



It's Foster Care Awareness Month and 13,391 Missouri Children are in State Custody

KANSAS CITY, MO - May 15, 2017 - Foster families come in all varieties, including single parent, same-sex couples, blended families and mixed race. Becoming a foster parent is a unique and rewarding opportunity to make a lasting impression on a child's life.

Britney Voigt and her husband Brandon know this first-hand. "I have known since I was young that I would not be able to easily conceive a child naturally, so from a young age I've thought about how I would build my family, and foster care always stood out to me," said Britney. The Voigts made the initial phone call to become foster parents in November 2009. After completing the licensure process, the couple received the call for their first placement – two sibling girls.

Since that day, Britney and Brandon have provided short-term safety and love to 16 children in their Clay County community. Britney credits much of their on-going success to the Cornerstones of Care Home Finding Center—a team of specialized social workers who notify foster families when a child, or sibling group, in their area needs a foster home. When the Voigt family gets a phone call from the Home Finding team, they trust that the placement will be a good fit for the child or siblings, as well as their family.

The biggest needs in communities throughout Northwest Missouri include:

- Homes for groups of siblings: For many children in foster care, their siblings have been the only constant in their lives. Keeping siblings together whenever possible is a top priority.
- Homes for older youth: More often than not, the perception of teens in state custody is that they are troubled, aggressive and delinquent. However, they are just as engaging, resilient and rewarding to parent as younger children. Foster parents of older youth often help to teach them independent living skills, such as how to do laundry and the importance of time management. Helping to provide direction and stability can directly influence the youth's future independence.

The Voigt family became foster parents after asking themselves, "Can I provide safety and love to a child?" To learn more about becoming a foster parent, contact the Cornerstones of Care team at 855-778-5437 or visit them online at cornerstonesofcare.org/fostercare.

Britney Voigt and Cornerstones of Care professionals are available for interviews throughout the month of May. Contact Carol Grimaldi at carol.grimaldi@cornerstonesofcare.org or call 816-508-1765 to schedule an interview.

About Cornerstones of Care: Cornerstones of Care has a long legacy of partnering with children, young adults, and families to create safe and healthy communities. A team of nearly 800 professionals provide programming in the areas of mental and behavioral health, foster care, adoption, education, and youth and family support. Its service area includes twelve locations in Missouri, Kansas, and beyond. Learn more at cornerstonesofcare.org.