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TO EXALT THE LORD BY SERVING AND SHARING CHRIST THROUGH MEETING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

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THE Outreach

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Angelina Morehouse

“What would you do if I showed up at your home with a child who needed a place to stay? What would you say? It’s not a trick question.”



The national average of children placed in out-of-home state care is 5.5 per 1,000, but in Indiana the number is about 13 children per 1,000. It's a population that has also doubled to 16,834 in Indiana since 2012, according to the findings by the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group.

It Takes a Village, How You



The Gainey's with their biological daughter and 4 foster children.

Brian and Shawna Gainey are servants in the truest sense of the word.

Since early 2014 the Gainey's have served as foster parents for Open Arms Christian Ministries, hosting as many as five youngsters at a time.

The Gainey's didn't set out to be foster parents in the beginning. They knew about Open Arms, like many in the community, and wanted to reach out and help where they could. They had sought to be mentors to the girls at the Open Arms Miriam Group Home. They had their own 16-year-old daughter, Megan, whom they figured would be a positive role model to any of the girls at the group home.

"We thought maybe Megan might be a good influence and we would do whatever it took (to be mentors) to pick up the girls some days and go out to the movies and kind of give them a break from that place," Brian recalls. "God was moving us in that direction. We had never thought about foster care or anything like that." The couple had decided that if they would get a foster placement, they wanted to have 'younger children'. After completing the paperwork to be foster parents, Brian said, "We felt driven to do this."

"We felt driven to do this."

Soon, in March 2014, they received a call from personnel at Open Arms that they had an 11-year-old boy and a nine-year-old girl, who were siblings, who needed placed.

"Their mother wasn't bad, she had just made a few mistakes," Brian remembers.

The next month they accepted placement of a seven-year-old girl so their family of one child had now grown to four, with the addition of three foster children.

The boy was behind academically by two grade levels when the Gainey's got him, but by the end of the final grading period for the semester, his grades had raised to all A's and B's. The girls also were doing well in the classroom.

"That made us feel good, like we were accomplishing something," Brian said in pointing out that the family required more study time than they were used to receiving. They worked closely with him and the two girls and offered positive support.

"They just needed some structure," Shawna added.

In May 2014, the Gainey's took on their fourth and fifth foster children, a 23 month old girl and a one month old boy.

Brian pointed out that despite their busy work schedules, fostering does allow for the use of an accredited day care facility.

"Megan was a real asset at the beginning. She was driving and she could drive the kids around when we couldn't," Brian noted.

Two of the older children transitioned back home in November, 2014. Later that month, the Gainey's were called on again to be servants and agreed to take on a set of paternal twins, who were 21 months old and developmentally behind.

Neither of the children could walk. The boy could not speak and was profoundly autistic. However, they progressed under the Gainey's care.

The Gainey's maintained five children from May 2015 – along with their own, who was a student at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville – until March 2, 2018 when the twins moved to a very good pre-adoptive home.

Our Donations Impact Lives!

The latest addition to the Gainey's foster family came on April 17, 2018, when a two-day old baby boy was picked up from the hospital.

The Bloomfield family encourages others to get involved in fostering.

"It is not as difficult as people think," Brian says. "It is just like having your own kids. You have to balance your time. You plan it and do what you need to do." They have received some welcome respite help from Shawna's mother and sister that has allowed them to get away for a vacation at least once and more often for a shorter breaks from the family routine.

Brian said one of the frequent questions he gets about fostering is, what if a child just does not work out in the family?

"A misconception among a lot of people is that when you get a foster placement, you are signing a 100 percent thing that this person is yours until something happens to them. There is no getting out or no backup plan. Obviously, they don't want you just going through kids all of the time," Brian explained. "I found out that was not true. If all the pieces don't go together, this is not working, there are problems and it's a situation that just can't be overcome, they will come and get the kid. They will never tell the child that you wanted a new placement. That kind of gives you an escape clause." Brian pointed out that in their tenure as foster parents, that has never been an option and they have never asked to have a child removed.

"It is not as difficult as people think."

Brian Gainey on foster parenting.



The Gainey's foster children don't call them Dad or Mom, instead addressing them by their first names. "We don't want any confusion on that," Brian stressed. "For them, they don't know any difference. As far as they know, everyone lives with somebody else and nobody lives with Mom and Dad. That is their world."



"They just needed structure."

Shawna Gainey on foster parenting.

Looking ahead, the Gainneys say they are content to be foster parents, but did not close the door to adopting in the future.

"We didn't get into this to adopt, but if God said to adopt, then we would," Shawna explained.

Brian, who is 55, admitted that they have talked about adopting.

"We have prayed about that and will let God take the course. If it ends up and they can't find people to adopt them, then we might do it."

He added, "When we first started this, if someone would have told us we were going to have five kids, three and under, we would have said they were crazy. But it happened and now it seems like second nature." Summing it up, Brian admitted, "It's been work. It's not a cakewalk, but it's not been bad...looking back, I don't think we would change a thing."

"I don't think we would change a thing."

Story written by Nick Schneider

Children like Angelina NEED Your Support!

Angelina Morehouse, a 14-year-old White River Valley High School freshman, was in foster care about 3 years along with her siblings Kobe (11) and Aaliyaa (5) until they were adopted by Tom and Julie Morehouse on February 9, 2017.

Angelina is very active in her school. She participates in basketball, cross country, track and softball. She is also a good student and a member of the National Honor Society.

Angelina is grateful for the many opportunities she has received while being in foster care and now in her adopted family. "They (the Morehouse's) definitely gave us the opportunity to do things that we -

would not have been able to do if we were still at home.

"They have always supported us and told us the truth about everything, even if we didn't want to hear it," Angelina commented.

When asked what makes Open Arms' foster families different than others, she smiled "The Christian base of it. I got to hear more about Christ and how that helps through your journey," she said. "It has helped."

Thousands of children like Angelina are in the foster care system RIGHT NOW. You can help those who enter Open Arms knowing they will get the love and support they need.



Angelina (top left) and friends praying before a meet.

"I got to hear more about Christ and how that helps through your journey."

All stories written and edited by Open Arms Staff including but not limited to Nick Schneider, Volunteer Coordinator; Marcie Dierdorf, Program Manager; Sheila Corey, Director of Development; Karen Stalcup, Development Assistant



YES, I will help a youth like Angelina!



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