

# Children Experiencing Homelessness Receive Individual Attention from Grandma Bea

*Kimberly Gaston*  
*FGP Assistant Director*



I will always remember the day Ms. Bea Kassees walked through the doors of a childcare facility for children experiencing homelessness in Dallas, ready to start the new adventure of being a Foster Grandparent Program volunteer. The smallest of these kids have already overcome the kind of adversity that would upset most adults, such as drug addiction, domestic violence, and simply not having a home or a room to call their own.

The day I arrived, a 4-year-old boy ran to me and grabbed my leg in a giant bear hug. He had the most precious smile when he asked, “Do you have a home?” My heart shattered at that moment because I knew he just wanted to understand if I was like him. When I told him about my home, I hoped it would give him confidence that someday he would have a place to call his own too.



## Grandma Bea

After talking to the boy and sending him back to play, I started the real reason for my visit, to begin the placement meeting for Ms. Kassees. She was starting her first placement for our Foster Grandparent Program. The facility director walked us around for a facility tour, talked about the center’s rules and procedures, and introduced Ms. Kassees to her two classroom teachers.

As we entered the room, I watched as the children moved toward her as if pulled by gravity. I could tell that they felt her sweet, calm, and welcoming nature. I knew right then that she would do great things at this center and have a lasting impact on the children in this community. From that moment, she became Grandma Bea to 20 children all at once.

## The Great Cover-Up

A few months later, I went back to visit and was not surprised to see that Grandma Bea and the children had developed a wonderful rapport. When it was time to leave, the teacher put the children into their cots for nap time, and Grandma Bea gathered her belongings to go home for the day.

As I walked with Grandma Bea to the door, I heard one child say, “Grandma, can you cover me up?” Grandma Bea put down her things and turned to the child. She gently pulled the blanket over the boy and whispered, “sweet dreams.” Before she could finish this sweet service, the girl in the next cot threw off her blanket and asked the same of Grandma Bea. Then suddenly, all the blankets began flying off with the children saying, “Grandma, cover me up!” She walked around the entire classroom tucking each child in one by one and whispering a personal message.

All I could do was smile, watching this small ritual of love being shared. At least for a moment, these children experiencing homelessness had a place to belong, where they were cherished and valued by a warm, loving, and trusted grandma.