

## Adoption from Foster Care: A Journey of Love

Matt & Ryan knew early on in their relationship that they wanted to adopt. As a social worker and teacher respectively, they recognized the desperate need for foster and adoptive parents. The biggest questions for them were “when” and “how many.”

Matt & Ryan connected with our Bright Futures Adoption Center in 2019, first meeting with Bright Futures' Director, Karen Cheyney. They had begun considering sibling pairs and learned about a potential match with Angel and Zavion in 2020. “What caught our attention most were our common interests, including video games and sports,” Ryan recalled. “We each felt like we could find common ground with the boys and connect in a meaningful way.”

After an initial virtual meeting, the four had their first in-person get-together at a park familiar to the boys. It happened to be Angel's birthday that day, so Matt & Ryan brought a cake. They also had planned a few activities, including soccer, Frisbee and Uno. Nonetheless, they were anxious when they first arrived. “What if they don't like us in person or don't want to take part in the activities with us?” Matt & Ryan worried. On the contrary, the four had fun getting to know one another, and the groundwork was laid for their developing relationships.

*Bright Futures Adoption Center, a program of RFK Community Alliance, is committed to helping families adopt sibling groups and older children from foster care. These children are often the hardest to place and the most in need of permanent, loving families. With older children, adoptive parents find themselves going back in time to help children have experiences they missed when they were younger (the first trip to the beach, first visit from the tooth fairy), while at the same time preparing them quickly to meet the challenges of older childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. With siblings, they also adapt to having two or more children at different developmental stages and with different memories or experiences in their first family.*

*The road is not easy, but we are amazed and moved by what the commitment and stability of family can give to children like Angel and Zavion, and the love and joy these children bring to the families they join. To learn more about adoption from foster care, please visit: <https://brightfuturesadoption.org>.*

Matt & Ryan recognized that a structured environment would be important for the boys. They also wanted them to engage in activities that would support their physical and mental health. Angel took up karate and quickly progressed from white, to yellow, to orange belt. Zavion joined the Cub Scouts, quickly made friends in his den, and found out about a soccer league he could join where he could spend more time with them.

Over the past year and a half that they've been together, they've grown into a family. After a couple of months, Zavion began using Matt & Ryan's last name and calling them Daddy and Dad respectively. (Matt is sillier than Ryan, according to Zavion, so he gets called Daddy.) For his part, Angel came to wrap his arms around Matt & Ryan's necks or shoulders when talking with them and more recently began leaving notes for them signed “Love, Angel.”

Matt & Ryan summed up their journey this way: “Bringing the boys into our family has been simultaneously the most stressful, most challenging, and yet the most rewarding thing we've ever done. It's hard to remember what life was like before they moved in.”

The Anderson Family



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Bright Futures  
Adoption Center placed

**36 foster children**  
ranging in age from newborn to  
15 years old, in loving, adoptive  
forever homes, including:

**13 sibling groups**  
of two; and

**10 single children**  
including one reunited  
with a sibling.

Last year, there were  
approximately  
**3,300 children**  
in the Massachusetts  
foster care system with  
a goal of adoption.

Source: DCF