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Nevada Foster Parent Honored for Transforming Foster Care Through a Powerful Co-Parenting Partnership

Washoe County, Nevada — At a time when national headlines too often focus on the crises in foster care, one Nevada caregiver is demonstrating what children truly need to heal and thrive: loving relationships, partnership among adults, and a system that sees families as essential to children's well-being.

The Youth Law Center's Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) has named longtime foster parent Yvette Clark a 2025 Elevate & Celebrate Honoree for her extraordinary 20+ years of caregiving and her steadfast belief in a core developmental principle: children do better when the adults who love them are connected, collaborative, and focused on their healing. QPI is a national movement that centers children and youth by ensuring they receive excellent, nurturing parenting and remain deeply connected to their families and communities.

Yvette models these values every day. Over two decades, she has welcomed more than 65 children into her home—not by standing apart from their families, but by standing *with* them. She has built intentional partnerships with birth parents grounded in dignity, respect, and the shared belief that children should feel surrounded by love rather than caught in conflict.

A Co-Parenting Partnership That Changed a Child's Story

When Yvette first met the birth parent of a young child placed in her care, both arrived nervous and unsure. Within two visits, their relationship transformed. They texted daily, shared updates, and aligned around the child's routines and needs. Soon they were celebrating milestones together, birthdays, park days, holidays, creating a sense of continuity that research shows is critical for children experiencing family separation.

The birth parent remembers those early encounters vividly:

"It was scary at first to meet the person caring for my child. But Yvette was patient with me. She showed me that my son could feel safe with her and still stay connected to me."

For the child, this partnership meant stability and emotional safety. For the parent, it meant dignity and hope. For the system, it demonstrated the direction foster care must move: toward relationships, not replacements.

Research Affirms What Yvette Lives Every Day

Decades of developmental science show that children rely on secure, loving relationships to heal from trauma and build resilience. QPI has spent years helping systems turn that science into practice, and research confirms the impact.

A 2022 evaluation found that the QPI approach strengthens communication, improves transitions, and enhances the relationship between birth and foster parents. In a 2024 article examining QPI's stakeholder-driven model, Dr. Ericka Lewis concluded:

“By centering the needs of children and their birth families, QPI shifts power away from agency-based professionals toward foster parents to improve outcomes for children... The success of this approach has broad implications for child welfare reform.”

A Community Built on Comfort, Communication, and Connection

Yvette's practice reflects Washoe County's growing commitment to QPI principles, including comfort calls, shared parenting, collaborative transitions, and consistent communication. QPI has led national efforts to make comfort calls a standard part of foster care because a simple, compassionate phone call between caregivers and birth parents at placement can ease a child's fear, set the tone for partnership, and dramatically improve stability. Yvette has seen this firsthand.

“When children see their foster parent and birth parent getting along, they relax. They feel secure. Everything in the case goes better.”

Every child who enters her home hears the same message: *“Your parents love you. I'm your TT - someone else who loves you too.”* Her home is known for its structure, warmth, and joyful routines, from backyard campouts to nature walks - all of which help children feel grounded during one of the hardest chapters of their lives.

Changing the Story for Families and for the System

The birth parent, who spent time in foster care as a child, shared how transformative the experience was: *“I never expected to feel included—in outings, holidays, the little everyday moments. Yvette didn't replace me. She supported me. She helped me feel like we could love and co-parent my child together.”* Her words underscore a truth often overlooked in public narratives: when foster parents, birth parents, and systems work together, children thrive.

Yvette's leadership shows what is possible when systems embrace QPI's vision - a future where families are partners, children remain connected to their roots, and foster care becomes a place of healing rather than separation.

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The Youth Law Center (YLC) is a non-profit law firm that advocates to transform foster care and juvenile justice systems across the nation so that every child and youth can thrive. The Youth Law Center leads the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI), a national movement spanning more than 75 sites and nearly 1,000 QPI Champions committed to ensuring that every child in foster care receives excellent parenting and remains connected to the people who love them.. www.YLC.org.

