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## **NEW HOPE FOR STRUGGLING GRANDFAMILIES**

*Expanded services for grandparents raising grandchildren in Metro Atlanta*

**ATLANTA, GEORGIA, October 9, 2018** – Atlanta area nonprofit, Innovative Solutions for Disadvantage and Disability is receiving new funding to help grandparents raising children with special needs. Expanded supports and services are helping grandfamilies to be successful and to keep children out of the foster care system.

Metro Atlanta Area grandparents raising relative children (grandfamilies) with special needs are benefiting from new funding from national and local sources to expand supports and services. According to the US Census, nearly 50,000 seniors are responsible for raising children in Metro Atlanta alone. This growing national phenomenon is thought to be linked to the opioid crisis. Project GRANDD (Grandparents Raising And Nurturing Dependents with Disabilities), a program of local nonprofit Innovative Solutions for Disadvantage & Disability (ISDD), was awarded \$170,000 in new funding from Fulton and DeKalb Counties, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, United Way of Greater Atlanta, Brookdale Foundations Group's national Relatives As Parents Program and the Atlanta Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging to serve this population. This funding is allowing ISDD to expand its ability to provide a comprehensive array of services designed to ensure that grandfamilies are successful and children remain out of the foster care system.

“Grandfamilies are astoundingly underserved in the Atlanta Metro Area,” said Executive Director, Rainie B. Jueschke, CFRE. “They are the square peg that doesn’t fit in the round hole of programs serving seniors or younger, biologically parented families. Grandfamilies face profoundly different challenges and they need programs that meet their unique needs, particularly when the children have disabilities. They need Project GRANDD. With this increased funding we are thrilled to be in the position to serve more of the 50,000 grandfamilies living throughout the Atlanta area.”

MORE

Children living in grandfamilies are more likely to have a disability, have a family income below the poverty line and have higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems than children in the overall U.S. population. Grandparents often have health issues of their own, which can create a risk factor, especially if those issues are ignored in favor of the child's needs. Most of all, grandparents feel frustrated and ignored by complex educational, health and social service systems that don't understand their circumstances.

Since 2005, Project GRANDD has been the only Atlanta Metro-wide provider of comprehensive supports to grandfamilies with children who have special needs. This includes support groups for adults and children, case management and client support services, home visits, needs assessments, advocacy, educational programming, monthly educational newsletters, homework assistance for children, health programming for seniors and parenting training specific to grandparents. All services are provided at no cost to program participants.

In addition to the ability to serve more grandfamilies, this new funding has allowed for the establishment of a DeKalb County Support group for grandparents meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at the DeKalb County Library Covington Branch in Decatur. Support groups offer a chance to be with others who share the same experiences and to participate in educational programming concerning topics of interest to grandparent caregivers so that they can meet the legal, medical, educational and financial issues that come with parenting another generation. This additional location compliments services provided in Fulton County including a grandparent support group meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at the Helene Mills Multipurpose Senior Center, and groups for grandparents, children and teens meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at the Metropolitan Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System. Support groups are free and open to the public, but advance registration is required (call or email Laura at 404-310-8129 or [lauraw@isdd-home.org](mailto:lauraw@isdd-home.org)).

Innovative Solutions is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2004 with the mission to create healthier outcomes for vulnerable children and families in the Atlanta Metro Area. Project GRANDD is supported in part by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Department of Community Development, Atlanta Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, DeKalb County Human Services, United Way of Greater Atlanta, Brookdale Foundation's Group and contributions from individuals and corporations. Funding under contract from the Atlanta Regional Commission is provided by the U.S. Government through the Georgia Department of Human Services. Funding provided under contract by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program is made possible through the support of the Georgia Department of Human Services and the Department of Families and Children.

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