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Role model foster parents recognized

Arapahoe County presents awards to two deserving foster parents

Aurora, Colo. --- As you enter Larry Pollard's home you're transported into a dense jungle of robust and thriving plants. He loves his plants, just like he does his children. Pollard currently fosters four youth and has adopted two of his former foster children.

"I had a great childhood," recalled Pollard. "I wanted to give back and provide kids less fortunate with the same opportunities. That's why I'm a foster parent."

Pollard is patient, caring and has a knack for working with adolescent males. He serves as a role model to teens and works hard to involve them in positive activities. Pollard is well known for playing an important part in reunifying children with their biological parents.

"Larry creates a family environment, and even after the children return to their parents, they keep in touch and he continues to mentor them," said Veronica Reynoso, Arapahoe County caseworker.

A few miles away, Debra Lewis, another Arapahoe County foster parent, does what she loves best. Lewis specializes in providing care to the County's most difficult children, parenting severely developmentally-delayed children who are often also non-verbal, mentally disabled or have physical handicaps.

"I have six kids," said Lewis. "I don't need to explain that I have two biological children and four foster children. We are a family and they are all my children."

Lewis challenges her children to achieve their fullest potential, an opportunity that many others might not think was available to developmentally-disabled kids. Her ability to decipher their behaviors and meet their needs is remarkable.

"It never ceases to amaze me how in tune Debra is with her boys' needs," said Deneen Kelly, Arapahoe County caseworker. "Her home is full and busy, yet the atmosphere is always peaceful and calm."

On May 23, Larry Pollard and Debra Lewis were recognized as Arapahoe County's Foster Parents of the Year. As role model foster parents, both share a caring commitment to each child who enters their home.

Arapahoe County Commissioners Pat Noonan and Frank Weddig and Human Services Division Manager Angela Lytle visited with Pollard and Lewis and presented them with Foster Parent of the Year awards for their outstanding work helping the County's abused and neglected children.

May is National Foster Care Month. Throughout the month, Arapahoe County will celebrate and recognize the loving, caring adults who are making a positive difference in the lives of children and youth in foster care. These parents have a special gift for supporting and unconditionally loving someone else's child.

The County hosts an orientation each month for anyone interested in joining the Arapahoe County Embrace a Life foster program. The orientation is free and begins the first Tuesday of every month. Call 303-636-1KID for more information.

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