

Former foster child finds fulfillment as foster mother

May 26, 2006

Posted: 5/26/06

Katina Duprey and her husband, Daniel, and their 2-year-old son, Riley, offer temporary in-home placement for foster children through the STARRY program.

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By Miranda Bradley

Children at Heart Ministries

CEDAR PARK—Between running her own in-home daycare and caring for her family, Katina Duprey has a full schedule—so full it makes some people wonder why she would take on extra responsibilities as foster mother to needy children. But Duprey knows exactly why she does it.

“I spent a good deal of my life in foster care,” she said. “Most of my experiences were bad, but one family totally changed my life for the better.”

Duprey entered foster care when she was 13 months old, only to be sexually abused by her first foster family. After she was removed from their care, another foster family also abused her.

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“It was very hard on me,” she said. “But then I spent one week with a foster family that was a great experience.”

When she arrived at the family’s home, Duprey admits, she was skeptical. After suffering previously at the hands of people who were supposed to care for her, she withdrew from her new guardians, expecting the worst.

“Instead, they just gave me space and time,” she said. “They didn’t push themselves on me. They just loved me, and that made all the difference.”

For years, she yearned to be a foster parent who could provide stability and security to children who need it most.

“Once I saw you could have a positive influence on children, I wanted to do it,” she said.

She served as a foster parent with Child Protective Services, but Duprey discovered she needed spiritual support. That’s when Dawson Clark, a fellow member at New Hope First Baptist Church in Cedar Park, introduced her to STARRY, a Children at Heart Ministries program that provides services to children and families through its emergency shelter, community-based counseling and foster care programs.

Clark, development director for STARRY, explained the ministry had expanded its foster care program to meet a growing demand for temporary in-home placement, and the ministry was seeking Christian foster parents.

“I found that the Christian aspect of the program makes a huge difference in our foster care experience,” Duprey said.

So far, Duprey has fostered two infants. Her most recent charge is just 3 months old. A baby, coupled with her own 2-year-old son and her thriving daycare business makes life interesting, she said.

Juggling all she has to handle requires the kind of Christian advocacy she

said she finds at STARRY.

“The staff and I pray together,” Duprey said. “Stacy Grant (foster care coordinator for STARRY) holds me accountable in a Christian way. I never feel attacked or judged.”

Grant praises Duprey, saying: “She really has a heart for the kids and a strong desire to keep them safe. She’s an ideal foster parent for our program.”

In spite of her past, Duprey harbors no anger toward parents of abused or neglected children—one reason many children are placed in foster care.

“I try not to judge,” Duprey said. “Being a mom myself, I can understand how stressful it can be. Everyone makes bad choices that affect more than just themselves.”

Once a child is in Duprey’s home, the lines of separation are blurred. Despite the title, the word “foster” soon is eliminated from any reference to anyone in the household. No one here is a former, current or future foster anything. In their house, only one word applies—family.

“These babies are part of our family,” Duprey said. “Whatever they’ve been through, it doesn’t matter. This is their home. And it will be as long as they need it.”

For more information on foster care, contact Stacy Grant at (512) 246-4229. For other inquiries, contact STARRY directly at (512) 246-4290 or log on to www.starryonline.org.

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