

The Parker Family!



REPRESENTATIVE BONAMICI

We like to refer to ourselves as a “Patchwork Family.” Just like a story quilt, built from beautiful, strong, and varied pieces, each with their own history, we have come together to make something wonderful – a family.

Josie and I began our foster journey in our twenties, way before we knew about our fertility issues. We wanted to counteract the idea that African American families are less likely to take on the tremendous burden of foster care. We’ve fostered close to ten children over the years (whom we still love immensely) which eventually led us to our forever sons, Victor and Kamari. They both came to us as infants three years apart from different biological families. Although permanency was not a consideration at first, we adjusted quickly as the expectations changed. Our licensing worker and case managers were our champions and constant support through the ever-shifting legal processes. We are now the boys’ full-fledged adoptive parents.

When we started this journey, we had no idea what twists and turns lay ahead. We had faith that if we gave it all our love and effort, it would be amazing, and it has been. The effects of our sons’ traumas – sleep issues, attention issues, and separation anxiety – bring daily challenges. For every joyous moment, there are ten kooky ones. Our life is filled with crazy stories, late-night tickle fights, tears and warm hugs, and the deepest of love.

Victor (age 7) is our ball of energy, always ready for an adventure. He’s full of stories, jokes, and curiosity, and is always looking out for his friends - as any good leader should. He loves building, drawing pictures, playing video games, and laughing with his whole being.

His little brother, Kamari (age 4) is a poet at heart. He loves music and singing, tight hugs, and quiet afternoons (mostly quiet.) He has deep emotions, a fun sense of humor, and a steady and deliberate nature.

To them, they are just brothers, even though they don’t share a drop of common blood. That is the beauty of adoption - it shows that family means more than that. Even though they both have their own struggles ahead, we know they will always be at each other’s side. Just like any parents, we are excitedly hopeful about their futures.

We owe a lot to fostering and adoption, but there is still a great deal of work to be done. Families like ours need the support of federal and state government policies that continuously follow the needs of the child regardless of status. Due to the issues, kids in care are facing, more can be done to support them in their development into adulthood and help them achieve success, safety, and stability.

After school programs, mentorship, counseling, volunteer opportunities, and college subsidy are just a few of the needed resources.

Forming a family is like making a piece of art; there are struggles and pitfalls along the way, and sometimes when you step back and look the whole you think, “Wow, this did not turn out exactly how I thought it would,” but there is beauty in the discovery of what makes your family one of a kind.

Note: The Parkers have written about their journey in the books they have published through their company, Believe in Wonder Publishing (www.believeinwonder.com)