

It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Connections

Two Sets of Caregivers: One Amazing Family

Kinship caregivers Dawn and Sean are exceptional caregivers. Over the years, they have opened their home to multiple children. They completed permanency through Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship (SPLC) with Sean's nephew 9 years ago and are getting ready to adopt Dawn's 18-month-old second cousin, who they received last March, on September 1. They originally took in Sean's nephew when Sean's sister could no longer provide care due to medical issues that lead to the children being truant. Sean didn't want his nephews to go into foster care with strangers, so he took one of the boys. His father, Robert, took the other boys since Sean and Dawn already had one of his sister's children (through informal care) as well as two of their own. Mom was allowed to keep the two younger children at that time, as they were not in school. His sister was not able to address her health issues right away, so they completed an SPLC on the child. They still have one of Sean's nephews that they have raised as their own.

Dawn and Sean do whatever is needed to help their tight-knit family. They are very laid-back people who love kids and always have kids at their home, as they seem to have that go-to house. They always make children feel welcome because they would much rather them be at their house instead of out in the street. They are very family oriented and provide structure and stability to all the children. They have always gone above and beyond to ensure the children in their home thrive. They are the parents who are always at or involved in every function any of their children have or are participating in. They truly are exceptional caregivers.

Connie and Sean's father, Robert, are also exceptional caregivers. They have taken in four of their grandsons when their daughter was not able to provide care due to medical issues that lead to the children being truant. During these various transitions to their home, Connie and Robert ensured that the children maintained a close relationship with their mother and their brothers who are residing with Sean. The family truly made every choice and decision for the children and acted as one family unit even though at points some of the children were residing with their mother, some with their grandparents, and some with their Uncle Sean and Aunt Dawn. Connie and Robert have ensured that every holiday, family celebration, family dinner, and reunion occurred together with all of the kids participating.

The children all received needed supportive services to thrive in their home; in particular, Connie and Robert ensured that the children had the educational supports they needed. They have worked very closely with the school district to ensure their educational needs are met and that all aspects of their individualized education programs are followed through. They are also committed to ensuring the children have the opportunity to participate in activities and to truly be kids.

Connie and Robert have always been cooperative with all the requirements needed to maintain their status as certified foster parents and have opened their home for all agencies and providers to visit whenever necessary.

Connie and Robert are truly exceptional caregivers who have made an immense impact.



As a family, Connie and Robert and Dawn and Sean are truly the definition of kinship caregivers and ensure that all members of their family are thriving! There are not enough words in the English language to describe how amazing this whole family is!

To learn more about Allegheny County Department of Human Services, visit <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/human-services/index.aspx>.



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