

# RAISE HOPE & FOSTER DREAMS



## REGIONAL RESOURCE TEAM: REGION 5 FAMILY NEWSLETTER

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **GROW trainings** are currently being held online. Interested families should be referred by their licensing workers. All upcoming GROW trainings can be found on our website at <https://www.fcn.org/pridegrow-training-schedules>.
- **ORIENTATION DATES** for local agencies can be found on our website at <https://www.fcn.org/become-foster-parent/inquiry-and-orientation>.
- Local **SUPPORT GROUPS** can be found on our website at <https://www.fcn.org/support-group/>.
- **Additional Trainings** can also be found on our website! Browse a full list at <https://www.fcn.org/news-events/calendar>.

### Patricia's Story

On a summer evening in 1998, Detroit police stormed Patricia's home. She and her five siblings were brought to the police station. Later that evening, their mother arrived, but they didn't leave together. Instead, all 6 children were placed in separate foster homes. During her time in care, Patricia suffered additional trauma in an abusive foster home. She then spent time in multiple girls' homes and even juvenile detention, simply because of the lack of adequate placements.

Patricia's father overdosed and lost his life shortly after she and her siblings entered care, and their mother was still struggling with addiction, so Patricia reached out to her father's mother with hope of having a home with someone who loved her. Unfortunately, after some time there, she realized she hadn't found what she was looking for.

At 15-years-old, despite her circumstances, Patricia had continued to be a model student. However, losing hope, she began to skip school and ended up finding what she felt was support from a man who was 11 years older. Patricia recalls feeling that someone actually wanted and loved her, but now she realizes that she was an easy target at the age of 15.

Finding herself pregnant at 16, she contacted her social worker to return herself to the foster care system and moved into a home for pregnant teens. This wasn't easy, but she made the best of her situation until she was old enough for independent living. After her semi-independent living situation fell through and she had nowhere else to go, she found herself returning to the same man.

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## Patricia's Story (continued from page 1)

When her second child was born, Patricia was determined to “stay on a right path in life.” She worked hard and supported herself and her two children on income from babysitting, hairstyling, and the bi-weekly assistance she received from the state until she aged out of the foster care system at age 20. Shortly after that, Patricia's third child was born. More than ever, she wanted an education so that she could pursue a better job to provide for her family.

In 2016, Patricia's babies and fiancé were in the audience watching while she graduated from college with an associate degree in pre-social work. “I really knew exactly what I wanted and what I was willing to accept (and not accept) in my life. It was time to be happy in my life despite all my adversities.”

In 2018, Patricia was married and celebrated the birth of her fourth child. That year, she and her spouse also became homeowners. “Forever, I will be grateful for God and life itself for finally blessing me with my own uniquely picked family,” she says.

Patricia elaborated, “Life happens, and in life, people might disappoint at times. Trust and believe every loss has a lesson in it. What I want most is to continue my education and be a great influencer to my children, their friends, my family and friends, neighbors, co-workers and strangers. I want to be love and acceptance to everyone I cross paths with, especially foster children. That's why, in 2020, I began the process to become a licensed foster parent.” Patricia began her foster care journey by calling the Foster Care Navigator line and talking with Navigator Jackie. Jackie knew immediately Patricia would be an amazing team member and suggested she apply to be a Recruiter. Patricia joined the Foster Care Navigator Program in August 2021 and shares, “I'm elated to be a part of the change I so desperately wanted to see in the foster care system.”



### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion, minced
- 1 carrot, sliced into 1/4-inch rounds
- 1 stalk celery, sliced into 1/4-inch pieces (substitute peas, green beans, etc., as desired)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon oregano
- 1 zucchini or yellow squash, diced
- 2 cups water or chicken stock (more as desired)
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste

### Directions:

Chop all vegetables before beginning to cook.

Pour oil into medium saucepan and turn heat to medium. Add onion and sauté for about one minute, stirring frequently.

Add chopped carrot and celery, sprinkle with salt, pepper and oregano, and continue to sauté for 2-3 minutes. Add squash and sauté for another minute.

Pour water or broth over the veggies, add tomato paste and bring to a boil. Stir well and lower heat. Simmer soup for about 15 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.

*Thank you Patricia, for sharing your deeply personal journey with us. We appreciate your honesty and willingness to work within the child welfare system to improve the lives of children! We are so lucky to have you as part of our Regional Resource Team!*



## ICE SUNCATCHERS

### Supplies:

- Bag/basket for collecting
- Scissors or garden snippers
- Pan or container for your mold
- Water
- Twig, sprigs, pine cones, etc.

### Making Them:

Now it's time to head to the great outdoors!

Take your time as you and the kids explore your environment and search for materials. A nature walk is a wonderful way to slow down and be present and in the moment with little ones.

- Trim, tuck, and stuff until your pans are full.
- Fill pans with enough water to cover your materials.
- Lay a loop of ribbon or string at the top of this mold so you can hang the suncatcher from a branch once it's frozen.
- Now it's just a matter of placing your molds in the freezer overnight, or leave the molds outside to freeze.
- Once the molds are frozen, run a little warm water over the outside of the pan to loosen and release your mold.



## HOW PARENTS CAN BUILD SELF-ESTEEM

Adapted from <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/self-esteem.html>



Every child is different. Self-esteem may come easier to some kids than others, but even if a child's self-esteem is low, it can be raised. Here are things parents can do to help kids feel good about themselves:

**Focus on strengths.** Pay attention to what your child does well and enjoys. Focus more on strengths than weaknesses if you want to help kids feel good about themselves. This improves behavior too.

**Praise your child, but do it wisely.** Of course, it's good to praise kids. Your praise is a way to show that you're proud. But some ways of praising kids can actually backfire. Here's how to do it right:

**Don't overpraise.** Praise that doesn't feel earned doesn't ring true. For example, telling a child he played a great game when he knows he didn't feels hollow and fake.

**Praise effort.** Avoid focusing praise only on results (such as getting an A) or fixed qualities, such as being smart or athletic. Instead, offer most of your praise for effort, progress, and attitude. For example: "I'm proud of you for practicing—you've really stuck with it." With this kind of praise, kids put effort into things, work toward goals, and try. When kids do that, they're more likely to succeed.

**Ban harsh criticism.** The messages kids hear about themselves from others easily translate into how they feel about themselves. Harsh words ("You're so lazy!") are harmful, not motivating. When kids hear negative messages about themselves, it harms their self-esteem. Correct kids with patience. Focus on what you want them to do next time. When needed, show them how.

**Let kids help and give.** Self-esteem grows when kids get to see that what they do matters to others. Kids can help out at home, do a service project at school, or do a favor for a sibling. Helping and kind acts build self-esteem and other good feelings.

**Help your child learn to do things.** At every age, there are new things for kids to learn. Learning how to do things helps self-esteem grow. Be sure your child gets a chance to learn, try, and feel proud.

**Be a good role model.** When you put effort into everyday tasks, you're setting a good example. Modeling the right attitude counts, too.



## Contact Us

### Adoptive & Foster Parent Recruitment & Retention (AFPRR) Program - Region 5

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## WHAT IS A FOSTER CARE NAVIGATOR?

A Foster Care Navigator is someone who serves as a liaison between current and prospective foster parents and their agency. As trained and experienced foster parents themselves, each Navigator will mentor, through their own experience, parents navigating through the world of foster care.

*The Adoptive and Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention (AFPRR) Program in Region 5 is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. For more information about becoming a foster parent, please visit us at [www.fcnp.org](http://www.fcnp.org) or call 1-855-MICH-KIDS.*



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