

The Adams County Foster Care

Connection

VOLUME 1



May is National Foster Care Month



May is National Foster Care Month, a time to recognize that we can each play a part in enhancing the lives of children and youth in foster care. On May 12th, 2020 the Adams County Board of County Commissioners will present a proclamation in recognition of National Foster Care Month to show appreciation and gratitude to foster parents across our county and state. The purpose of National Foster Care Month continues to evolve based on the needs of the time. Current activities focus on increasing the visibility of the needs of children and youth in foster care and highlighting how the child welfare system can prioritize foster care as a service to families and promote reunification.

Celebrating *OUR* Foster Parents during National Foster Care Month

We want to **THANK** all of our amazing Foster Parents. The time you invest in our children is heartwarming. Each of you are changing lives everyday and for that, thank you does not seem nearly enough! Each family in our program represents the very best of Adams County, the State of Colorado, and humanity. Our program would not be what it is without you and the support you provide. Each May we recognize families during our annual banquet. Unfortunately, we are unable to share that time together this year. So we bring to you our 2020 stand out foster families, nominated by Adams County staff.

Decorative brush strokes in green and blue are located at the bottom left and bottom right corners of the page.

Connect by celebrating our foster families



MICHELLE SMITH
AND
TAMARAH
GAUDET-

*Supporting
Children since:*
12/14/2017



JOE
AND
KAREN
BLAIR

*Supporting
Children since:*
11/05/2018



Nominated by Karla Kruse

The Smith-Gaudet family have been a foster family since 2017. Michelle and Tamarah have had multiple children in their home during their tenure with Adams County. They had two young children placed in their home and when they were informed these children had two older siblings, they immediately asked for special permission to have the older children placed with them to maintain sibling relationships. They moved to a bigger home to accommodate all their children. Michelle and Tamarah have built a relationship with the children's parents to keep communication open. They work hard to continue to create new opportunities for the children. Most importantly they have provided the children with structure and love, and the children are thriving. Michelle and Tamarah are heroes and deserve recognition as outstanding foster parents during foster care month.

Thank you, Michelle, and Tamarah!!!

Nominated by Noelle Berg

The Blair family has been a foster family since 2018. They were originally a kinship home and made the important decision to become a licensed foster home. Joe and Karen have exemplified what it means to be excellent foster parents. The Blair's supported reunification through supportive communication, interaction, and advocacy for the whole family unit. Their engagement in visitation and coming alongside the family through the transition home made reunification successful. Because of the Blair's support and encouragement, the family expressed willingness to maintain a permanent connection with Joe and Karen. Joe and Karen are amazing foster parents and deserving recipients for special recognition during foster care month. Thank you Joe and Karen!!!



STEPHEN AND
ASHLEY KNOLL

*Supporting
Children since:*
01/17/2019



JOSEPH
AND
VALENTINA
SAAVEDRA

*Supporting
Children since:*
11/21/2019



Nominated by Maria Avila

The Knoll family has been a foster family since 2019. The first child placed into their home was a 16 year old child who was pregnant. Stephen and Ashley had never parented prior to this child being placed into their home however, they have done an unbelievable job. They have taught this child how to be an amazing parent to her baby and have strongly advocated for the child permission to experience typical adolescent activities such as driving and finding a job. Even though this family has been presented with challenges in caring for an older adolescent, they never wavered in their commitment to her and have recently finalized her adoption. Stephen and Ashley maintain relationships with this child's biological family and continue to support her in parenting her baby. Stephen and Ashley have risen above the challenges of parenting an older child from foster care and have proven success. Stephen and Ashley are a well-deserving family for recognition during foster care month. Thank you Stephen and Ashley!!!

Nominated by Nereida Serrano

The Saavedra family has been a foster family since 2019. They began as a kinship home in May 2019 and became licensed in November 2019. Joseph and Valentina opened their home to a 14-year-old child from Valentina's school. She developed a relationship with him after spending time with him daily due to concerns about his behavior. When Valentina retired from her job, this child said to her, "I will miss you mom." It was after this that Joseph and Valentina asked to have this child placed into their home. This child is thriving and doing well. He recently called Joseph, "dad" for the first time. This foster family is very supportive of the child having contact with his biological family. Joseph and Valentina have invited this child to be a part of their family and will be adopting him in July 2020. For these reasons and many others, Joseph and Valentina have earned the privilege of recognition as fantastic foster parents during foster care month. Thank you, Joseph and Valentina !!!

~~Bio~~
~~Adoptive~~
~~Step~~
~~Foster~~

It's not the word before the parent that defines, but rather the love and dedication in the parents heart.



SUSAN OSTER
AND
MICHAEL
VONSHARPSTEEN

Supporting
Children since:
05/02/2019



Nominated by Hannah Rauer & Jill Walker

The Oster-Von Sharpsteen family has been a foster family since 2019. They were interested in opening their hearts and home to adolescents. They accepted an adolescent child who has given them a crash course in being foster parents. Susan and Michael have remained committed, even during the very difficult moments, and have handled it like seasoned pros. They have addressed challenges head on while showing a calm, caring, and loving demeanor. This parenting style has been paramount to her success in their home. Susan and Michael have introduced new opportunities for this child and have remained active and involved with her, even while knowing they may not receive a thank you or feel appreciated by her. They are her best advocates, they stand up for her, and they attempt to protect her from difficulties in the world, while also providing her an opportunity for a typical childhood experience. Susan and Michael also support this child in maintaining important family connections. Susan and Michael have exceeded all expectations as a foster family and have achieved an important spot to be recognized as amazing foster parents for foster care month. Thank you Susan and Michael!!!

