

A Tribute to the Community Care Veteran Foster Parents

Community Care is proud to honor 15 foster homes that have been with the agency for the past eight to 20 years. Their combined years of service to youth in foster care total an amazing 213 years! Their longevity and resilience are remarkable. Many of these parents have adopted the youth in their care or have raised foster youth into early adulthood, seeing them through high school and into college, or on to independent living. Some are now happily serving as grandparents to the children of the youth they raised. They welcome their former foster children and the grandchildren back into their hearts and homes, providing practical and moral support.

They are the ones these former foster youth who are now adults call in the middle of the night when they are experiencing a crisis or just need advice. These foster parents have been the mavericks in terms of working with birth parents and reunification efforts long before the Family Share Program was implemented by the Department of Health and Human Services. They welcomed birth parents into their homes on holidays so that the children could be with their biological families. They modeled how to show the children that adults were working together on their behalf. They actively supported reunification by supervising contact and mentoring birth parents.

Many of the youth were successfully reunified with their birth families. When children were not able to be reunified, many of these foster parents adopted the children in their homes. Many of the youth they raised have gone onto the working world or higher education, and now are raising children of their own. To our Community Care Veteran Foster Parents — we celebrate you!

Thank you for your never-ending dedication and support of these youth!



Outpatient Therapy

A process of self-discovery and making positive change

“How can I help you?” is a well-intentioned question that we encounter while browsing at the store or standing at the deli counter. It’s a question that focuses you on completing the task at hand.

When the same question is asked by a therapist in our clinic, it is intended to send an entirely different message.

The clinicians at Community Care want to help you make the changes that you want to make. We are here for you, no matter who you are, or where you are on your journey in life. We have chosen to dedicate our careers to

reaching out to others who are trying to find their way through life’s complexities.

The terms “therapy” and “mental health clinic” can be off-putting to many people, because they often come with outdated ideas about therapy. At Community Care, “therapy” is a word that means that two people have come together to share ideas, to build on things that are working well, and to shore up defenses against things that are not. We hope that anyone who comes to Community Care will find an open door to self-discovery.

It Takes a Village – or a committed Foster Family and Community Care support!

Think of a time in your own life as a child when you were scared and needed to turn to an adult for reassurance and comfort. That person was likely someone you trusted. Now imagine that at that time, you had nobody to go to. It’s hard to believe that some Maine children are in this very situation — unable to live with their birth parents. Maybe they were removed due to child abuse and neglect, or perhaps their parent(s) are deceased. There are many reasons why children end up without a family — and all of those reasons are highly traumatic and typically result in children entering the foster care system.

Children in foster care have experienced significant trauma on multiple levels. Furthermore, coming into foster care in and of itself is traumatic.

Can you imagine yourself or your own child being uprooted from their home, from their family, and being placed into a completely strange place with people they don’t know? Children are vulnerable, their minds are still developing, and they aren’t able to comprehend everything that is happening to them. They are young. They are vulnerable. They are scared.

When a child enters the foster care system, they are taken into Department of Health and Human Services custody and assigned a caseworker to serve on their behalf as the guardian. That caseworker

works diligently to find a potential “kinship” family who will care for them. If no kinship home is available, a temporary “substitute” family is sought — a foster family. Maine is fortunate to have a network of foster parents who have opened their hearts and homes to these vulnerable children.

Kandy Ferrell is one of those foster parents and has opened up her home for 16 years, fostering over 45 children of all ages with the support of Community Care.

“The children come in so traumatized, broken, scared and unable to trust,” said Kandi. “The best part of being a foster parent is watching children feel safe and trusting you as foster parents, and seeing how the children work as hard as I do.”

Community Care understands the difficulties of being a foster parent and has a support team in place to help.

We offer regularly-scheduled in-home support, extra on-site support as needed, 24/7 phone support and guidance, training, opportunities to meet and learn from other foster parents, activities and groups for the kids, and help with all of the day-to-day challenges foster parents encounter.

Community Care is looking for foster parents to join Kandy and our other incredible foster parents so we can offer even more safe and caring homes for children of all ages. We encourage you to

consider becoming a foster parent. We understand that it’s a complicated decision, and our foster care staff are there to support you. Making that first phone call does not lock you into becoming a foster parent, but begins a process of education so you can make an informed decision on whether fostering is right for you and your family.

To any foster parent who is reading this article, Community Care thanks you for making the difference in the life of a child. Some of you have made the difference in the lives of dozens and dozens of children as Kandy has. We are able to see you support birth parents in reunification and have seen many families reunite, and have seen you play an active role in supporting that reunification. We have seen many of you adopt the child in your care. From all of us at Community Care, thank you for your opening your hearts and home. To the foster parents of Community Care, thank you for letting us share in your journey.



PHOTO CREDIT: JILL DIONNE

Please consider becoming a foster parent. Call Community Care at 1-888-236-2273

REFERRALS Are you interested in making a referral for you or someone that you know to receive support or assistance utilizing any of the following services: Adult Case Management (Behavioral Health Homes or Community Integration), Outpatient Mental Health or Substance Abuse Therapy, Children’s Case Management, Home and Community Based Services (HCT)? **Please Call 207-945-4240 or 1-888-236-2273** *MaineCare insurance is required for most of these services.*