

Grandparents *For* Vaccines

A storytelling movement to protect every child's tomorrow.

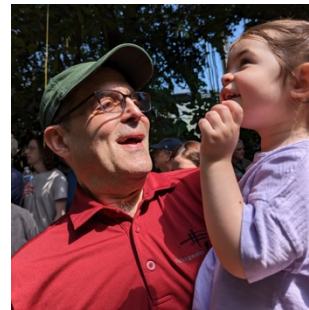
Newsletter, August 2026

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A Word from Arthur

Dear GFV Members,

As I write this, I'm wrapping up a vacation spent with my wonderful grandchildren. We have been spending lots of time in the backyard, with running through the sprinklers a current favorite activity. My wife and I are so grateful for this time with our extended family, and know that we have childhood vaccination, in part, to thank for our good fortune.



I wish all of you a good and healthy last few weeks of summer, and hope you get to relax and enjoy time with those you hold dear.

Arthur Lavin
President and Founder

Get Ready! Two Weeks of Action

SEPTEMBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Our first anniversary is nearly here, and we're taking action to mark it. On September 13, Grandparents Day, we'll celebrate one year of stories, outreach, organizing, fundraising, getting to know each other, and finding the bravery to go beyond our comfort zone and speak out for children.

Leading up to the big day, we launched a back-to-school education campaign, called *[Before the First Bell!](#)* It reminds parents to put vaccination on their list of tasks to help their kids get ready for school.

We're also planning our inaugural "Two Weeks of Action" member program, featuring the opportunity to purchase GFV merchandise, from September 7 through September 18. We're asking for one event per state during that time. Can you commit to one action? Some ideas:

- speaking at local library/town council/PTA meeting
- collaborating with a local volunteer group (e.g., student Interact clubs)
- organizing a book drive: donate vaccine education books ([check here for suggestions](#)) to school or town libraries
- writing a letter to the editor (see Richard Skolnik's advice on this below)
- hosting a gathering to discuss GFV and engage others in fundraising and action



To further amplify everyone's good work, we now have t-shirts and buttons available for purchase. The dark green shirts, prominent logos, and bright white buttons will help draw attention to our cause. We're offering these items at cost, so we're hoping you'll order yours and take photos of your crew "taking action!" Please document your efforts with photos and share them with us at grandparentsforvaccines@gmail.com. We'll post them on social

media and our website.

Visit [Vistaprint](#) to order a t-shirt or buttons.

State Leader Spotlight: Diane Windsor

Colorado State Leader Diane Windsor is passionate about bringing important voices and stories, including her own, to the public. This wife, mom, and grandmother works as a technical writer and novelist, and owns a small publishing company. An avid baker and hiker, Diane is also a dedicated GFV volunteer, posting news items on the "[In the News](#)" section of our website.



"The publishing company is really a labor of love for me," she said. "I particularly like helping women and mom authors get their work out into the world."

"I understand it now. When something bad happens to a child, you want to know what caused it. You need an answer."

Diane's own young adult novel, *Stuck*, shares the story of two friends. "One of the friends is immunocompromised, and the other friend's mother has always been kind of crunchy and antivax," Diane said. "Unfortunately, the unvaccinated friend passes on a serious disease to the vulnerable friend."

“I wrote it as young adult (YA) because I wanted to speak to younger people,” she continued. “Although I know a lot of adults enjoy YA fiction, in this case, I wanted to speak to the youth about the importance of vaccination against serious diseases.”

Diane wrote the book after her son was diagnosed with leukemia. During his numerous rounds of treatments, including stem cell transplant, chemotherapy, and CAR-T, she was struck by his vulnerability while being immunocompromised from the therapies. He is now healthy, she said, but “It was terrifying. And I realize now that fear is a big part of what drives the anti-vax community. When something happens to a child, you want to know what caused it. You need an answer, even though sometimes there is no answer.”

Diane regularly speaks publicly about her book and the need for vaccination, and we’re grateful to her for sharing her experience and wisdom.

How to Write an Effective Letter to the Editor



New Mexico State Leader Richard Skolnik, a former Director for Health and Education for the South Asia Region at the World Bank and an influential writer, shares best practices for writing an effective letter to the editor.

One of the strengths of Grandparents for Vaccines is that every grandparent has a different story. Rather than producing dozens of letters that sound alike, I’d encourage members to use a common structure but make the letter unmistakably their own.

1. Begin with your own memory

Start with something only you can say. Examples:

“I remember lining up at my elementary school for the Salk polio vaccine.”

“My parents kept us away from public swimming pools during polio season.”

“My younger sister spent weeks recovering from whooping cough.”

“As a pediatric nurse in the 1970s, I cared for children with bacterial meningitis.”

2. Focus on one disease. Don’t try to cover every vaccine-preventable disease. Choose one: polio, measles, whooping cough (pertussis), Hib meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, chickenpox, influenza. One disease makes for a stronger story.

3. Include one or two memorable facts. Use facts to support your story—not replace it. For example:

- Before the measles vaccine, nearly every child got measles.
- Before the polio vaccine, thousands of Americans were paralyzed every year.
- Most deaths from pertussis occur in babies too young to be fully vaccinated.

4. Explain why you're writing now.

Connect your letter to today, for example, mentioning a local measles outbreak, declining vaccination rates, back-to-school season, National Immunization Awareness Month (August).

5. Write as a grandparent or concerned person — not an expert.

Your credibility comes from experience. Instead of “the epidemiologic evidence demonstrates...” say, “I remember....”

6. Be respectful. Many readers are uncertain, not opposed. Assume readers want to do the right thing. Avoid:

- criticizing parents
- questioning motives
- political arguments
- sarcasm

7. End with hope. Leave readers with something positive. Examples:

- “Our grandchildren deserve to grow up free from diseases that my generation feared.”
- “Vaccines have given today’s children opportunities my generation could only dream about.”
- “I hope we continue one of medicine’s greatest success stories.”

A Simple Formula. To recap, a good Grandparents for Vaccines letter can usually follow this pattern: A personal memory (“I remember ...”); one important fact; why it matters today; a hopeful conclusion.

One final suggestion

You might also ask yourself, “what story could only I tell?” Perhaps you remember the excitement when the Salk vaccine arrived, a sibling hospitalized with measles, caring for patients as a nurse or physician, or simply the fear families felt before vaccines existed.

Those memories are the unique strength of Grandparents for Vaccines. Facts are important, but it is authentic personal experience that readers are most likely to remember — and that is what has the greatest chance of changing minds.

DYK (Did You Know)?

There are an estimated 65 to 70 million grandparents living in the U.S. today.