CONNECT WITH RESOURCES

During this unprecedented time, we understand you may be struggling to come up with support, services, and activities for the children in your care. We hope the following resources will help in some way, as we all adjust to our new "normal". In addition to these supports, services, and activities, we will be periodically posting additional supports, services, and activities in our Facebook group. If you have not yet joined the group, please feel free to do so, we are Adams County Foster Care. In times like these, it really does take everyone coming together for support, encouragement, and help! If you come across anything amazing you would like us to share and highlight, please email it to fostercare@adcogov.org



The leading library for kids.

getepic.com



Children's magazine and adventure.

timeforkids.com

 Khan Academy Kids



Khan Academy Kids is a free, fun, educational program designed to inspire young children to become learners for life.

learn.khanacademy.org

CONNECT WITH RESOURCES



Providing educational games and activities for school-aged children.

Abcya.com



fostersource.org

ESSENTIAL WORKERS CHECK IT OUT

Essential employee childcare
covidchildcarecolorado.com



A Precious Child

A Precious child provides children in need with opportunities and resources.

apreciouschild.org



A teacher led yoga, mindfulness and relaxation for kids.

cosmickids.com



Our next Virtual Huddle is May 20th @ Noon





CONNECTION IS THE ENERGY THAT IS CREATED BETWEEN PEOPLE WHEN THEY FEEL SEEN, HEARD AND VALUED- WHEN THEY CAN GIVE AND RECEIVE WITHOUT JUDGEMENT.

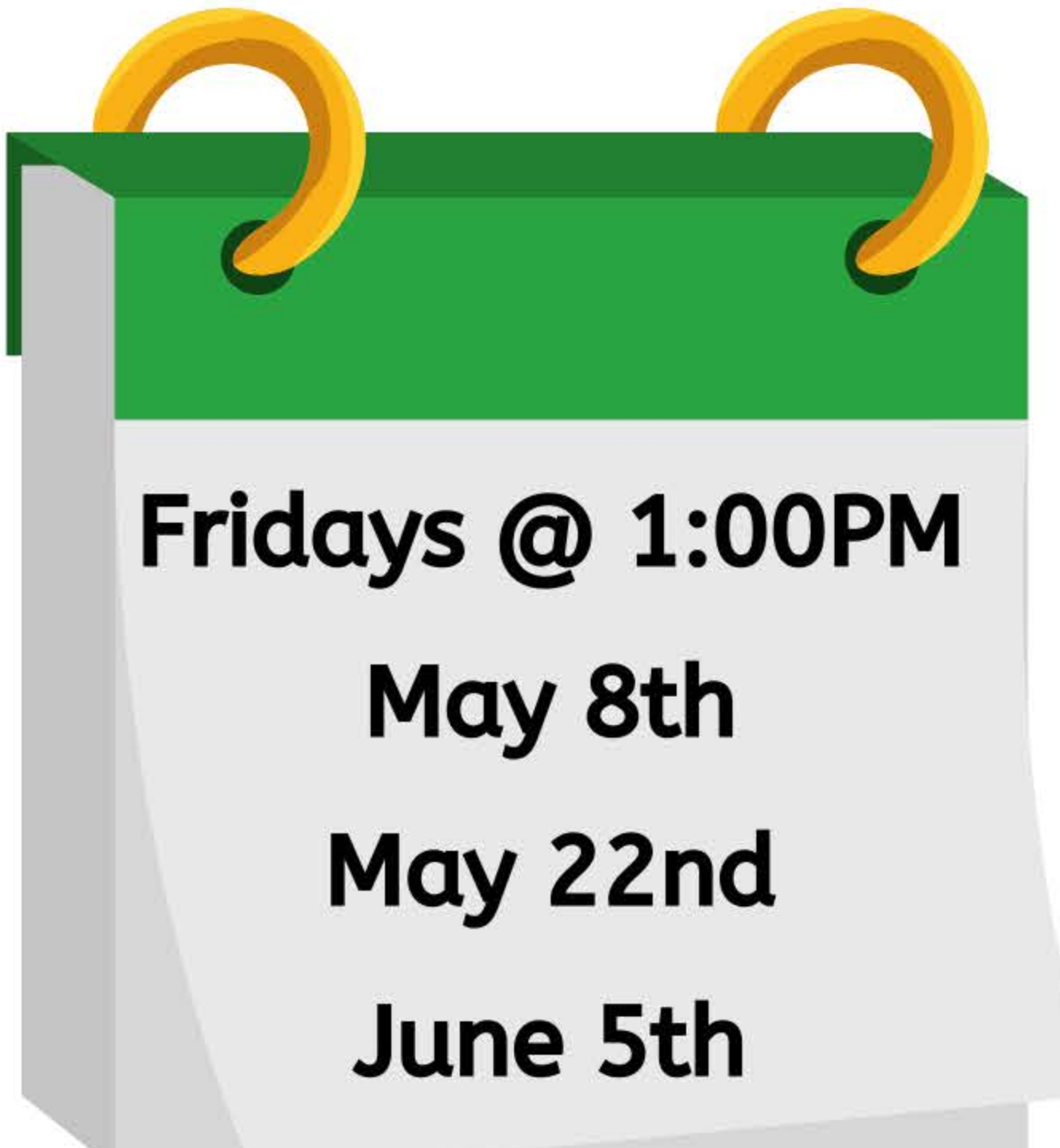
- BRENE' BROWN, PHD, LMSW

Connections for Support Group!

JOIN MARTHA STRONG, MSW INTERN WITH ITT AND KP LONGTON, FOSTER PARENT TRAINER FOR AN ENGAGING HOUR OF SUPPORT AND CONNECTION.

Mark your calendars and save the date! Virtual Support Group is here!

Check your email for the Zoom meeting link!



Fridays @ 1:00PM

May 8th

May 22nd

June 5th