

## Safe Families of Cincinnati Host Family Statement

Kevin and Nona Peyton  
120 Vista Ridge Drive  
South Lebanon, OH 45065

June 25, 2019

Good Morning, our names are Kevin and Nona Peyton. We live in South Lebanon, Ohio, just north of Cincinnati. Together we lead an organization named Joshua's Place. Joshua's Place ([www.joshuasplace.cc](http://www.joshuasplace.cc)) is a community outreach organization that exists to help struggling families overcome the barriers in their lives that cause instability. Our original location is in the Kings School District and we now have a location in the Little Miami School District and next fall will be in the Lebanon and Mason School Districts. Our focus is on Adult Development, Child Engagement and Addiction Recovery. We are a faith-based organization serving over a thousand individuals each month and supported by local churches and over 250 volunteers.

We brought the services of Safe Families of Cincinnati to Joshua's Place and became a host family ourselves five years ago. In our work we see first hand the need for this type of support and wanted to be personally invested. Since starting we have had fourteen hostings. These have ranged in time spans of 3 days to nine months. Most of the children we have personally hosted come from families within our community, many that we knew prior to the hosting.

We have learned that many times families avoid county Children's Protection Services and allow their children to remain in unsafe or unhealthy environments out of an irrational fear of losing custody. The voluntary nature of Safe Families provides assurance for those families that they maintain their parental rights while working through the presenting issue(s) they are facing. While the children stay in our home the parent is given a personal coach that works with them directly to help resolve their temporary crisis and towards reunification. Visitation is arranged to help ease the transitions for both parent and children.

To ensure we were properly prepared and vetted to host we attended several classes, had an in-home inspection and were background checked. In our training we learn from writers/researchers like Ruby Payne (*A Framework for Understanding Poverty*) and The Chalmers Center (*When Helping Hurts*). We're also trained in topics related to Trauma Informed Care, knowing that most of the kids we connect with are coming from hard places. This training prepares volunteers in methods of communications and engagement recognizing the complexity of the situation when children are hosted. Safe Family Staff and volunteer leaders work directly with every Host Family to make sure their home is safe and ready to receive a child at any age. There is a full wrap-around service that is mobilized to make sure Host Families have equipment like car seats, baby cribs, diapers and other age appropriate supplies when needed.

It is our goal as a host family to not only provide a short term stay but to build relationships with the families we host. We continue to connect with most of the children and parents we have hosted over the years. The voluntary nature of Safe Families (volunteer host families/coaches and voluntary placements) allow for relationships to be built in what otherwise could be adversarial circumstances. A

trust and bond is often built between the families that transcends the socio-economic barrier that had previously kept them apart. This connection allows us to be a resource to families long after the hosting ends.

Families that utilize Safe Families as a resource are usually impacted by poverty or addiction and often both. We know that poverty and addiction can be cyclical and generational, meaning the way out is complex and the time horizon is long. It is for this reason that we believe The Local Church, through organizations like Safe Families, is well suited to bring support to these situations. We (the Church) possess a relational capacity, human resource and commitment to time that allows us to bring lasting help and change in our communities. Nona and I have seen firsthand the impact this on the children and families we have hosted.