

# Community Partner Spotlight: Foster Kinship



“September is National Kinship Care month,” says Alison Caliendo. “We hope to raise awareness of how much kinship families do for children and enlist the community to support kinship caregivers work to keep children with family when they can’t be with their parents. By helping to ‘keep home in the family’ for vulnerable children, we envision a safe and healthy childhood for all children in kinship care.”

Alison Caliendo established Foster Kinship as a nonprofit organization in 2011 after she saw the difficulties relatives faced compared with her experience as a traditional foster parent. Once she learned there were over 31,000 Nevadan children living with relative caregivers\*, an arrangement known as kinship care, Allison founded Foster Kinship with a mission to strengthen the kinship caregivers’ capacity to provide safe, permanent, and nurturing homes for children.

\* <http://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/State%20Fact%20Sheets/Grandfamilies-Fact-Sheet-Nevada.pdf>

“One of the important things to understand about kinship care is that it is both intervention and prevention,” Alison Caliendo states. “What most people might not realize is that the majority of relative caregivers keep children out of the traditional foster care system- 90% of children raised by relatives do not have child welfare involvement. But all caregivers can face financial difficulties, legal issues, a child's exposure to adverse childhood experiences, their own health problems, lack of knowledge of social resources, isolation from other family members, and the trauma that precipitated their role as a caregiver. One of our goals is to ensure an equitable system for all children who can't be with their parents.”





Foster Kinship provides two free programs for kinship caregivers: [Kinship Navigator Services](#) and [Child Welfare Training](#). Foster Kinship also advocates for all kinship families to receive access to services and improved caregiving options through training, partnerships and advocacy. Nationally recognized, Foster Kinship is the only non-profit organization in Nevada exclusively serving kinship children and families. Since its inception, Foster Kinship has proudly served over 3,275 children and 2,045 kinship families across Southern Nevada. As part of their work, Foster Kinship partners with DFS to provide kinship information sessions, licensing classes, and navigation services for families with child welfare involved children.

“At Foster Kinship, we believe when children can’t be with their parents, they should be with their family when possible, and that family should be supported,” says Nani Garrett, the Kinship Navigator Manager of Foster Kinship. She explains, “Our kinship navigator program offers families an efficient, effective, supportive solution; ensuring vulnerable children remain with family and are provided in safe, permanent, and nurturing homes.”



Foster Kinship's programs are designed to meet goals through the following objectives:

- Legal Status: Families are given tools to increase the stability of the placement through legal means such as guardianship, kinship licensing, or adoption.
- Financial Resources: Families are assisted with applications for financial support and may be eligible for emergency resources from Foster Kinship.
- Community Connection: Families are connected with resources to increase knowledge of and access to supportive programs.
- Emotional Support: Families have access to free support groups, caregiver education classes, and family events with other kinship families.



Alison notes, "Foster Kinship can't do this all alone, and we are so thankful for our partnership with Clark County DFS, our community partners, and the kinship families that do this amazing work. We are always looking for partners who can help us with food, diapers, and other resources for families. If anyone wants to learn more or get involved, we would love to talk!"

To learn more about Foster Kinship, visit [www.FosterKinship.org](http://www.FosterKinship.org) or call (702) 546-9988.

#### Client Testimonials

"This journey for our family has been a rocky experience since 2014 with the birth of my twin grandsons. I had no idea Foster Kinship existed. The recent placement of my granddaughter in June 2017 has not been as turbulent because of so much support provided by Foster Kinship. I can get numerous resources, advice and knowledge from this team. They are a blessing to the household!"- Jeanetta C.

“I am a kinship caregiver who is totally grateful for Foster Kinship and all that they have done to help me with getting my Foster Care license. Their organization and staff introduced to me resources that I didn’t even know were available and I have been a Kinship Foster parent on and off for 13 years. My children and I thank you so much for all you have done and always will be extremely appreciative for your assistance.”- Hope J.



“I first learned about Foster Kinship through my Emergency Case worker when my 4 nieces were removed from my sister’s care. They have been with me every step of the way. They helped me with obstacles that I never knew I had to go through from licensing to food assistance to back to school events for the kids. Not only that but moral support. They always help with whatever they can no matter the circumstances. It’s like a one stop shop for kinship fostering. The ladies are always really nice and if they don’t know at that moment they will find out and

call you back. With all the different case workers we encountered through this process it puts me at ease knowing that they are the only constant people basically in our lives." - Monica D.

**Alison Caliendo, M.A.**  
**Executive Director, Foster Kinship**

[Need Help? Try our Kinship Resource Locator Tool!](#)  
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