

Testimony for Kate and Randy Barth

We love the mission behind Safe Families. We love the idea of helping families in crisis before they lose their children. All of us face crisis in our lives. However, most of us have resources to help us through those times. We have family members and friends that can step up and help us care for our children while we work through whatever is going on in our lives. Most of the families asking for help from Safe Families truly don't have any other support. They are completely alone. There is nobody else to help care for their children while they do the work to get through the crisis situation, whether that be homelessness, loss of employment, mental health counseling, addiction counseling, incarceration, personal illness, etc. These parents are voluntarily asking somebody else to help take care of their children in order to eventually provide a more stable environment so that they can be stronger parents.

Over the past 15 months, we have hosted 9 children in our home. Some have been there for only a few days to provide much needed respite to single moms while some have been there for a few months as their parents have secured employment and daycare, found housing and transportation. They have ranged in age from 2 days old to 4 1/2 years old. Throughout each hosting, the parents are still in touch with their children and very much a part of the daily decisions that go with raising their children. We are simply coming alongside the parents to support them during this time. We compare ourselves to being an aunt and uncle or grandparents helping out during a difficult time. We are not the parents, but simply a support system for the parents.

We have seen families really have the ability to turn their lives around with the assistance that Safe Families provides. As a host family, we give parents the freedom to work on their needs while their children are being cared for. Safe Families also puts family coaches in place to help guide the parents through the work they need to do and to provide resources to help them. The parents are doing all of the hard work during this time. We have seen several people secure employment, obtain housing and transportation. We have also seen parents become stronger and more secure in their ability to face the future needs of their family.

We believe strongly in this program being able to continue. We feel as though it is a great way to help families work through their crisis without having to lose their children to the foster care system or other avenue. This program works to get families back on track and keep them there.