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**Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) Honors Foster Parent,  
Willie Chess as Elevate and Celebrate Awardee**

**NEW ORLEANS** — The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) of the Youth Law Center proudly announces Willie Chess of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, as one of its distinguished Elevate and Celebrate Awardees for 2023. The award recognizes Mr. Chess for his exceptional dedication to foster care advocacy and his outstanding contributions to the well-being of children and youth in the community.

Willie Chess, a 16-year veteran of the Jefferson Parish Police Department, has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to fostering. Recognizing the needs in his community, Willie embarked on a journey to provide love, support, and stability to children in foster care. His remarkable efforts have not gone unnoticed.

"My community needed more foster parents who look like me and understand the kids in the community," said Mr. Chess, reflecting on his motivation. "As a single black man, I saw an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of these children by providing a loving and supportive home environment."

Jasmine Proctor, Willie's caseworker, nominated him for the Elevate and Celebrate Award. In her endorsement, Proctor expressed, "Willie Chess is an exceptional foster parent who goes above and beyond to make a positive impact on the lives of the children he fosters. His commitment to their well-being and his collaborative approach with birth parents are truly commendable."

Mr. Chess, now a proud adoptive father of two, continues to foster teenage boys. His unique approach to parenting aligns with QPI's philosophy, emphasizing the importance of building positive relationships and working collaboratively with birth parents for the benefit of the children.

"When I was being licensed, my home was checked for fire extinguishers and other appropriate measures, but QPI understands the need to ensure love and relationships; those are the things most important," he remarked, highlighting the significance of emotional well-being in a child's life.

In a statement, Willie further shared his thoughts on the QPI approach, saying, "QPI has allowed me to foster in a way that matches the needs of the children. Kids need love and parenting the most. I didn't want to be someone seen as taking someone's kids away, but through the QPI approach, I'm able to parent with birth parents and help children get back home when possible."

The QPI, launched in 2008 in Florida and California and now spanning more than 80 jurisdictions in 10 states, believes in the transformative power of excellent parenting and positive relationships for children and youth in foster care. The Youth Law Center, a national legal advocacy organization based in San Francisco, spearheads the Quality Parenting Initiative.

For more information about QPI, please visit [www.qpi4kids.org](http://www.qpi4kids.org). For media inquiries or to schedule an interview, please contact Terry Harrak at 202-297-4687 or [tharrak@qpiylc.org](mailto:tharrak@qpiylc.org).

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