

*Elisabeth and Matt:*

# *A Safe Haven*



**In 2021, Elisabeth and Matt became Treatment Foster Parents with Children's Aid and Family Services. Treatment foster care is a short-term placement — generally nine months to a year — designed to provide safe and nurturing care to a child or teen in a more structured home environment than typical foster care.**

**Sadly, the children in our care have generally endured severe neglect, abuse, trauma, and several family placements at a heartbreakingly young age. As a result, they may struggle with their emotions and behavior and need stability, consistency, and a strong foundation to help them heal. Parents such as Elisabeth and Matt work with our Treatment Home foster care team to provide a nurturing and safe environment. Here is their story:**

Elisabeth and Matt both work in helping professions: she is a special education teacher and Matt is a mental health clinician. During her career, Elisabeth worked with children who had difficult family lives and often “wished I could bring them home and

*Faces blurred to protect child's identity.*

give them a stable home environment.” Matt adds, “We help people in our professional lives but felt we could do more personally.”

After purchasing their home, and having more room for a child, they began researching foster care agencies. They found Children's Aid and Family Services and attended an information session. “We learned this is therapeutic foster care and would require a higher level of preparation and commitment from us,” says Elisabeth.

After attending comprehensive agency training to help understand the children and how to work



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# CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES

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with them, and becoming licensed by the state of NJ — an intensive process that took nine months — 9-year-old Aaron was placed in their home. Aaron’s parents struggled with addiction, and he endured severe neglect and trauma. Aaron needed to feel safe and learn to live in a family.

“Children such as Aaron, who have gone through so much instability and neglect, need to learn the basics that parents teach their children,” says Marcia Fisher, Administrator of Adoption & Permanency Services. “Elisabeth and Matt are wonderful foster parents, full of patience and creativity. They were strong role models for Aaron, teaching him values, expectations, and how healthy families function as well as working with him on his educational needs.”

For the nine months he was in their care, Aaron made strides. “When he first came to our home he had nightmares and trouble sleeping,” says Matt. “Elisabeth and I created a safe environment for him,

and after a while, he was sleeping well and doing better in school. He learned to ride a bike, played soccer for the first time, and made friends with the kids in the neighborhood. He grew while he was with us.”

Adds Elisabeth, “Being a foster parent to a child with complex trauma has its challenges and the wrap-around services that Children’s Aid provides, such as therapy, case management, monthly training, and communication and support are very helpful. These children need more than typical children do but by working together, we make an impact and change their lives.”



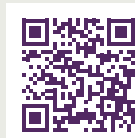
Elisabeth, Matt and Aaron having fun!

**Your donation helps us find, train and support caring foster parents such as Elisabeth and Matt who play a key role in helping a child work through trauma.**

Your gift also provides recreational activities which help a child develop confidence, self-esteem, and improve social skills. While in our care, Aaron had first-time experiences many of us take for granted, such as swimming lessons, basketball camp, and summer camp because of generous donors like you.

*Together, we are changing lives.*

*Please give as generously as you can using the enclosed envelope or online at [www.cafsnj.org](http://www.cafsnj.org).*



*Thank You!*