

WINNING GRANDPARENT ESSAY 2011

By Callie Mueller, Waverly Elementary

My grandma, Avis Schafer-DeBerg, is the grandmother of 7 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. When I think of why she should be the AARP South Dakota's Grandparent of the Year, many reasons come into my mind. I've narrowed it down to three that I believe make her your winning nominee! My grandma doesn't spoil her grandchildren or shower us with gifts and treats, but she gives gifts that are far more important. She instills in us the importance of a good education. Grandma encourages us to choose good clubs and activities to get involved with. She also builds our confidence and tells us to set goals, and then work hard to achieve them. She does these things for us by getting involved in our lives, and by setting a good example in her own life.

Grandma believes in the importance of getting a good education. She has shown us this by getting educated herself, and teaching for over forty years! She is always interested in what we are learning in school. She loves to study with us, and she tells us to call anytime we have a question about our homework. Oh, she won't tell us any answers, but she'll review the rules it will take to figure them out! Although sometimes I wish she would just quickly say the answer, I know her way is the best for me.

Grandma encourages all of us to get involved in clubs and activities. This will keep us mixed in the "right crowd," as she says. She is a strong believer in 4-H, and shows this with her devotion of being a club leader for over 10 years. She has helped many of us grandchildren with our horticulture, baking, judging, and oral speaking projects. She is always encouraging us and attends every Achievement Days to show her support!

Grandma has always told us to set goals and then work really hard to achieve them. Like the time I set a goal to win a belt buckle with my horse at the 4-H State Horse Show. She encouraged me to work hard to reach my goal, and she would come out often to watch my practices. When I won the buckle, she was there in the stands to cheer me on!! She also tells us that we may not win every challenge, but we learn many things from each experience.

We may not get the new video games and clothes our friends talk about getting from their grandparents, but the gifts Grandma has given us will last our whole lives. We have learned that education is important. We have learned to fill our spare time with clubs and activities that keep us active with good friends. Most important, we have learned to believe in ourselves, set goals, and work hard to achieve them. It is for these reasons I believe my grandma, Avis Schafer-DeBerg, should be the AARP Grandparent of the Year.