

6/11/2014

Dear Friend,

I am writing to you because I want to express to you my feelings on the importance and necessity of foster and adoptive parents.

Please let me start by introducing myself. My name is Alicia Lairsey and I am a Social Services Supervisor for the foster care and adoptions unit in my county DFCS office (Department of Family and Children Services). My unit is the permanency two unit and we work with children and families who have been involved with the child welfare system because of abuse and neglect as well as with children in need of adoptive resources because it has been determined that they cannot be safely returned to their parents or family members. I have eight years of prior experience as a case manager for these same types of children and families.

Foster and adoptive parents are those individuals who open their homes and their hearts to the children in our communities who are most often considered the "problem children", the orphaned, the unloved, or the unwanted. What every social worker, therapist and foster/adoptive parent knows is that these children are just like every other child. They have a desire to be loved, a desire to belong somewhere, a desire to be educated, a need for protection and a need for stability.

Foster and adoptive parents are often the only source of love, stability, nurturance and acceptance that many children in the child welfare system experience. A strong and supportive foster home can make the difference in bringing a hopeless and hurt child back to the promises of God that He has a plan for everyone, a plan of Hope for the future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Without foster homes, many children in the state's custody would be placed in group homes, or worse, residential treatment centers. Group homes are the equivalent to orphanages in the eyes of a child. Placing a child in a group home tells that child that no one else will love them and care for them. Unloved children turn into unloved adults. Unloved adults are potentially dangerous to the safety and success of our society as a whole. Many researchers have opined that those who lack empathy for others, who lack the ability to show remorse for harm cause to others, and those who lack compassion for fellow humans, are more likely to commit dangerous crimes. Generally speaking, the state government is a poor parent and does a very poor job in raising and repairing hurt children. Foster and adoptive parents are the link between the state agency's available, yet limited, resources and the needs all children have while growing and developing. In many situations, foster parents show the unconditional love and guidance children in foster care crave, but never receive from their birth parents.

I've worked with a multitude of foster parents during my years of service to Georgia's foster care system. One of the most highly respected and highly favored is Cindy Millsap. Ms. Millsap viewed her life and service as a foster and adoptive parent to be a calling from God, and I agree. Very few foster parents dedicated so much of their love and time to the needs of children in their home as Ms. Millsap.

Cindy has dedicated her life, her home and her professional resources to providing a safe haven for children in need and children without families. Cindy relies on her faith in God and His promises to provide for those who trust in Him as her guidance and support. Her faith has helped provide love and stability for so many orphaned children, several of whom she has adopted and had the opportunity to welcome into her family permanently.

My hope and prayer is that Cindy will be able to continue providing her home and love for some of the state's most vulnerable children. Georgia's foster children need foster and adoptive parents with the love, commitment and determination of Ms. Millsap.

Please do not hesitate to call me should you feel I can offer any further information.

Sincerely,

*Alicia Lairsey*

Alicia Lairsey

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