

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



FGP News!

Happy Halloween!



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Meet Leah Abatiell



Leah Abatiell is a first grade teacher at Northeast Elementary School. This is her 30th year teaching! She was born and raised in Rutland and attended UVM for two years before leaving when she realized she wanted to be a teacher. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Ed. at Castleton and her Master's at the College of St. Joseph's.

What was her best and worst job? Leah says, "I both loved and didn't love working as a waitress and bartender. I loved it because I made a lot of money. In my first year of teaching, I taught during the day and was a waitress at night. I made more waitressing than I did teaching! The cons were that the long hours were tough with no

benefits or reliable income."

Leah's mother was a hairdresser and her father worked at GE. She has 1 older sister, Paula, who lives in Maine and is retired from working in an Optometrist Office.

Leah's husband, Pat, is a Financial Advisor. Their son, Evan, is an Athletic Trainer for the UAlbany football team. He and his new wife, Jessica, live in Half Moon, NY and are currently house hunting.

Leah has a beautiful, black cat named Zoey. "We think she's 4. We got her at the Humane Society and she's our lil' baby! We loved our 3 Golden Retrievers who lived long, wonderful lives. Brennan (15), Tori (15), and Jeter who recently passed at the age of 14. We miss them tremendously," she says sadly.

Any regrets? "Long ago I told myself to live my life so I wouldn't have major regrets. I sure do make mistakes, but I try to be better and

do better the next time. I'm not afraid to say I'm sorry," says Leah.

Craziest thing Leah has ever done?

"When we were in Italy with our spouses, my sister and I bought a random train ticket and didn't tell our husbands that we had NO IDEA where we were going. We wanted to see a vineyard. As it turns out, we ended up on the Island of Gandolfo (the Pope's summer spot). The vineyards were not in season, but a restaurant owner brought us to his and other underground tunnels that have been converted to eating/winery spots. It was amazing! Later, we learned that our grandmother's birth name was Gandolfo! We never knew since she was always Ann to us!"

Funny story? After I drove cross country (when I left UVM), I was going to be an Au Pair in California. I went

"If a year were tucked inside of a clock, then autumn would be the magic hour."

Victoria Erickson

Inside this issue:

Leah Abatiell	Page 1
Abatiell (cont)	Page 2
Volunteer Openings	Page 2
Note from Maryesa	Page 3
Historical Society	Page 3
FGP Info	Page 4

 **AmeriCorps Seniors**
Green Mountain FGP

16 North Street Extension
 Rutland, VT 05701
 Phone: 802-774-8711
 Email: debfgp@gmail.com

79 Court Street Suite 7
 Middlebury, VT 05753
 Phone: 802-388-7044
 Email: rsvpfgp@gmail.com

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.

Leah Abatiell (continued from page 1)

for a weekend interview somewhere in VT where they had a vacation home. As it turns out, they wanted more of a maid than someone to watch their child. After requesting that I cook dinner for a group of friends coming over, I left abruptly the next day! I think the dinner turned out okay???

Her parents and relatives were the most influential in her life because they always encouraged and supported her, yet held her accountable for her actions.

Favorite toy as a child? "I loved my Mrs. Beasley Doll! You pulled the string and she could talk!! She was from the show Family Affair, which I loved to watch. I always wanted my hair done in pigtails like Buffy!"

Life Lessons? Work hard, be honest, and make time for yourself, your family, and your true friends. Have LOTS OF FUN!!

Leah's favorite teacher was Mrs. Dexter, her Kindergarten teacher, because she could play the piano and Leah thought that was pretty impressive!

As a child, Leah says she wasn't really sure what she wanted to be when she grew up. "I'm still not sure—haha!" she laughs. One thing for certain is that it is obvious she loves to teach and she is an outstanding teacher. "I am most proud of how hard I work every day to be the best teacher I can be."

Hobbies: Golfing, working out, gardening, traveling

Likes: Beaches, flowers, fireworks, warm weather, the sun, my family and dear friends

Dislikes: I DO NOT LIKE RAW ONIONS and I don't like snakes!

Favorite Singer/Music: I like all kinds of music, but most often find myself turning to the country station

Favorite Book: Love reading in the summer but only have time to read for enjoyment during school vacations.

Favorite Movie: "Bridesmaids" always makes me laugh no matter how many times I've seen it!

Wish I had: I would have learned to play an instrument. I would also ask my great-grandfather to teach me Italian.

Volunteer Possibilities

There are a variety of schools that have indicated they might be willing to have Volunteer Foster Grandparents at their sites. These needs change as the school year progresses. Typically, we try to place grandparents at the school they are interested in, if there are available placements.

Sites must be non-profit organizations to qualify for our Federal Program. That means that if a site doesn't have a 501-3C Non-Profit Fed ID number, we cannot place grandparents there.

If you, or anyone you know is interested in becoming a Volunteer Foster Grandparent, please contact our office in Rutland County at 802-774-8711 or in Addison County at 802-388-7044. If you want more information you can check out our website at: volunteersinvt.org and click on the FGP tab at the top.



Notes from Maryesa



Happy Fall Everyone!

School is in full swing, and I hope everyone is having a wonderful year so far. With that being said, we can't fight the fact that winter weather is right around the corner. I want to remind everyone that it is important to have shoes that have good traction for the different surfaces that you may encounter (slippery, wet, icy, snow, etc.). Even though it is important to have good footwear, it is also important to have proper tires on your vehicle. Vermont weather can provide us with difficult travel conditions. We want to make sure that everyone is safe and prepared for this upcoming winter season. Along with making sure we are safe by having proper footwear and transportation equipment, we want to remind everyone that flu, COVID and RSV Season will be here before we know it. Many local pharmacies and doctors' offices are providing these vaccines. Please chat with your doctor on what vaccine is best for you. We want to remind everyone that the best way to help stop the spread of sickness is when you are sick stay home. Please note that monthly in-services are mandatory for all FGPs to attend. This is a federal regulation and if you don't attend these meetings, it is putting us in jeopardy of non-compliance. So please remember to attend these meetings so we can stay compliant. The other reminder is to please make sure you are following your work plan. This helps us stay compliant when it comes to prohibited activities. I want to let everybody know that these are just reminders, and everybody is doing a wonderful job!

Now that that's out of the way, I want to welcome all our new and returning Foster Grandparents back, I am excited to work with you. As many of you know, we are still on the search for individuals to join our program. If you have a friend or a family member that is interested or think they would be a good fit, please send them our way. We always have flyers and brochures in our office and if anyone would like some to hand out, please let us know.

Lastly, I want to wish everyone a happy spooky Halloween season. I love seeing all the different costumes. I am joining in on the fun this year by being a blow-up t-rex, Mylie is going to be a witch from Harry Potter and Mairin is Chase from Paw Patrol. I will have pictures for our next newsletter to show everybody how silly we looked. Also, I want to wish you a happy and healthy start to the upcoming holiday season. Thank you for all you do, and I am excited to see what this year brings. — Maryesa

Rutland Historical Society

At our September 25th in-service we had guest speaker, Barbara Giffin, President of the Rutland Historical Society, speak with grandparents about what type of information is housed at the Historical Society and what they can do, as the knowledgeable generation, to help continue the important process of preserving family and local history. Sharing photos, stories, and family genealogy with family members and with the Historical Society to preserve that information for future generations was emphasized. There are many artifacts available for viewing at the Historical Society which is open on Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at 96 Center Street in Rutland. You can stop by during that time, or make an appointment by calling: 802-775-2006. You can also go online to: rutlandhistory.com to view slides, newsletters, photos and other information that you might be searching for to assist you.

