Extending Family Support

On April 15, we took placement of a sibling group of five, each with their own personality and needs. On that day, our lives changed in ways we could have never expected. The first few weeks were challenging for both of us and the children. Establishing routines and identifying each of their individual needs became our family’s priority. Although the kids responded well to the structure, they seemed sad. It wasn’t until we reached out to the children’s birth parents that everything fell into place.

Speaking to Mom and Dad on a regular basis became part of our routine. We began notifying them of all school related issues, our observations, and encouraged them to attend all the kids’ medical appointments. The birth family began to ask us for our opinions on issues regarding the kids. Seeing all their efforts to reunify with their children firsthand is what motivates us to continue advocating not only for the kids but educating and encouraging the parent to better advocate for themselves and their children.

When it became clear that the kids would be reunifying soon, we welcomed the birth family into our home to teach them the children’s routines and what was working in our home. This has been a great opportunity for us to model, give them a chance to ask questions and for the kids to see us all as one family. If we did not welcome the birth family into our home, we do not feel they would have built the confidence they needed to remain on track to successfully reunify. Our hope is that we can be a support to the family for years to come.

We recently took a placement of twin teens who returned to care, and we have fully supported their family as well. We are now a household of seven children. We have found that all children’s connections with family have made the most contribution to their stability.