

FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

Connecting seniors with special children

Children who live in limited income communities or who suffer from mental and physical challenges often need special care to grow, gain confidence, and thrive. Teachers and parents have many pressing demands on their limited time and cannot always provide the children with the intense and specialized attention they might need.



This is where foster grandparents can help. The senior volunteers who work as foster grandparents give children plenty of extra affection, wisdom, and support – just the way a loving grandparent would.

These senior volunteers provide friendship, assistance, and one-on-one mentorship to their young charges. They are intensely appreciated, not only by the children they help every day, but also by the organizations they service, such as schools, day care centers, rehabilitation centers, and Headstart programs.

WHAT FOSTER GRANDPARENTS DO

Our foster grandparents spend from fifteen to forty hours each week helping children on a one-on-one basis, generally in a school setting, providing support to at-risk children who are pre-school or school-aged.

As mentors, they assist with homework, listen to the children, provide emotional support, and offer praise, feedback, and positive reinforcement. Often, foster grandparents become true role models for the children they assist.

A relationship with a foster grandparent has huge benefits for the child. At the same time, it provides significant benefits to the senior volunteer as well. The volunteers experience the satisfaction of helping youngsters grow, mature, and prepare for successful and self-sufficient futures. Even the many seniors with grandchildren of their own find that this connection brings extra joy and fulfillment.



ABOUT UCAN

UCAN (Uhlich Children's Advantage Network) was founded in 1869 as a Civil War orphanage, UCAN serves wards of the state who have suffered severe abuse or neglect as well as foster families and families in crisis.

TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

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BENEFITS OF BEING A FOSTER GRANDPARENT

Beyond the satisfaction of making a difference in a child's life, foster grandparents receive:

- A small tax-free stipend
- Transportation assistance or reimbursement to and from volunteer stations
- Paid holidays, sick leave, and vacation days
- Free lunches on work days
- Formal and informal recognition events

WHERE FOSTER GRANDPARENTS SERVE

Foster grandparents work in the communities of south suburban Cook County. There are 28 volunteer stations in Chicago Heights, Ford Heights, Riverdale, Harvey, Markham, Robbins, Matteson, Richton Park, Calumet City, Maywood, Bellwood, Oak Park, Olympia Fields, and Park Forest.

At each of these stations, foster grandparents offer support and guidance to children whose families are working to overcome educational, developmental, and/or economic challenges.

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