

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- September 04, 2015

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Kinship Caregivers Unite as Funding for GrandFamily Success Center Evolves



Pearlene Armstrong (left) and Mollie Robertson are kinship caregivers helping their families raise the next generation and are advocates for the continuation of Mercer County's only GrandFamily Success Center, a program of CHSofNJ.

Lawrenceville, NJ (September 04, 2015) – Often, when a birth parent is unable to care for his or her child, the safest and most comforting environment for that child is with his grandparents or other extended family members whom he knows, loves, and trusts. The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSofNJ) offers supportive counseling and services to help connect kinship families with medical coverage, housing, child care, family support, and resources to help with legal issues such as guardianship and the right to make medical and educational decisions in the best interest of their kin children. One such program that has tremendously impacted the lives of many local caregivers is CHSofNJ's GrandFamily Success Center (GFSC).

The GFSC is a community-based gathering place in Mercer County, NJ that supports and empowers relatives who have taken on the responsibility of raising their kin children. A Grant from The Nicholson Foundation that has funded the GFSC reaches the end of its 5-year term on December 31, 2015. Due to these funding changes, CHSofNJ will no longer be able to maintain the GFSC as a stand-alone program without the help of a new major funder. The agency continues to search for new sources of financial support through state and federal grants and

private donations to continue a separate kinship-focused Family Success Center, but in the meantime, CHSofNJ will provide a place for GFSC families to continue gathering for monthly meetings beginning in January, 2016. All GFSC families are invited to attend programs offered through CHSofNJ's North and South Ward Family Success Centers in Trenton, which will incorporate kinship-centered workshops and activities into their calendar of events. CHSofNJ's Director of Kinship, Clinical and School-Based Services Dolores Ijames-Bryant said, "Our GrandFamily staff has already begun training the North & South Ward FSC staff to recognize and advocate for the specific needs of kin families. We are confident that our kin children and caregivers will feel welcomed, understood, and comfortable continuing to support each other and work with our staff in this new location."

The GFSC families whose lives have been changed by this important program have refused to sit idly by waiting to see if a new major funding source can be identified. Caregivers have united to form a committee that has taken the lead in trying to ensure other kin children and families can benefit from this valuable resource as they navigate the world of kinship care. Their extraordinary efforts to save the GFSC are truly a testament to the importance of the program. Grandmother Jacqueline Harris struggles to imagine her life without the support she has found in the GFSC. "Without this program, I don't know what I would do because they help me in so many ways," Harris said. In order to keep the GFSC operational at CHSofNJ, caregivers are working in partnership with the agency to identify new sources of major kinship funding.

The GFSC supports the health and well-being of caregivers and children whose birth parents are unable to care for them, and CHSofNJ looks forward to continuing to provide these services to kinship caregivers and their children. The program empowers kin families to achieve stability, and helps caregivers provide a safe and stable home for the children entrusted to their care. To help this life-saving program and the local families it strengthens, tax-deductible donations can be made by check (payable to CHSofNJ at 635 S. Clinton Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08611). Credit Card donations can be processed over the telephone by calling 609-695-6274 x156, or via internet at www.chsofnj.org. No gift is too small, as every dollar will help sustain these critical services for local kin families. *Please be sure to note that your gift is in support of the GrandFamily Success Center.*

About The Children's Home Society of New Jersey

The Children's Home Society of New Jersey is a nonprofit child and family serving agency whose mission is to save children's lives and build healthy families. Founded in 1894, the agency protects abused or neglected infants and at-risk children by ensuring stable, permanent, and loving homes for each and every child it serves. All services are confidential and most are free. For more information, visit our website at www.chsofnj.org.

About CHSofNJ's GrandFamily Success Center

The Mercer County GrandFamily Success Center is a community-based center for grandparents and other family members who are raising their relative children. The Children's Home Society of New Jersey has re-designed services for the Mercer County GrandFamily Success Center to focus more intensively on supporting the health and behavioral health of caregivers and children, while provide linkages to community services, providing supportive education groups and individual support. To learn more about the GFSC or CHSofNJ's other Kinship programs, visit www.chsofnj.org.

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