

# Pointers For Grandparents

## When Grandparents Raise Grandchildren

(NAPSA)—With the first of the Baby Boomers turning 60 this year, the nation is beginning to see the effects of its aging population—and with the average life expectancy extending to nearly 78, those approaching retirement must plan ahead financially, emotionally and physically. However, for some people, that planning includes taking on a responsibility they thought was behind them: parenthood.

According to a 2002 U.S. Census Bureau report, 5.7 million grandparents in the U.S. are living in households with their grandchildren—and more than 2.5 million grandparents are the sole guardians of the children. The bureau estimates that the number of grandparents raising their grandchildren has increased 30 percent from 1990 to 2000.

Such was the case for the Py family. Tragedy struck them twice—once when their son-in-law died suddenly of a brain aneurysm and then 14 months later when their daughter lost her battle with breast cancer. The Pys' grandchildren were orphaned in a matter of months and they turned to grandma and grandpa.

Many grandparents in the Pys' position turn to Mooseheart Child City and School, a nonprofit residential child care facility and school for children and teens in need, as an alternative to state foster care.

"Families—many of whom are grandparents—work with us because we provide a nurturing home and a solid education," explains Scott Hart, the nonprofit's administrator. "It's a difficult decision. But students thrive in our community because we en-



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courage them to reach their fullest potential," he says.

Mooseheart is funded through monies raised by the 1.3 million members of the Moose organization, and it accepts applications from all families with children in need. Hart says the children living in the Mooseheart community learn that from hardships come triumphs. It's a lesson the Py family learned as well.

After enduring their tragedy, their home was eventually renovated by ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition." Their new home now includes a private "Moose" office, as the entire family is highly involved as volunteers of the Moose.

"Our society's grandparents are increasingly faced with the necessity of raising their grandchildren. They need to understand that they're not in this alone," encourages Hart.

For more information, visit [www.Mooseintl.org](http://www.Mooseintl.org) or [www.Mooseheart.org](http://www.Mooseheart.org). You can also call (630) 966-2229.