Foster Grandparents Recognized

The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) at MEOC recently held its annual recognition event for senior volunteers who work in classrooms with special needs children in Lee, Scott, and Wise Counties and the City of Norton. Foster Grandparents serve as mentors to their assigned children, while under the supervision of the teacher, and help the students achieve more of their potential.

In attendance were special guests MEOC Executive Director Michael Wampler; Marilyn Pace Maxwell, MEOC Executive Director Emeritus; Nancy Bailey, Mayor of Big Stone Gap, member of MEOC Board of Directors; Janie Dockery, Director of MEOC’s Children’s Services; Karen Davis, Chair of the FGP Advisory Committee; and Nick McDavid from 9th District Congressman Morgan Griffith’s office. Congressman Griffith also greeted the crowd via a short video. Master of Ceremonies was Foster Grandparent Program Director Bill Dotson.

While the volunteers enjoyed their meal, a movie played containing images and video of children, teachers and Foster Grandparents working together during the school year. Following the meal, a comedy presentation was given by Cornbread the Comic, Kenny Robinson, from Waynesboro, Virginia.

The main event of the evening was the recognition of the 26 Foster Grandparents, the 21 sites they work in, and the over 75 children whose lives they impact. Each volunteer was introduced along with the information about the school they work in and their supervising teacher. An opportunity was given for the teachers to comment on the work of the Foster Grandparents and many of them did. Ten-year service pins were awarded to Nelda Dennison and Patsy King and five-year pins went to Irene Bailey, Lucille Baker, Ruth Shawver, and Aleath Strong. The song “Thank You” with lyrics re-written to honor Foster Grandparents was played which also touched the hearts of many of the volunteers and guests.

In honoring the accomplishment of the volunteers, Marilyn Maxwell thanked them for the one-on-one work they do with young children. “It is remarkable what they accomplish and the special learning relations they develop under the watchful eyes of greatly appreciated and appreciative teachers. I am proud of many things at MEOC, but none make me prouder than the valuable and meaningful life changing volunteer work of our Foster Grandparents,” said Maxwell.

Foster Grandparent Program Director Bill Dotson expressed thanks to the following businesses and individuals for their sponsorship and help in making the 2013 Foster Grandparent Recognition Event a great success: Cavalier Pharmacy, Crutchfield Corporation, In Home Care, Freedom Ford, Wellmont Health Services, CVS Pharmacy – Big Stone Gap, Friendship Home Health, Mountain Rose Vineyards, Ethel Daniels, Food City – Big Stone Gap, Pennington Gap, Weber City and Wise, PayLess Markets, Walmart – Big Stone Gap, Lowe’s of Wise County and Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc.