



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Loudoun County Foster Parents Celebrated for Exceptional Service

In observance of May as Foster Care Month, Loudoun County is celebrating and recognizing local foster parents for their service. Loudoun County's foster parents were among those lauded at a recognition event May 19, 2022, hosted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). At the event, Richard and Ashley Harper were named as Loudoun County's Foster Parents of the Year.



Ashley & Richard Harper

COG partners with local and state child welfare agencies from 10 jurisdictions in the region to recognize outstanding foster parents on an annual basis. COG is recognizing the Harpers for their commitment to the mission of foster care and for serving as “exemplary foster parents” to thirteen children in the Loudoun community over the past 7 years. The COG citation notes that the Harpers’ “graceful demeanor has helped to create bridges between children in foster care and their biological families, promoting growth and healing.” COG says that despite their own goal to grow their family through adoption, the Harpers have consistently prioritized the biological family’s needs over their own goals, fully supporting reunification or placements with relatives. They have been flexible as they welcomed numerous adolescents from challenging backgrounds and have demonstrated understanding and support of the child welfare system challenges.

A video featuring the Harpers, which was produced by COG, can be viewed [here](#).

“The parents in our foster care program provide many young people in our community with guidance, stability, support and care,” said Loudoun County Department of Family Services Director, Ina Fernández. “Foster parenting is a commitment unlike any other and we are so incredibly proud of, and thankful to, each and every one of our foster parents for supporting our youth.”

Foster care is a protective service provided to children in the custody of the Department of Family Services. It provides substitute, temporary care for a planned period of time when a child must be separated from his/her own parents or relatives because of neglect, abuse, abandonment or other issues endangering their health and/or safety. Foster care also provides support services to birth families. The primary goal of foster care is to provide a safe place for a child while the biological parents become stable or until a suitable relative is identified.

The Loudoun County foster care program is currently supporting 40 children ranging in age from birth to 21 years old. Find out more about foster parenting and how to become a foster parent at loudoun.gov/fostercare.

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