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## News & Media

### Good for You: Nancy and Ray Askew

#### Foster parents open home to a foster child's family during Irma/demonstrate best in co-parenting

**Palm City** - Foster care is not orphan care.

Palm City resident Nancy Askew should know. She and her husband, Ray, have been foster parents for eight years and to 19 children.

"These children have families," Ms. Askew said, in between moments comforting an infant in her home and gently explaining to her two-year-old sister why "we don't throw things."

Ms. Askew, a devoted Christian and mother of three adult children and three adopted children, said it's her job as a foster mom to help them get home - safe, sound and with a stronger connection to their parents.

It's a concept embraced in recent years by child-welfare professionals, therapists and caregivers alike - the idea that a foster parent can work together - or co-parent - with a child's biological parent to reduce trauma and help ensure a smooth transition from one home to the other.

The Askew Family demonstrated the best of co-parenting immediately following Hurricane Irma, when they invited a mother and her four children to stay with them until the power in their own home was restored.

One of those children - 3-year-old Nancy - had lived with the Askews for more than a year while her mother struggled with and then beat an alcohol addiction.

After the storm, they stayed together in the Askew's fully-powered, air-conditioned home for five days. And when they returned to their own home, Ms. Askew helped replace food that had started to spoil in the refrigerator.



Mrs. Askew plays with two children who are living in foster care at her home.

The Askew's journey into co-parenting began the day that little Nancy - then only 16 months old - came to live with them.

"I wasn't always sure about it," Ms. Askew said. "But I remember how lost her mother was those first two weeks - she didn't know where her kids were, she didn't know if they were changing schools, or if they would see one another - she was just lost," she said.

"I told her, 'We're going to go through this together.'"

The process took about 18 months, but Nancy's mom pulled her life together, overcame her addiction and eventually reunited with her children.

Ms. Askew still sees Nancy and her mother regularly, babysitting when asked and providing the support system that many people involved with the dependency system lack.

"Foster care is the hardest job we've ever loved," she said. "The ultimate goal is to get these children back home, and if you can help someone better understand their child then you create a better transition and a safer home for everyone."

For more information on becoming a foster parent [click here](#).

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