THE FABULOUS FIVE!

A Family Finding Story

Five siblings—three girls and two boys—came into care due to their mother's drug abuse. After they had been in care for 2 years, the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition's Extreme Recruitment® program received their case. At that time, the five siblings were living in three different foster homes. The goal of the recruiter, Edna, was to find them a home together. When Edna received the case file, only eight family members were known to the case management team. One father of the siblings was incarcerated, and another had voluntarily terminated his parental rights. Edna quickly realized that if she wanted to keep the siblings together, she should focus her efforts on the maternal side of their family. Edna searched the case file, court records, and social media for as many relatives as possible. She interviewed family members as she identified them.
The children's maternal grandfather had a criminal history so Edna knew that the siblings could not be placed with him, but she still took the time to meet with him and encouraged him to participate in the family-finding process. The grandfather was more than happy to help.
He recommended his sister as a placement option, but, unfortunately, her health concerns prevented her from being a good fit. Edna also spoke with the siblings' maternal grandmother. Their grandmother struggled with addiction for much of her life and knew she couldn't take the children, but it meant a lot to her to be able to participate in finding a family member who could help. She suggested that Edna contact her other granddaughters, cousins Patricia and Azella.

When Edna contacted Patricia and Azella, each woman knew she had to help. Azella lives in Kentucky, whereas the children were in Missouri, but was still determined to open her home to the siblings. So Edna and Missouri's Children's Division worked diligently to complete the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, which was approved in a matter of months. Azella was able to adopt three of the siblings. Her cousin, Patricia, who lives in St. Louis, adopted the other two siblings. The five siblings are in constant contact with each other and see each other frequently. The entire family is grateful that the team worked with them to keep the siblings connected!

Visit http://www.foster-adopt.org/ to learn more about the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition, which strives for permanency for every child's life by recruiting and supporting foster and adoptive families in the St. Louis metropolitan community.