



Family Renewal Initiative

www.familyrenewalinitiative.org

Bimonthly Newsletter

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A Host Family's Story

"How's it going?" Eye opening. Intense. Challenging. Words like these accurately but insufficiently describe the experience we had with our first hosted kiddo. While friends at church were asking us about how things were going, we weren't always sure how to answer. We wanted to honor the program, our host kiddos' family, and our own family dynamics... but honestly, the best word to describe it was "hard". *Really hard*. But I come back to something else we said to ourselves and others repeatedly while she was here, "We didn't do this because we thought it would be easy (or even

fun), we did this because we thought it was important. Not that *we* are important, but *these kids* are important."

When Jesus asks in Matthew, "Who are my mother and brothers and sisters?" We get to answer an emphatic, "We are!"

Our host daughter was often hard to get along with. In responding to her and asking my children to kindly respond to her, I kept thinking about Romans 5:8 "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". She was unkind on many fronts to all of us, and I kept reminding myself (and my kids!) that we sinned

against God, yet He chose to love us. I cheered my kids on by encouraging them to forgive "70 times 7!" and "Pray for those who persecute you." I was so proud of my kids. They were kindly teaching rules, sharing their stuff, coming up with ideas, and keeping their mouth shut when she was rude. Ironically, several weeks later, it turned out that her relationship with my kids was the hardest part of having her here. As much as I wanted my kids to respond perfectly" (AKA returning kindness for rudeness every single time), their attitudes started to slide downhill when my "70 times 7!" cheer had to be put in place literally.

It was a very stressful situation on many fronts, and yet all five of us want to host other/more children. In fact, if her family was still in need, we'd be willing to have that girl back in our home every month or so.

WHY? Because Christ asks us to. We want to follow His call to care for the poor and weak among us, especially children. At our wedding, one of the verses we chose for the ceremony was Romans 12:13 about seeking to show hospitality. We feel that God has called us into this ministry (and a lifetime of opening our home) for our good and His glory.

We saw glimpses of that in her last few days with us when we were reading a devotion about forgiveness, she abruptly left me and went to apologize to each of my kids. She sobbed and hugged my daughter when she gave her a heartfelt, homemade parting gift. She even told us she loved us and that she wished she could stay longer. We pray that the truths God showed her through this time would penetrate her heart and mind, and that she would one day come to know Him as her personal Lord and Savior.



A Word From Illona Roman, FRI Executive Director

Many, if not all, of us have heard messages from our pastors on the call to minister to, take care of and serve orphans, widows and the fatherless (James 1:27, Isaiah 1:17, Psalm 82:3, Deuteronomy 10:18, etc). In the song, Start Right Here, by Casting Crowns, we hear these words: "*But for the hurting in our cities, Would we even cross the street? But we wanna see the heart set free and the tyrants kneel. The walls fall down and our land be healed. But church if we want to see a change in the world out there, it's got to start right here.*" Right here, ministering to and caring for those in our city, our community, our neighborhood. People we come into contact with every single day?

Family Renewal Initiative was started to do just that, to reach hurting and broken people, families who need to know that Jesus loves them, right here.

Family Renewal Initiative desires to show compassion, support and be in relationship with those right here, in the Eastern Panhandle.

Over the past few months we have been able to minister to several families in different situations, coming around them in relationship and support in the name of Jesus Christ.

Through relationship, we were able to provide furniture to a family who had lost their home and belongings, including a table and chairs to seat her family of 6. Amy said this "My family just wants to say thank you for all your help, it means alot to us, thank you so much!"

We were also able to help a mother of 8, through relationship with a Family Friend who regularly prays with and for this mom, her children and her marriage

that has been rocky for some time.

Mom says this "I appreciate you thinking of me. Everything is going well. My husband has showed positive changes on how he handles stress and is making efforts to grow our relationship. D (family friend) has been kind to check on me and offer prayer. I'm glad you connected us."

We were also able to host our first child, a 7 year old girl. While this was a tough placement, the family stuck with her and saw many positive changes. The host mom reported this in the midst of their hosting her, "M just prayed at breakfast today! She started "Dear Jesus" and thanked Him for today and the food and for being with "this family" and then said "I miss my mom and dad". She was really talking to Him!!! What a gift God has given us to be involved in this ministry..."



God has prepared families for us to minister to, for you to minister to if you are willing to step into serving children and families, right here.

UPCOMING EVENTS

11/17—7:00P Information Session @ Westview Baptist Church

Would You Help Us with a Year End Gift?

Would you consider a one-time gift or even a monthly gift for the coming year? Your generous gift would allow us to minister to hurting families in Jesus' Name through the local church. Your gift will also be matched by a generous \$10,000 gift from LifeSong for Orphans! Go to www.FamilyRenewalInitiative.org and click on the DONATE button.

YOU Can Be Jesus' Hands and Feet in our Community!

If you believe that God would have you to actively minister to children and families in the Eastern Panhandle in Jesus' Name, we very likely have a role for you! Please visit our website at www.FamilyRenewalInitiative.org to see what roles may suit your gifts and passions.

Join the movement!

Receive our Bimonthly Newsletter Online!

If you picked this newsletter up at your local church and you want to be sure not to miss it in the future, please let us know! Just send us an email at info@FamilyRenewalInitiative.org and your newsletter will come to you directly and hot off the press!

*We wish you and your family
Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year !!!!!!!*