

FEATURE

Passing on values one more time



James asks her granddaughter if something is bothering her. Jasmine had been very quiet during dinner.



James helps Terry with his homework while also trying to get dinner started.

Linda James never thought she would be the mother of two youngsters at the age of 52. Her situation is not all that unusual, however: She is raising two of her grandchildren, Jasmine Myers, 12, and Terry Myers, 10. James is one of many older adults in the Rochester area, and all over the United States, who are finding themselves rearing families for the second time.

James has had legal custody of her grandchildren since her daughter's death almost 10 years ago. She filed for legal guardianship about a year after her daughter, Katrina Myers, was murdered. She has cared for Jasmine and Terry, however, since they were each 5 months old.

Being a second-time parent carries over into James' career as well. She works at the Southwest Family Resource Center of Rochester, where she runs a support group called Skip Generation, for grandparents raising their grandchildren.

"I had to be re-trained in parenting," James said. "(Skip Generation) teaches grandparents some of the new things, so they won't be uneducated. It's important for them to realize that times have changed."

She feels that bringing up children is not what it used to be, and that many older people are not in tune with what children nowadays need in order to be prepared for the world. However, she said that it's good to take some of the old with the new; many grandparents have important values and lessons to pass on to their grandchildren.

James said that in addition to the changing needs of children, one of the largest problems is lack of financial assistance.

Under the Kinship Care System, New York pays a guardian approximately \$1,000 a month for a child's care and keeps custody of the child. However, if the grandparent(s) decides to adopt the grandchild, such financial support is stopped.

James encouraged anyone wishing information and support to contact Skip Generation at 716/436-0370.

Another such support group, Parents Again, is sponsored by the Catholic Family Center for grandparents and any other older adults raising someone else's children. Parents Again may be reached by calling Laurie Marshall at 716/262-7048.

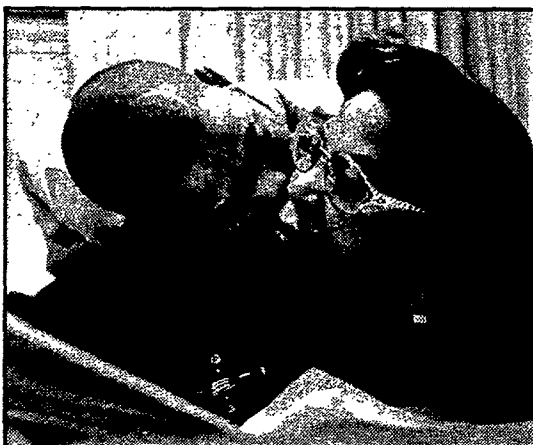
Also, the American Association of Retired Persons offers a grandparent help-line, 202/434-2296.



Clockwise from bottom, Terry Myers, 10, Jasmine Myers, 12, and their grandmother, Linda James, laugh together at their home in Rochester on March 14. James has raised the children since they were infants.



James prays with Jasmine and Terry at bedtime on March 14, after their Bible study. The children take turns reading various passages and then talk about them.



Terry kisses his grandmother goodnight following their family prayer.

STORY AND PHOTOS
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