

It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Connections

Angels of Foster Care

We have fostered three generations of children. Our story begins back in the 1980s when we became guardians to a 15-year-old boy named Rick. Rick was getting kicked out of every group home you can imagine, and nobody wanted him. Our son knew him from school and asked if we could take him in. We cared for Rick until he became of age. It felt nice to be part of this young man's support system.

Two decades later, we fostered our three granddaughters, Lorena, Bertha, and Annie. Bertha and Annie have grown up to be wonderful mothers. They had attended community college and are doing well. Unfortunately, Lorena's story is not the same as her sisters'. When she was a teenager, Lorena left to go live with our daughter—her mother. Sadly, Lorena has followed in her mother's footsteps and is now a drug user. She has experienced a lot of trauma and lived a life full of pain. She brought three beautiful children into the world: Jose, 12; Abigail, 10; and Cristo, 9. Due to Lorena's illness, the children had to be removed from her care. They were placed with us temporarily, until a resource family was found for them. Just when we thought we were done parenting, we got a call stating that the resource family could no longer care for them. The children were going to get split up and would be living with separate families. My husband and I had a long talk and thought, "Would we be able to care for three more children? Did we still have the energy to do it?"



It has been 3 years since we decided to be foster parents again. Currently, we are in the process of adopting our three great-grandchildren. As we think back on our journey, we would not have been able to do this without the support of our angels. We call them our angels because they have been such important people in our children's and our lives. They are the county social workers, therapists, staff at The Live Oak Family Resource Center, the children's court-appointed special advocates, and our church community. We believe that it really has taken a village to raise these three bright children.

As great grandparents, we have taken an oath to become involved in these children's lives. We are open to learning new parenting techniques and are committed to taking the children to therapy sessions, school functions, and any activities they are involved in. We want our children to heal and want them to have wonderful experiences. We have been working hard to give them the opportunity to be kids again. Although they still miss being with their mother, we will forever be here to support them.

To take the first step to become a resource parents or adoptive parents in Santa Cruz county, please visit <http://santacruzhumanservices.org/FamilyChildren/FosterCareandAdoptions>.



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