



COLONY SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting ministries of the members of Colony

Kiet and Toni Pham are foster care parents. Over the last three years they have loved and cared for seven long term children. These neglected children come to their home with so many needs, yet over time God does remarkable things in their lives through the Pham Family.

How did you get involved in becoming foster parents?

We got involved in fostering about three years ago. Through the Holy Spirit, God had been speaking to each of us, Kiet and Toni, independently about fostering for quite a while before we even discussed the subject with each other. After spending time praying about it as a couple and family, we all agreed this was something our family was called to do. This began our journey. We were very blessed to find an independent Christian agency that worked with Child Protective Services in placing children with families.

How has foster parenting changed your lives?

We must admit that daily life is more complicated, but it has also become much richer. We have learned to be more flexible and patient in all things, especially on a daily basis.

What are the difficulties and frustrations you face?

We face struggles and frustrations first with ourselves. Realizing the uncertainties of many situations, we still battle the internal conflict of knowing that God is in control. We know we have to put our emotions and thoughts aside and give up control to Him no matter the situation.

We struggle with fully loving a child as if they are our own, having them create a place in our home and hearts, and then dealing with the variety of emotions that comes when they leave.

We are frustrated and saddened that each time a child leaves our home, it wouldn't take but a few hours to have another one coming in. There seems to be an abundance of children in need.

Finally, many times it can be difficult dealing with others realizing their agendas and motives are different from what God has led us to do. We realize we must be patient and know God is in control; it can be very difficult when others do not understand this point of view. We constantly face external pressure to do what is "humanly" right which has led to much frustration.

What victories have you seen?

We have been able to witness many victories as foster parents. We have seen broken families reunite. We have been able to be a part of the healing process of children who are affected by their circumstances in unimaginable ways. So often, they come into our home without the most basic of human needs. Starting with lots of prayer and slowly fulfilling their basic needs we are able to see them flourish.

One victory, specifically that we have been a part of is that of a child we had in our home for nearly two years. After years of trying to be reunited with the family, it was decided that adoption was the best goal for this child. After much prayer, we knew through the Holy Spirit, God was telling us that we were not supposed to adopt this child. As this disappointed and confused many, we knew that we trusted God. Even though our pain was great and we didn't understand either, the decision was made to begin looking for adoptive parents and we began praying for God's will to be done.

God, indeed had a plan for this child beyond anything we could have imagined. Even though we tried to help God along and find other great homes for this child, God already had the perfect place for the child. God had been working in the lives of a young couple who happened to be trying to start a family. This couple was trying to be adoptive parents in another state and found out about their unknown relative who was the child living with us in need of adoptive parents. God was able to place the child with these family members who were trying to adopt. They faced many hurdles, but remained persistent to fight for a child they did not even know, and they were finally united after many setbacks. He was a youth minister and she a children's minister and this was an answer to their prayers as well. God is good. Only God could have brought this family together beyond any human manipulation. It was by listening to Him and not through others, that God showed us He prevails.

How has God taught you through foster parenting?

God has taught us that He is in control. This is something that was just easy to say before, but now we have definitely lived it. Day by day we rely on him. His answers are not ours, and we may not understand His plans, but we must have faith and trust because we have been humbled by His mercy and grace. As we have taken our concerns to Him in prayer, we have seen Him answer in ways we could not have imagined. God has helped us become more patient and understanding of others. This doesn't mean children, but also the parents of the children that come to our home. They too deserve prayer and as some struggle to reunite their family, they require patience and understanding - not judgment.

What are the rewards of ministering in this way?

The rewards are many. Our relationship with the Lord has strengthened. Our testimony has multiplied and we are able to share it with many in the fostering community. We have seen our own children (even at the young age at which they were when we began) become sensitive, caring, and understanding individuals. We are able to have a loving, prayerful role in the lives of children who are in need. God has allowed us a glimpse of His glory and to witness how great He is as we continue to serve Him. We have also seen our family grow as a result of being foster parents.