

## **Parents Again: Forum welcomes grandparents raising grandchildren**

**When:** 5:30-7 p.m. April 15

**Where:** Leyden Family Services

10200 W. Grand Ave., Franklin Park

**Information:** Ruth Folkening, (708) 354-1323, Ext. 228

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For more than 100,000 Illinoisans, the notion of an empty nest is little more than a dream. Having raised their own children to adulthood, a growing number of people find themselves parenting a second time – this time, for their grandchildren.

For those living in Leyden and Norwood Park townships, help and support is on the way.

Aging Care Connections, a La Grange-based organization that provides comprehensive social work services, education, and health and wellness programs to adults 60 and older in suburban Cook County, provides regular support groups for those who find themselves parenting for a second time.

“It is growing,” Ruth Folkening, caregiver specialist, said of the number of people faced with raising their grandchildren, and the need for support.

On April 15, Aging Care Connections will hold an informational forum to determine whether a new support group is needed for grandparents in Leyden and Norwood Park townships. The forum will welcome several speakers along with information about resources that can help make parenting a little easier the second time around.

Those who attend the April 15 forum will hear firsthand from a woman who is raising her grandson. Adrian Charniak will tell the story of how she found herself parenting again after the death of her son and the challenges she has faced the second time around.

Pastors Bill Ressler and Penny Taylor of Trinity Community Church, UCC, Berwyn, also will speak about the church’s grandparents raising grandchildren ministry. Founded by Charniak, the church’s Gift of Hope ministry serves as a resource of information and support for church and community members who have become parents to their grandchildren.

Colleen A. Connelly, an attorney from the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago, will speak about the legal challenges that can come with parenting a grandchild and the resources available.

“Our goal is to reach out to grandparents and find out if there is an interest in a support group,” Folkening said.

Grandparents already gather regularly in Summit and Melrose Park. Folkening said the April forum could be the start of an ongoing source of information and support for even more second-time parents in Cook County.

The forum will be held at Leyden Family Services, 10200 W. Grand Ave., Franklin Park, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. All are welcome. Call Folkening at (708) 354-1323, Ext. 228, or email her at [rfolkening@agingcareconnections.org](mailto:rfolkening@agingcareconnections.org) for more information.

*Aging Care Connections is a non-profit organization which is the connection to the most comprehensive, expert information, programs and services enabling older adults to remain independent and their families to make the best, most informed decisions regarding needed care in their lives. Serving communities in Leyden, Lyons, Norwood Park, Proviso and Riverside Townships, Aging Care Connections' programs and services are made possible by community support and donations, and, in part, by the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA), AgeOptions, Community Memorial Foundation and local United Ways. To learn more, visit [www.agingcareconnections.org](http://www.agingcareconnections.org).*