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“I THINK PEOPLE’S VIEW OF FOSTER PARENTING IS SKEWED. They think of eight bunk beds and low income families,” states Frisco foster parent Meredith Arnold. Meredith and her husband Brandon have been foster parents with the Methodist Children’s Home for the past year and a half. She continues, “Foster parents are teachers, pediatricians, your next door neighbors.”

The Methodist Children’s Home (MCH) has cared for abused and neglected children since 1890. In 1968, the home began its short-term foster care program. The main campus is in Waco, Texas with foster care offices in Lubbock, Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Tyler. MCH focuses on reestablishing a family and works with parents to improve their situation for their child’s eventual return home. MCH does not take custody of the children in its system. Throughout Texas, about 160 children are in the care of MCH’s licensed foster families.

Chris and Tracy King, teachers with Frisco ISD, are new to the foster care system and received their first long-term placement in June. They wanted to show children from unstable backgrounds what a normal home feels like. The Kings came upon their decision after they settled in a house and had a child of their own. “You put your heart out on the line not knowing if these kids will ever love you like you love them and you wonder if they will remember the little things in life that will get them through,” Tracy notes. “We want them to know how to share and love.” It took the couple about five months from start to finish to become licensed foster parents through MCH. They first met with the director at the Dallas office and took classes designed for foster parents and first aid training. They filled out the needed paperwork regarding their parental and family

beliefs before MCH interviewed family and friends. After careful screening, a family is approved for child placement.

Once the children are placed with a foster family, they remain until they can be reunited with their family. Unemployment, drug addiction, and family issues all contribute to the upheaval of a once stable and familiar family life. MCH temporarily cares for children while parents find jobs, housing and get their lives back on track. When family life and a child’s physical and mental health is

in question, families can find a safe haven and temporary assistance through the MCH foster care program knowing that superior foster parents are caring for their children in a safe and loving environment.

John and Karis Gray are long-term foster parents in the Frisco area. Since August 2000, the Gray family has cared for more than 20 children. Some for a few days; others for a few years. The couple currently has three foster children in their care as well as their biological daughters, ages eight and thirteen. The Gray’s began fostering after considering adoption. “I can’t encourage you enough to do it. We have such a shortage of



John and Karis Gray and family.

photo by Chris Johnson

frisco foster families offer safe haven

by dawn morton

great families and such a huge need,” Karis explains. “The greatest joy I take from foster parenting is knowing that I have taught children to love and that they can be loved unconditionally.”

When speaking to these families, you sense their heart, their love, and their joy for these children. You also sense the hardest part of foster parenting: letting them go.

The foster families in the Frisco area are a valuable resource. They are transforming the lives of countless children and keeping families together. If you are interested in learning more about foster parenting, please contact The Methodist Children’s Home at 972-480-8772.

Dawn Morton is a freelance writer living in Plano.