



FAMILY

One in 25 Idaho children lives with a grandparent; UI Extension helps

More than 14,000 children—one in 25 in Idaho—lives with a grandparent. The number of Idaho grandparents raising grandchildren has increased by 79% in the last 10 years, the third largest growth in the nation.

A major cause is substance abuse and its attendant neglect, violence, and incarceration. The anguish and stress that accompany this change are further exacerbated by poverty. While grandparents raise grandchildren across socio-economic levels, census data shows they are 60% more likely to live in poverty than other grandparents.

Also, grandparents often have no custody or guardianship rights, even if they have been caring for grandchildren for months or years. Legal guardianship is essential to access childcare, health care, and other state and federal aid.

Idaho KinCare Coalition (IKCC) has developed a "De Facto Custodian" bill (RS13805) for Idaho's 2004 legislature, seeking legal status for grandparents raising grandkids.

UI Extension—a member of the IKCC—continues to address issues of these families at risk with educational materials, support groups, agency referrals, and advocacy. Highlights in 2003 are:

Support groups In 2003, 241 grandparents attended 10 IKCC-sponsored support groups. UI Extension Educators Carol Hampton and Kathee Tift helped establish groups at Bonners Ferry and Lewiston. Find support group details at www.idahoaging.com/programs/ps_GAPsupport.htm.

18 tip sheets On the web at www.ifep.net/kincare.htm, tips address child sexual abuse, legal issues, physical and mental health, finances, child safety, nutrition, and suicide prevention.

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ENVIRONMENT

Selenium is not a problem for Idaho's fish

When a small tributary of southern Idaho's Blackfoot River watered a pasture where a horse got sick, selenium toxicity was identified and traced to elevated levels in the stream, raising an alarm that the natural fish populations could be contaminated.

Idaho's phosphate industry funded a multi-year study to assess the environmental levels and effects of selenium on area wildlife. Ron Hardy, director of the UI Aquaculture Research Institute at

Hagerman Experiment Station, conducted a 3-year study to determine effects of selenium on growth, health, and reproductive performance of wild cutthroat trout.

Diets with varying degrees of selenium were fed to groups of fish. The fish grew normally and spawned successfully with no effect of dietary selenium on reproductive performance, the main effect of exposure to excessive levels of selenium in fish.

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DID YOU KNOW?

\$2.7 BILLION. Idaho earnings from the health care services industry in 2002.

Source: UI report to Idaho Dept. of Health and Welfare



AGRICULTURE

UI nursery website aids growing Idaho green industry

Idaho's green industry rings up an estimated \$662 million in sales and provides 12,911 jobs statewide. This includes landscape architects, floral crop and sod growers, garden centers, arborists, and landscape maintenance professionals. (1999 figures).

To help Idaho's expanding green industry thrive, the UI recently established a nursery website—extension.ag.uidaho.edu/nursery/—providing horticulture professionals with science-based information they can readily access to improve their products and services, tread softly on the environment, and expand their bottom line.

The site includes nursery sales trends, resource links, information on starting landscape plant production, identifies cultural practices and common landscape problems and solutions, and offers UI research reports and technical publications. A plants problems page lists 15 common pests and how to eliminate them.

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