It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Connections

Launchpad to Success: A Model Kinship Family Story

Elena took a giant leap into kinship parenting her teen, A.W., just 3 days after Christmas in 2015.

Unlike most kinship placements, Elena was not the aunt or grandma. Elena had been A.W.'s court-appointed special advocate worker since July of that year. However, after seeing that A.W. wasn't getting much needed dental and medical attention, she made a huge decision: She decided to resign from that role as A.W.'s caseworker to become a resource parent.

"It was hard to be an observer and know that I could help somebody, but I was just observing the things going on," Elena said.

Elena's bond with the child, developed over time as Elena worked with A.W., inspired her to action. Nearly 2 years later, through visitations with the biological family and various appointments, Elena's kinship family continues to thrive. That success is in part because Elena is always working to show her family the world; she always makes sure to include A.W. in national and global vacations. Even through times of hardship, their love has grown.

"I have to tell you," Elena has said of A.W., "the girl I met in 2014 and the girl that lives with us today—totally different."

For their daughter, Elena and her family have served as a launchpad to success. In recognition of her efforts, she received the Outstanding Kinship Family Award from the New Jersey Department of Child Protection and Permanency and Foster and Adoptive Family Services at their 2017 Annual Recognition Brunch. For taking such an extensive interest in this child's life and for working hard to provide the best support and care they can, everyone in the family are truly bright stars.

To learn more about being a court-appointed special advocate, visit
http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.5301295/k.BE9A/Home.htm.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

ACF

Children's Bureau