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SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Re-Scheduled Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Forum

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) -- Sedgwick County Department on Aging (SCDoA), Central Plains Area Agency on Aging (CPAAA), the Silver Haired Legislature (SHL), the Kansas Children's Service League, and Representative Oletha Faust-Goudeau are sponsoring a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource Forum. **This forum was re-scheduled due to inclement weather in December, and will be held January 12, from 1-3 pm at the Sedgwick County Extension Center, 7001 W. 21st St. North (Wichita), in the Meadowlark Room.**

The forum will provide information on how to access the "Grandparents as Caregivers Program" beginning January 2, 2007, funded by legislation passed on May 23, 2006. A panel of professionals and experienced grandparents will present information on additional resources and supports that are available. The number of grandparents as caregivers is on the rise in our tri-county area, and especially in Sedgwick County, where the largest population of older adults in Kansas reside including 64,481 adults 60 years and over.

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Sixty eight percent of these grandparents are still in the labor force. However, 17% are living below the poverty level. The caregiving responsibility puts strain on grandparents financially, physically, and mentally. Caregiving grandparents may be caring for their grandchildren in addition to providing caregiving assistance to their older parents. Older caregivers are often pressed to their limit and suffer physically and emotionally due to the lack of care they provide themselves. Many common health concerns for caregivers include hypertension, chronic fatigue, and depression, loss of sleep, headaches, musculoskeletal pain, colitis, and a general state of “unwellness.”

The Grandparents as Caregivers Program will be an excellent resource for grandparents raising grandchildren; it states that a grandparent 50 years of age and older or other relative caregiver caring for a child under 18 years will have access to benefits if they meet financial criteria, including income less than 130% of the federal poverty level. Beginning January 1, 2007 benefits will include reimbursement for grandparents in the program for the cost of care of the grandchild in the amount of \$200 per grandchild per month, but not to exceed a total of \$600 per month. More details on this program and how to access the needed assistance will be provided by experts from the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Kansas Legal Services, a representative from the local Silver Haired Legislature, Representatives from the Kansas Legislature, and the Kansas Children’s Service League at the forum.

For answers on Aging or information about services available to older adults, call the Sedgwick County Department on Aging/Central Plains Area Agency on Aging at 660-5120 or (800)367-7298 or visit us online at www.sedgwickcounty.org or www.cpaaa.org.

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