

Foster Grandparent Program

Covid-19 significantly impacted our program in 2020. Volunteers fell in the most vulnerable, targeted population to contract the disease and were advised on the national and state levels to stay home. Schools transitioned to virtual learning and did not allow volunteers to participate in virtual activities due to concerns over confidentiality. In addition, staff was advised that teachers were overwhelmed with the required changes in their teaching processes, duties and responsibilities inherent in virtual learning so that the additional oversight necessary in supervising a volunteer was/is not possible. Staff has inquired as to the possibility of alternative volunteer activities on days of in-person instruction to include taking student's temperatures on arrival or assisting with food service distribution to no avail. To ensure volunteers remained active and to prevent isolation, staff called each volunteer on a weekly basis, at a minimum. In addition, staff prepared training packets that were mailed to the volunteers to keep them mentally engaged, as they continued to earn their stipend via "Temporary Allowance". By the end of March, the national, state and local restrictions set in place to protect the most vulnerable citizens including senior citizens by enacting stay at home measures. As the weeks went by, schools transitioned to remote learning. Staff contacted teachers and/or resource centers coordinators as to the possibility of our Foster Grandparents continuing to engage in some way. Four Foster Grandparents volunteered sporadically throughout the summer months mentoring 14 students, however due to the limited assistance, the students mentored could not be assessed on academic improvements.