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The Magic of Adoption Leads to Happiness for the Jackson Family

Mount Union, PA – Glenda Jackson's compassionate nature shines through in her roles as a devoted mother of two, proud grandmother of seven, and dedicated owner of a childcare center.

Despite nearing retirement, her caregiving instincts and unwavering faith in God compelled her to open her home and her heart to provide love and stability to three young siblings in need.

Glenda, 58, along with her husband, Rodney, 59, of Mount Union, recently adopted Parker, 7, Ariel, 6, and Samuel, 3, who entered the Adelphoi system in great need of socialization.

"A lot of people asked 'why are you doing this? You're not spring chickens anymore,'" she laughed. "People just don't understand."

Adelphoi first reached out to the Jacksons in late 2021 in regard to the siblings. A caseworker informed her that unless a family capable of accommodating all three children could be found, they would have to be separated.

"I said, 'God, please show me, tell me, what to do. I can't do this without your consent.' He said 'Glenda, you can do this.' I called back and said we would take them."

When the three children arrived at the Jackson home in December of that year, Glenda's heart ached. Having come from a home that was marred by substance abuse, the siblings lacked basic life skills.

"When they arrived, they were scared, crying and hugging each other. It was heartbreaking," she recalled. "These kids were in a house where they didn't see civilization. Parker didn't go to school, so the school turned him in.

"Those kids were so dirty," she continued, as her voice cracked with emotion. "I had to throw away the clothes they came with. They were full of mildew. They ate plates and plates of food. Heaping plates of food. And they ate with their fingers. They didn't even know how to use silverware or how to walk right in their shoes since they didn't wear shoes at home. Their teeth

were rotten. They didn't know what salt was and they didn't know what a restaurant was. They were just so secluded. They had no interaction with humans."

Thanks to the love, patience and nurturing provided by the Jacksons, the trio began to thrive. By the time Parker returned to school, he had already learned how to write his name and how to eat with a fork and spoon.

"They are three amazing little children," she praised. "These kids love us as much as we love them. They will grow up to be wonderful people."

Prior to welcoming the youngsters into their family, Glenda already had experience with fostering, having cared for four other children in the past.

However, it was Glenda's own childhood experiences that played a significant role in shaping her decision to become a foster parent. Growing up, she and her two sisters were taken in by their grandparents, who, despite already having 15 children of their own, opened their hearts and home to them.

"My grandmother and grandfather raised me and they didn't have to," she stated, noting that life came full circle when she later cared for her grandmother in her advanced age. "The love they showed me was amazing. That's why I became a caretaker— my grandmother was my caretaker."

While she always knew she would continue to foster, she admitted that she never expected to adopt.

"I'm retiring in four years," Glenda said. "I could say I've had enough, but here I am adopting three kids that I love with all of my heart. I love being a mom, I can't even imagine it being just me and Rodney for the rest of our lives," she laughed.

With a deep sense of family values, Glenda goes above and beyond in her role as a childcare provider, considering her clients as part of her own family. She expressed her love of cooking, cleaning, organizing family dinners and vacations.

One vacation in particular holds a special place in her heart.

In January of 2023, the Jacksons embarked on a trip to Walt Disney World. Prior to one of the shows, the attendees were asked if they were commemorating a special occasion. Aware of their impending adoption of the children, Glenda and Rodney informed the staff that they were celebrating the adoption.

To their surprise, they were designated as the Family of the Day. The Disney cast members escorted them through a back exit, where they were greeted by the entire show's participants. Among them was a young gentleman, who was overcome with emotions and began to cry. He

revealed that he, too, had been adopted and mentioned that he grew up as a black child in a white family.

Given Glenda's white ethnicity and Rodney's black ethnicity, he felt a shared connection to the family.

"The cast members told us that they wanted to know when the kids were officially adopted, so we can't wait to tell them when we go back this year.

"If anybody is thinking about fostering, they should try it," urged Glenda. "It has been the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my entire life. I can't imagine life without these kids. God has given me so much peace by having them."

"It's not easy being a foster parent sometimes, but Adelphoi has been beyond wonderful. I don't even have the words to describe it," she said. They are there for you."

For more information about how to adopt or foster with Adelphoi, please visit <https://www.adelphoi.org/services/foster-adopt/> or call 1-800-KID-5928.

Headquartered in Latrobe, Adelphoi offers outcome-based solutions for abused, neglected, delinquent and other at-risk children and their families through a continuum of treatment and education services that provide a foundation of hope for the future. Since its founding in 1971, Adelphoi has served over 60,000 at-risk youth and families.

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Photo: The Jackson Family Visiting Walt Disney World in January 2023