

## Intergenerational Storytelling is Focus for Multi-Event Convocation

### Honoring Children and Families in Belknap County

LACONIA: “Everyone has a story to tell!” says Laconia resident Lois Plimpton, a retired school teacher and the architect of the concept behind the 2007 Belknap County Convocation on Children and Families on Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> from 3:30-7:30pm at the Opechee Inn Conference Center in Lakeport.

Lois says, “We need to share these stories and tales, especially within our families. Storytelling is a unique process that ties generations together.”

Over the last several years, through Theta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, a national association of teachers, Lois has encouraged educators in the Lakes Region to incorporate intergenerational story telling into their reading and literacy curricula. Students learn how to interview senior citizens and how to write stories from what they hear. Other students draw illustrations and Lois condenses all this raw material into small, bound, colorful storybooks which then become part of classroom libraries.

This past fall Lois expanded the Theta project by collaborating with Katie McKerley, the coordinator of the Friends Foster Grandparent Program in the Lakes Region, to create 25 story books that will be featured at the January Convocation. The students from



Children from ages 4-12 at the Lakes Region Child Care Services have created bookmarks as part of the table decorations for the January 23<sup>rd</sup> Convocation on Children and Families. The bookmarks are part of this year’s Convocation theme of intergenerational storytelling and everyone who stays for dinner will take one home with them. Lakes Region Child Care Services is one of twenty organizations and agencies in Belknap County that have been working together over the past six months to plan this annual event.

around Belknap County and the seniors they interviewed will be special guests at each dinner table where the stories they co-created will be on display.

According to McKerley, “Stories are coming from all five Laconia schools, Belmont Elementary, Winnisquam Regional Middle School, Sanbornton Elementary, Holy Trinity School, and partnerships with Project EXTRA, Interlakes Day Care Center, Laconia Teen Center, and the Newfound School District. Teachers, students, and seniors have been working on this project all fall.”

Lois Plimpton, also the featured guest speaker during the dinner hour, will share from her experiences with storytelling. As she will explain during her presentation, “These stories can also be developed using a variety of different strategies other than printed materials. We will have examples of stories told through both PowerPoint and oral presentations.

Sponsored by 20 different organizations throughout Belknap County, this annual, multi-event conference honors children and families in Belknap County and is especially appropriate for families and youth 10 years and older, and anyone who is interested in the well being of families in Belknap County.

The 2007 Convocation begins at 3:30pm with interactive displays and exhibits from more than 50 agencies and organizations providing services for children and families in Belknap County. Convocation activities continue at 4:30pm with an hour of performances by youth from around Belknap County including the Stephenson Family Singers, five siblings ages 7-17 from Gilford, and students from Belmont Elementary and High School and Prospect Mountain High School in Alton. A catered dinner will be served at 5:30pm. The dinner program will include youth speakers and emcees; Lois Plimpton, as the keynote speaker; and the presentation of the coveted Annette P Schmitt UnSung Hero Award.

In addition to the youth performances and creating the colorful storybooks, young people will have prominent roles at this Convocation as guides and registration assistants. All decorations are made by children at the Lakes Region Child Care Services.

The meal is catered by NH Community Technical College, Laconia Campus, and includes four pasta dishes, antipasto, tossed salad, bread, beverage and a dessert buffet. Dinner fees are \$15.00 for adults and \$10.00 for youth through 12 years. Pre-registrations for dinner are required and limited scholarships are available.

Registration forms and directions are posted on the Belknap County Citizens Council website, [www.bccj.org](http://www.bccj.org), as well as websites of the other sponsors. Convocation snow date will be Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.

For more information, call Judy Buswell at 528-3185 or Laurie Dunleavy at 528-6511.