

# Senator Harry Reid Celebrates Family Services' Foster Parent Champions as Angels in Adoption

Former U.S. Sen. Harry Reid celebrated the Clark County Department of Family Services' Foster Parent Champion Program as a 2016 Angels in Adoption awardee for their outstanding advocacy of foster care issues and their mentoring and leadership of licensed foster parents and relative caregivers.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI), which orchestrates the Angels in Adoption® Program, honored the Foster Parent Champions at an awards ceremony on September 20 and gala on September 21 in Washington, D.C.

Clark County's Foster Parent Champion Program has made more than 4,000 mentoring phone calls to licensed foster parents, relative caregivers and fictive kin caregivers since July 1, 2014 to offer support, guidance and encouragement. This number does not account for the number of referrals, surveys, face-to-face discussions at local events and the number of emails and phone calls that are placed every day to this program.

The Foster Parent Champion Program's motto is Making Caregivers' Lives Easier and each member of the team has "been there and done that." As licensed foster and adoptive parents themselves, the Champions are able to empathize and provide answers and solutions that work to caregivers who are stressed out and confused about the system.

Whether it's a basic question about how the foster care system works, what to expect in court, how to work with a case manager, or how to manage a child's behaviors, the Champions are always ready to lend a hand and guide caregivers in their foster care journey. With 90 children between them (half are adopted!), the Foster Parent Champions truly have the experience and knowledge to answer just about any question!

Their kindness and compassion is not only evident in the contact they have with caregivers; it extends to their professional relationships with case managers, investigators and other child welfare team members. They are able to help professionals understand the foster parents' point-of-view and ensure that decisions are always based on what is in the best interest of the children in care.

Then, after a nine-hour shift helping others, they go home to their families, to make sure the laundry is clean, the homework is done and that everyone has eaten! They truly are the example of quality caregivers we strive to be.

The Angels in Adoption Program is CCAI's signature public awareness event and provides an opportunity for all members of the U.S. Congress to honor the good work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans in the United States and abroad. This year, more than 140 "Angels" are being honored through the Angels in Adoption Program.

The Angels in Adoption Program was established in 1999 as a Congressional press conference to honor outstanding individuals. Since then, the program has developed into a yearlong public awareness campaign, culminating in an extraordinary awards gala and celebration in Washington, D.C.

