

“Life can be wonderful if you have family who love you.”



Meet the Karge-Moritz Family Senator Merkley

Thirteen-year-old twins Alexis (Lexi) and Christian (Chris) were 8 years old when they arrived home to their dads, Craig Moritz and Vincent Karge. Over the previous seven years, they had been moved into and out of *five* different foster homes. Asked what being adopted has meant to them, the two agree, “Adoption means that we finally found our forever family, who loves us unconditionally.”

As a same sex couple with a 20 year committed relationship, Craig and Vincent felt that adoption was the right option for them to start a family. Their decision was strengthened by their awareness of the need for parents for older children and by Craig’s positive personal experience – his family had adopted him as an infant through Catholic Charities. Pre-adoption life was not always pleasant for Lexi and Chris. Both had been impacted by prenatal drug exposure. In addition, the two experienced domestic violence and other traumas. Fortunately they found solace in each other. Part of their success story is that they were never separated in the foster care system. They have a very close bond.

Their dads have worked diligently to locate needed services to help their son and daughter recover and progress. “We have been in family counseling for five years now addressing all the damage done to them by their birth parents and a few of the foster homes. Mental Health counseling has been a critical component toward helping them put their traumas behind them.”

Today Lexi and Chris are living the safe and healthy life all children deserve. They are well-adjusted, academically-focused, and well-liked by peers. Sociable, fashion-conscious Lexi is “strong willed with a great personality and a huge heart.” She loves animals and has a gift with winning their trust. Kind, sensitive, and curious, Chris is “a typical rough and tumble boy.” Lacrosse and hip-hop dancing top his list of favorite activities.

Together with their dads, Lexi and Chris are building a new repertoire of positive experiences. A trip to Disneyland within the first year of their arrival remains a favorite memory. The twins report, “It was so exciting to stay at a hotel within the park and to have our Dads there with us.” The two remember that trip as the first time they truly understood, with great relief, that Craig and Vincent would be their parents from then on, and that all the moves into different homes with different caretakers were finally over.

Craig and Vincent appreciate the “outstanding efforts” of their DHS (Dept. of Human Resources) caseworkers. They respectfully offer two suggestions to policy-makers: First, provide better screening and certification requirements for foster families. Second, re-evaluate policy regarding the return of children to birth family after removal by DHS, in order to prevent further harm to children.