

## **Texoma Senior Corps celebrates Foster Grandparent Program Volunteers**

**SHERMAN, June 21, 2018**—Susan B. Thomas, PhD, Executive Director of Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG), commended Texoma Senior Corps for hosting a recognition event honoring the Texoma Foster Grandparent (FGP) volunteers of Cooke, Fannin and Grayson counties on June 21, 2018.

As part of the celebration for recognition of service, Texoma FGP volunteers enjoyed a trip to Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament in Dallas. The electrifying performance which focused on medieval history, included an interactive “hands on” feast that the volunteers thoroughly enjoyed. The Foster Grandparent volunteers also participated in a special awards presentation with program staff where volunteers were recognized for milestone anniversaries and volunteer hours served. Special awards presented included Volunteer of the Year, presented to Ronald (Dale) Rideout and FGP Station of the Year which was awarded to Wakefield Elementary School in Sherman, TX.

Dr. Thomas stated, “Our FGP volunteers cover a tremendous amount of territory, covering different agencies and institutions across the region. They provide stability, encouragement, love and compassion to all the lives they touch. Our community continues to be blessed by these senior volunteers who consistently give of themselves to assist our area children who need their support.”

The FGP currently consists of 41 volunteers and 30 volunteer host stations which include schools, day cares and community facilities throughout the tri-county area. Texoma Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors and friends to children with exceptional needs serving 15 to 40 hours per week. Texoma Senior Corps programs benefit the community, the organization, and the volunteer which creates a win-win experience for all involved. Approximately 140 local children are mentored by our program (FGP) volunteers. In 2017, volunteers contributed 43,392 hours of service. Those volunteer service hours equate to a value of \$1,091,309 according to the Independent Sector Website on The Value of Volunteer Time.

The Texoma Foster Grandparent Program is also celebrating twenty years with its sponsor, the Texoma Council of Governments. The program was authorized by Congress in 1965 and became active in Texoma in 1997. Texoma residents age 55 and older, with a heart to serve who meet certain income level requirements, are able to pass a physical and criminal background check, and can commit to a minimum of fifteen hours a week are invited to join the program. A small stipend and liability insurance are provided to volunteers who participate in the program.

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson Counties. Established in 1968, the Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Either directly, or through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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