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National Foster Grandparent Month, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This year, we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Foster Grandparent Program. In its first year of operation, 782 foster grandparents carried out 33 projects in 27 States. Today, some 19,000 foster grandparents are serving some 65,000 children through 245 projects in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. The program, which has achieved both great success and great acceptance, is administered by ACTION, a Federal agency that promotes voluntarism.

Most of us have been fortunate enough to have enjoyed a very special relationship with our grandparents. They were the living bridge to the past. They handed down to us the hard-won lessons they had learned from life and the wisdom they had received from their own grandparents. They provided us with the patient, unquestioning love and understanding that gave us the strength to face the future with confidence and hope.

Today, the elderly and retired participants in the Foster Grandparent Program provide unique, personal guidance and care to tens of thousands of physically, emotionally, and mentally handicapped children as well as those who have been abused, neglected, or who are in the juvenile justice system, or in need of other special help.

Love is the only thing we have more of the more we give it away. And these volunteers who give of themselves, of their wisdom, and of their time, reap rich benefits. They rejoice in a newfound independence. Their loneliness and fear of isolation disappear. In many cases, their health improves. Their sense of self-worth is enhanced as they find themselves deeply involved with others who depend on them. They experience a new fulfillment in performing a much-needed community service which taps all their reserves of understanding, creativity, and warmth.

The children in the program blossom under the golden glow of counsel and caring that foster grandparents bring into their lives. This program has truly worked wonders for hearts young and old.

I urge all Americans to join me in applauding the activities of these foster grandparent volunteers. Their service encourages positive attitudes about the abilities of the elderly. It demonstrates how greatly society benefits when it calls on the experience and seasoned judgment of older persons.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 92, has designated the month of October 1985 as "National Foster Grandparent Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of October 1985 as National Foster Grandparent Month. I invite all citizens and appropriate agencies and organizations to unite during October with appropriate observances and activities to honor these volunteers and the children they serve.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan