When watching her in the classroom, she has it down pat—kind and caring but firm!

Brain Makeover: A Holistic Approach To Brain

There is no "magic pill" for your brain. It is part of a whole ecosystem that includes your body and all your surroundings—that means the artificial flavors, dyes and additives in your favorite junk food and the chemicals in the hair spray you just inhaled. Your brain is only 2 percent of your bodyweight, yet consumes 20 percent of the body's glucose. How to feed and care for it? Try these tips:

Avoid chemicals as much as possible. The more your house and office are "clean and green" the better your brain will work. Watch out for house rehab paint strippers, paints, varnishes and the fumes from new carpets and furniture. Avoid using plug-in or spray deodorizers. Use natural citrus sprays instead. (Lime Mate Mist is a good one.) Use body products that have natural ingredients instead of chemicals—a lifetime of breathing hairspray can really lower those IQ points.

Get organic foods whenever you can. If organic foods are not available, wash all foods with a good fruit and vegetable wash. Be aware of the "dirty dozen"—the list of fruits and vegetables that, if not organic, are likely to have the highest pesticide content. (They are: peaches, strawberries, apples, domestic blueberries, nectarines, cherries, imported grapes, celery, sweet bell peppers, spinach, kale and collard greens).

Drink water. Energy drinks and sports drinks with all their sugar and dyes don't count. Dehydration actually causes brain damage. Drink at least 8 to 10 glasses a day.

Take fish oil. Deficiency of omega-3 fatty acids has been shown to lower intellectual performance and is linked with dementia. Fish oil's "active ingredients" are the essential fatty acids DHA and EPA—30 percent of the content of your brain is these very fatty acids. No fatty acids, no brain. It's tough to eat enough fish to get the right amount of fatty acids, so take a good supplement. Do your best to get at least 600 milligrams of combined DHA/EPA per day.

Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. The best ones, according to the US Department of Agriculture, have the highest antioxidant value: blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, strawberries, spinach, raspberries, brussels sprouts, plums, broccoli, beets, avocados, oranges, red grapes, red bell peppers, cherries and kiwis. Five servings a day of fruits and vegetables is recommended (each serving is a half-cup).

Drink green tea. Green tea (and to a lesser extent, black tea) slows the build-up of plaque in brains from amyloid deposits and also prevents strokes. Drinking tea also helps mental alertness.

Eat eggs. Eggs are rich in choline, a fat-like B vitamin. Studies have shown that it increases memory and chases away fatigue.

Get exercise. Greater blood circulation means more oxygen to the brain and more production of mood-enhancing endorphins.

Meditate. Meditation changes brain frequency and function. The frequencies of deep meditation allow a "brain rest" you cannot get anywhere else. Meditation also enhances connection and symmetry between the right and left hemispheres of the brain.

Notes from Maryesa



Happy Spring Everyone!

I want to take a moment and thank all of you for your hard work and dedication to our program. Every one of you is truly an amazing part of our community and has a special part in the hearts of the children you serve.

Since our last newsletter, I have been very busy filling out our renewal grant for the feds and everything is going well so far with the submission. Deb and I have been busy recruiting. If you have any friends or family that would be a good fit for our program, please send them our way. Please let us know if you would like to up your FGP hours.

I do have to let everyone know some sad news. Our Addison County Coordinator, Lynn has given her notice and her last day was March 28 th , 2023. We are searching for a new coordinator, and we will keep everyone posted on our search. I will be filling in for the Addison Office until we find someone. So, if you are volunteering in Addison and you cannot get ahold of Deb,

please feel free to call me at 802-468-7056.

I would like to pass on some very exciting news that starting April 1 st ,2023 your stipend will increase to \$4.00 per hour. I am excited about this increase. It shows the Feds appreciate the work you do. Let us hope they will keep recognizing the work and provide a more proper increase down the road.

Deb will be providing everyone with news on our recognition event but unfortunately it must change from the way that we use to hold our event for the simple fact the feds are not providing us with the appropriate funding to support the program with these events. The inflation costs have hit our program in unexpected ways and the cost of living has made prices to hold formal events very expensive. Please note we are working hard to still have a recognition event just different than our past events.

With the end of the school year approaching, I would love to hear some positive short stories and comments about your year that we can provide to potential FGPs. If you could write them down and send them to Deb or myself that would be great. My email is maryesarsvp@gmail.com ; our mailing address is 16 North Street Ext. Rutland, VT 05701 or please feel free to drop it off in the white box near our front door.

I hope everyone is looking forward to Spring and going out with their family. I know I have many flower gardens that need attention. I will have many stories to share about my spring adventures with my family soon enough now that the weather is warming up. Until then I will share photos of Mairin and Mylie from their glitter photoshoot where they got to play and make a mess with glitter. I will share an Easter photo in our next newsletter. Enjoy the warm weather and as always if you need anything please let me know. Thank you for all you do and Happy Easter.

~Maryesa



Calling Prospective Grandparents!

We are getting calls weekly from schools asking for Volunteer Foster Grandparents. Wallingford Elementary and Mt. Holly Elementary are the latest two calls we have received from Principals wanting grandparents at their school. If you know anyone who lives in those communities and who might be interested, have them give us a call. Even if they don't live in those communities, but are willing to drive there to volunteer, send them our way. Our numbers remain the same with new grandparents coming on and other grandparents leaving for health reasons. We'd love to call these schools back and say we have a FGP for them!