

It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Connections

Advocating for Relative Caregivers

My name is Imrith, and I am 26 years old. My family consists of Reyna (my life companion) and our two beautiful daughters, Judith and Zion, and my siblings, Ricardo, age 17, Angel, age 13, and Esli, age 12. My siblings were separated from their parents on and off a few times over the years, and eventually they were removed permanently. They remained separated from one another for over 2 years, until they were placed with us in July 2016.

Reyna and I began the approval process in January 2016. We lived in a studio apartment and needed to move into a larger home with three bedrooms. Los Angeles County paid the deposit, first and last month's rent, purchased bunk beds, bedding, appliances, and kitchenware. Then, the social worker worked to approve our new home as quickly as possible. We felt very supported by our social worker and other county staff.

I'm actively involved in my siblings' academic achievements. All three of my siblings are thriving and flourishing in education; self-esteem; emotional, mental, and physical health; and overall happiness. On June 7, 2017, I received a Certificate of Congressional Recognition from Congresswoman Nanette Diaz Barragán for outstanding commitment to the students, parents, and staff of Marco Antonio Firebaugh High School, for my service, leadership, and dedication to the School Advisory Council. I have also received Certificates of Achievements from the Lynwood Unified School District for volunteer hours and attendance at parent training and workshops.

I'm also continuously advocating for both foster youth and relative caregivers. I'm an active member of the Education and Transitional Age Youth Subcommittee of the Commission for Children & Families to create a comprehensive youth-informed Los Angeles County Foster Youth Bill of Rights & Services. I'm an active volunteer for the foster youth advocacy organization California Youth Connection. I'm also an active member of the Kinship Caregiver Council, advocating for relative caregivers. We plan to continue blazing the trail for other kinship caregivers and advocating for our family and others.

To learn more about Grandparents as Grandparents, please visit <http://grandparentsasparents.org/>.



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