

2015-J1830

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Foster Grandparent Program

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to recognize and acknowledge certain exemplary organizations which provide our communities with services and support for younger generations, and through their work have become beacons of compassion and devotion within the community; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Foster Grandparent Program; and

WHEREAS, Foster Grandparent began in 1965 as part of Senior Corps, a federal program guided by the Corporation for National and Community Service, with 800 Foster Grandparents serving at 45 sites across the country; and

WHEREAS, Today, over 30,000 Foster Grandparent volunteers help more than 280,000 children nationwide, contributing approximately 62,000 hours of volunteer service each year; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, the project came to the Southern Tier counties of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany as an outreach program of Lutheran Social Services, which graciously continues to be the local sponsor of the Foster Grandparent Program; and

WHEREAS, Locally, each year approximately 70 Foster Grandparent volunteers provide mentorship and outreach to children through the 30 volunteer sites in Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua counties; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the Foster Grandparent Program is to improve lives, strengthen communities and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering; and

WHEREAS, The remarkable individuals who volunteer with the Foster

Grandparent Program provide supportive services for children with special or exceptional needs; a Foster Grandparent provides a child "in need" with intensive, one-on-one attention, something not always possible for a teacher with a classroom full of students; and

WHEREAS, Teachers and child care providers report that children who are enrolled in the Foster Grandparent Program make academic progress, learn social skills, and find a compassionate friend through their program mentor; and

WHEREAS, During 2013-2014, 79 Lutheran Foster Grandparents served 63,382 hours working with 237 "in-need" children; elementary students assigned to a Foster Grandparent saw a 70 percent increase in classroom participation and 100 percent of students achieved improved academic skills; and

WHEREAS, The Foster Grandparent Program demonstrates the willingness and capacity of older persons to participate reliably and creatively in community service activities on a regular part-time basis; the program enables older Americans to contribute to their communities in their retirement years by sharing their love and lifetime skills with children; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to publicly recognize those vital organizations which provide services for the betterment of the residents of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Foster Grandparent Program; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Debbie Basile, Director, Lutheran Foster Grandparent Program.