



Kinship Newsletter



Thurston-Lewis-Mason Counties

July ~ 2021

1st Annual

Voices of Kinship Caregivers

CONTEST

WINNERS!



The Parental Compass

<https://www.parentalcompass.org/feed.xml>

My Why

In June of 2008 I became the legal guardian of my 5-month-old nephew. Here we are 13 years later and I am proud to call him my son. The last 13 years has not been all sunshine and rainbows but some of the GREAT things about being a kinship caregiver are as follows.

I am thankful that Riley never had to grow up in foster care. I was a single Mom when I got custody of him and have remained as such. Riley has grown up with my 2 older sons as brothers and they are amazing with him. Riley has a heart of gold. Even through the difficult times his light shines through. He can always be seen comforting another child or helping someone to feel better. Riley never stops amazing me. When he was a year and a half old his biological mother passed away. I have always been honest that I am not his birth mother, but he makes it clear that I am the only momma he ever wants. Riley is helpful and a burst of energy.

Riley has learned and grown with me. Being a single Mom there are times that were difficult. When my older boys grew up and left home, well it's just us. He understands when we watch finances and when I was putting myself through school, he was one of my biggest supporters. I worked full time, full time school and still made sure that he was in the WISE program to get the help that he so needed. We advocated together so that he could work through his trauma responses and learn the coping skills to feel better.

I am forever proud of the young 13-year-old man that he has become today. My life is nothing like I imagined but I wouldn't have it any other way.

**Connie
Richland, WA**

Anatha's Corner

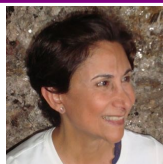
Play

Psychologists emphasize the importance of play in a child's emotional and intellectual development. Play stimulates a child's imagination and creativity and promotes empathy.

Adult brains may have reached full development but, adult play is just as important for similar reasons. We can compare adult play to a state of mind called FLOW. FLOW is experienced whenever we are immersed in an activity. It is characterized by a loss of self-consciousness, a sense of timelessness, and satisfaction from mastery over a particular challenge. This state of mind can arise through every-day activities like gardening, preparing a meal, or engaging in an inspiring conversation. When we are in a state of FLOW, we experience increased creativity, tranquility and even joy.

Notice the times in the day when you feel most satisfied. Take note of what activity you are engaged in. How can you bring more of these kinds of activities into your life?

If you are caring for young children, you may need to save your favorite activity for after their bedtime or set them up with a play activity of their own first. Another possibility may be to engage in a joint activity. Invite the children to help with baking cookies or preparing the evening meal. Make play a habit for the whole family!



Join the Kinship Group on Zoom

Take a much needed break, meet up with your fellow Kinship Caregivers & enjoy some well deserved "Me Time" in a very supportive environment.

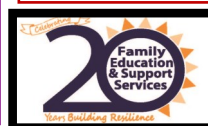
Meetings are:

Wednesday Evenings 6:30 - 8 pm

Contact Tammara for signup information:

Tammara@familyess.org

zoom





My granddaughter was 11 months old and my grandson, 36 days old when they were placed into my care by CPS. My son's wife had mental health issues and had abused and neglected them.

My youngest daughter was 15 at the time and at first, I was overwhelmed and afraid. I remember crying out to God "What am I going to do with these babies"?

I found the kinship support group for Thurston county and was so thankful to find that I was not alone. Over the years, I have developed friendships with other grandparents and we share our experiences and support each other in our journeys.

When I realized this would be a permanent situation I decided that I would love and care for them as my own. Over the past 12 years, they have become my own. When my granddaughter started calling me Mommy, the Social Worker told me not to correct her. I decided that every child deserves a mommy and have never regretted that decision. For over 8 years, I was the only mother they knew and they are my babies. Now, I can't imagine my life without them.

Diane
Olympia, WA

In August 2016, I was faced with having to pick up my 3 grandchildren, who were living out of a vehicle with their mother (my daughter-in-law), at the time, as my son had went to prison to serve his 4-year sentence. The children, ages 2,3,7, were not being taken care of in any manner and needed to be taken away from that neglectful situation.

Now onto the good news! Since my grandbabies have been in my home, I have had the opportunity to watch them as they grow up, they continue to go to counseling. I have watched them mending and healing with each day knowing they have food, a warm home, and unconditional love and support.

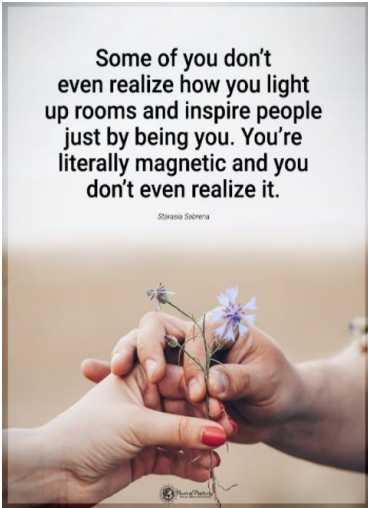
I have had the opportunity to raise my grandbabies so that they know they are safe, well cared for, loved, nourished, and carefree. My grandbabies are now 7,8, and 12. They are my life. They bring me so much joy and happiness that I cannot begin to tell you just how much. Elijah is a fiery redhead that tells me he loves me many times a day. He loves to jump on the trampoline, ride bikes, and color. Dakota is beautiful, smart, and such an artist. She frequently will draw me pictures telling me how much I mean to her, she has come a long way. Harvey is now 12 and becoming such a young man, he is bright, thoughtful, and full of love and respect. He gives me several hugs a day and often gives me a handmade card of how thankful he is for everything. These three children bring with them the baggage from the trauma we deal with daily and that I cannot change. But what I can do, is provide for them, allowing each of these precious babies to blossom into healthy, happy, care-free children just as they deserved from the beginning. They share so much love and affection. I could never ask for anything more...the gifts that mean the most to me are my hugs, my kisses goodnight, the loving eyes of these three priceless gems when they smile.

Terry -Port Orchard, WA



Some of you don't even realize how you light up rooms and inspire people just by being you. You're literally magnetic and you don't even realize it.

Stavros Stavrakas



SAVE THE DATE!

Kinship Potluck Picnic
August 14th, 2021

11am- 1pm

Tumwater Historical Park

John Amidon-Professional Magician performing at 11:30 am



Summer LIBRARY PROGRAM

June 1 – August 31 **FOR ALL AGES**

Free fun online events for all ages including Storytimes, STEM activities, virtual performers, StoryTrails, scavenger hunts, and more!

For 2021 Summer Library Program you can **EARN 2 BOOKS!**

Ask us on your next visit!

Timberland Regional LIBRARY [TRL.org/summer-library-program](https://www.trl.org/summer-library-program)

The Brookdale Foundation Group

The Brookdale Foundation The Glendale Foundation Ramapo Trust

Supporting today's seniors and tomorrow's leaders in aging

Lewis Thurston Moon

Area Agency on Aging

Family Education & Support Services

Supporting Families...Strengthening Communities