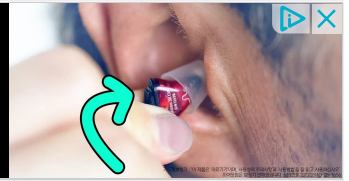


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Foster Care Awareness month brings attention to need for foster parents

by Julia Dunn

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May is Foster Care Awareness month which brings attention to the countless number of families across New York State in crisis and in need of help. Foster parents are needed more than ever these days. Right now, almost 26-thousands kids are in foster care in New York.



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Kyle and Kayla Ambesi, who live in the Capital Region, became foster parents just over three years ago.

“We’ve had kids as young as 2-days-old up to 18-years-old. We’ve had kids come into our home for a day, some for just a week.” Kyle says.

“It doesn’t matter. When they walk through the door they’re family.” Kayla says.

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Kayla is in social work and says she’s always wanted to foster children. Kyle admits it was something he’d never considered until he began dating Kayla. But after telling him about the need for foster parents in the community, Kyle agreed to commit.

“Going into it I had that wall up. That I could never love a child like I could love my own.” Kyle remembers. “But as soon as I laid eyes on these kids, I’m like – I’m going to care for these kids the best that I can. I love them. I’d do anything for them.”

The Ambesis are now in the process of adopting three children currently in their care. Their foster journey began with a call to the Berkshire Farm Center which has locations throughout New York State. The organization, which has been around for over a century, helps 2-thousand families every single day. The Ambesis were able to get certified as foster parents through the Berkshire Farm Center. Family specialists are always available to help foster parents out along the way.

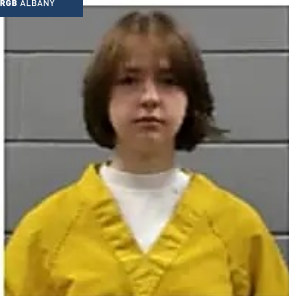
“It was nice just to kind of touch base with us, touch base with the kids, see what we’re doing.” Kyle says of the weekly visits. “It really felt like we had support besides just the two of us.”

The goal of foster care is the reunify children with their birth parents but sometimes that isn’t possible. The Ambesi family says they’ve been fortunate to keep close relationships with the biological parents and even kids they’ve fostered in the past. Even recently going to one of their college graduations. Kyle and Kayla say it’s an experience that continues to enrich their lives.

“They’re so amazing. They’re so innocent. They didn’t ask to be put in this situation.” Kayla says. “It’s just such a great experience. I think anyone can do it.”

Are you interested in being a foster parent? If you are, you can find more information about what it entails at www.berkshirefarm.org

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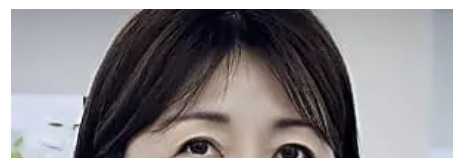
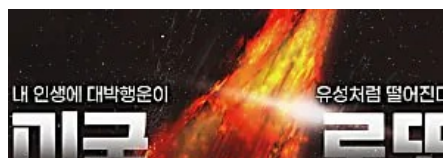
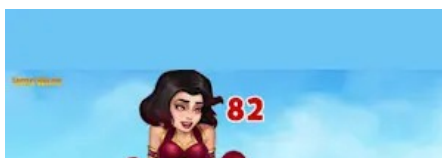
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