

Amarillo couple fills house with foster, adoptive children

October 21, 2011

AMARILLO—It's not that Tim and December Barcroft wouldn't love to go to Washington, D.C. They would have been among 150 others nationally to be honored at a gala as part of the Angels in Adoption awards through the [Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute](#) on Oct. 5.

It's just, they couldn't go.



Tim and December Barcroft finalized the adoption of their daughters Genie, 14, Kelsey, 2, and Heavenly, 6, on Sept. 29.

The Buckner foster family received a national award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption. (?Photo by Russ Dilday/Buckner International)

Barcroft has a route to run delivering tortillas around the area for J&T Distributing. Mrs. Barcroft, who not surprisingly, was born in December, can't afford to miss class at West Texas A&M University, where she's studying to be a teacher. Then, there are the girls—Genie, Heavenly and Kelsey. What to do about them?

"It's probably best we not go," Barcroft said. "We'd like to, but just can't. It's disappointing, but money was also an issue as well."

The Barcrofts are a common couple doing an extraordinarily uncommon thing. That's what foster parents are. They're like so many on the outside, but inside they have an extra dose of love, unselfishness and sacrifice.

Life was peaceful and routine the first five years of their marriage. Maybe too peaceful.

"We were tired of our quiet house," Mrs. Barcroft said.

They talked of being foster parents for three years. Finally, they enrolled in the foster parents program through [Buckner International](#), training that is intense and rigorous.

They had a heart for children, had none of their own, and were eager to have some extra noise in their home.

"Foster parents have to be patient, flexible, giving and obviously loving," said Scott Collins, vice president of communications for Buckner.

"I think for Tim and December, it was also part of a spiritual calling," he said.

In March 2009, they became foster parents of two boys, Aaron, 6, and Jason, 9. They were in their home until they returned to their mother the day after Christmas 2009.

"We still pick them up and take them to church every Sunday," Barcroft said. "They may not live with us, but they're still part of our family."

It's now a crowded drive to New Life Foursquare Church.

A little more than a month after the two brothers left, the Barcrofts

received two sisters, Genie and Heavenly, from the Panhandle Assessment Center.

Soon after, their infant sister, Kelsey, was taken from another foster home to join her sisters.

"It's been mind-altering, a house full of girls," Barcroft said. "I mean, sharing one bathroom, come on. There's not a moment's peace with that. It's been rough, but we love them to death, absolutely love them to death."

Imagine this challenge: A teenager, one in kindergarten, and one who now is 2 years old. Those are some different needs and priorities with no time for parents to grow into the challenge.

"Kelsey can entertain herself. She's independent, but very loving," Barcroft said.

"Heavenly had some severe behavioral issues in the beginning, but she's come a long way. Genie is Genie. She's attached and then detached. She has her moments as I'm sure all 14-year-olds do."

But few have had the baggage the two oldest had been saddled with. What was missing in their lives, as it is with virtually all foster children, is stability, a parental role model who will be there for them.

"We've provided them and showed them there are people out there who do love them for who they are," December Barcroft said.

The Barcrofts didn't get to go to the nation's capital, but they did get to go to 108th District Court in Potter County the day following the Washington event. There, before Judge Doug Woodburn, the Barcrofts legally adopted the three girls. No doubt which event meant more.

"Going to Washington would have been pretty cool," Barcroft said. "But the real honor is having these kids for a lifetime."

But the Barcrofts hope this isn't the final chapter.

They would like to add more foster children and their own biological children one day.

"God's not done with us yet," Barcroft said. "But we're going to need a bigger home."

-Jon Mark Beilue is a columnist for the Amarillo Globe-News.