

Miramar family dedicates 19 years to Broward youth

Janet and Peter Hendricks have dedicated nearly two decades to fostering Broward County's most vulnerable children.

After seeing a heartfelt televised public service announcement on the need for foster and adoptive parents, Janet and Peter knew they had to get involved.

The couple opened the doors of their home in 1989 to their first foster child. Initially the couple wanted to adopt, but were advised to foster until they decided who they wanted to adopt.

Nineteen years later, the Hendricks' household has fostered more than 100 children. In addition to their two biological children, the Hendricks have also adopted another four children.

"It is so fulfilling to see that same child utter their first word or take their first step."

Janet Hendricks

With three foster children between the ages of 8 months and 3 years and two adoptive children ages 12 and 18, Janet and Peter are not closing their hearts and homes any time soon. They care for children with serious medical issues such as Shaken Baby Syndrome, Trisomy 8 Syndrome and Paraplegia.

"Over the years I have had many children that doctors said will never walk or talk," said Janet. "It is so fulfilling to see that same child utter their first word or take their first step."

Throughout their years of fostering, the Hendricks have witnessed many foster children

overcome a doctor's diagnosis of an early death or paralysis to blossom into healthy kids. They credit the child's progress to the warmth and stability of being in a home with a caring family.

Most of the Hendricks' foster children live with them for about one year, but some children have lived with them for as long as five years. For the past few years, Janet and Peter have taken their entire family on road trips across the country. "Our kids come with us on every family vacation" said Janet.

When asked about her drive and dedication to fostering, Janet said she knew that if she wanted to see a difference in the lives of the children in the community that it would have to start with her.

"Many times we foster so that we can inspire and encourage a child but the inspiration and hope that they give us is immeasurable" said the Hendricks.

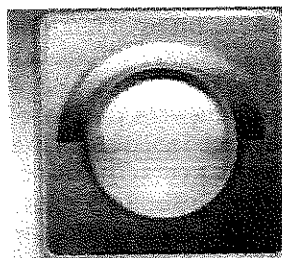
For more information about fostering in Broward County, visit www.browardfostercare.org or call the Foster Care Recruitment Hotline at 954-414-6001.

ChildNet is a non-profit organization selected by the state through a competitive process to serve as the local Community Based Care lead agency.

As the lead agency, ChildNet manages the local system of services and supports for Broward County's abused, abandoned and neglected children and their caregivers.

This system of care was developed with extensive input from local stakeholders and its effective implementation depends upon their continued support.

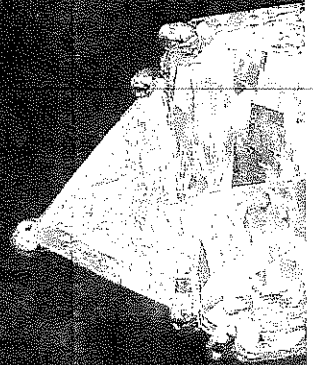
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