

## Texoma Senior Corps celebrates Foster Grandparent Program volunteers

SHERMAN, JUNE 13, 2019 – Officials from Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) hosted a recognition event today to honor the Texoma Foster Grandparent (FGP) volunteers of Cooke, Fannin and Grayson counties.

The Foster Grandparent Program, authorized by Congress in 1965, 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 15 hours a week are invited to join the program. A small stipend and excess liability insurance are provided to volunteers who participate in the program.

As part of the celebration and recognition for their service, volunteers enjoyed a trip to the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas. The museum tour was exhilarating and inspired all who attended, reminding everyone of how spectacular the universe is and that it is never too late to learn. The Foster Grandparent volunteers enjoyed lunch at the Perot Museum café and also participated in a special awards presentation where volunteers were recognized for milestone anniversaries and volunteer hours served. A special “Volunteer of the Year” award was presented to Rata Perry, and the Foster Grandparent “Station of the Year” was awarded to Fairview Elementary School in Sherman.

TCOG executive director, Eric Bridges, commented, “Foster Grandparent volunteers provide a positive and productive impact on the children they interact with on a daily basis. Our community continues to be blessed and supported by these senior volunteers who dependably give of themselves to support area children who need it the most.”

The regional Foster Grandparent Program currently consists of 51 volunteers who mentor approximately 150 children at over 30 volunteer host stations throughout Texoma including schools, day cares and community facilities. Texoma FGP volunteers are role models and mentors who provide support to children with exceptional needs. Texoma Senior Corps programs benefit both the community and the volunteers, creating a win-win experience for everyone involved. In 2018, volunteers contributed over 40,000 hours of service equivalent to nearly \$1.1 million in value according to the Independent Sector Website on The Value of Volunteer Time.

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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