

“Living the Good Life”



In the spirit of the old African proverb declaring, "It takes a village to raise a child," Myrlande Alexis embodies the profound truth in this saying.

This timeless adage underscores the belief that a community's collective involvement is indispensable when nurturing and guiding a child to flourish in a supportive environment.

While residing in Haiti, Myrlande's compassionate spirit and tender heart have guided her to embrace the roles of foster parent and adoptive guardian since her late teens.

She then moved to the United States, where Myrlande's extraordinary commitment continued as she attended nursing school and raised a biological daughter and her godchild. Inspired by her mom, who embraces every child like a grandmother, Myrlande found herself contemplating fostering after she survived breast cancer, a divorce, and her children leaving for college, leaving her with an empty nest.

Myrlande reflected on a conversation she had with her daughter, who was in college at the time. "You'd be great, Mom," her daughter said, adding, "You have so much love to share," Myrlande called to inquire about fostering the next day and attended an informational session. She has been fostering medically complex children for the past six years, adopting a child through foster care in 2020.

Her dedication has left an unforgettable mark on the lives of numerous medically complex children she has fostered and adopted. Myrlande's unwavering commitment became even more profound when her story intertwined with Jiji, a medically complex child who was 12 years old at the time of placement.



Myrlande shared that Jiji tested her commitment by presenting various behavioral challenges. Throughout this journey, trust formed in multiple stages, with the first significant step occurring when Jiji was asked to address Myrlande as "Tati" and later progressed to "Mommy." This evolution speaks to the resilience of their bond and highlights the depth of trust and connection that developed between Myrlande and Jiji over time.

Myrlande fondly recalls an emotional moment during a home visit with Jiji's social worker. Seated together at the dining room table, Jiji, now thirteen years old, looked at Myrlande and asked if she would adopt her. She then turned to Alexis' biological daughter and asked: "Can your mom please adopt me?" This profoundly emotional moment resonates vividly in Myrlande's memory, emphasizing the certainty and heartfelt desire Jiji expressed in wanting to become a cherished part of Myrlande's family.



The significance of this request further solidifies the profound connection and sense of belonging that has blossomed between them. The adoption process took three years due to immigration laws and requirements.

Jiji's social worker, Ludy Mingot-Cesar, expresses gratitude to the exceptional team at the Bridgeport DCF office for their support and collaborative efforts with Jiji's medical team at Yale Smilow and the Alexis family. This collaboration resulted in a remarkable outcome for this young lady.

Jiji's family shares her culture and language. "She found a home with a family that was simply made for her," Ludy said. "Jiji is now healthy, she has a great family that loves her, advocates for her and are dedicated to providing her with a forever home."

On October 31, 2023, Jiji was adopted. "It felt amazing," Jiji said, explaining, "I've been waiting a very long time, and it finally happened; now, I'm living the good life!"

Myrlande takes great pride in Jiji, a remarkable 10th-grade student with aspirations to become a pediatrician. Jiji excels at the honors level and is not only a talented hip-hop and ballet dancer but also a guitar player with a passion for drawing.



Expressing admiration for Jiji's accomplishments, Social Worker Mingot-Cesar stated, "I have never felt prouder witnessing this young lady overcome significant adversity, including neglect, life-threatening illness, and abandonment."

Myrlande emphasized her commitment to instilling the belief in all her children that they can achieve anything they set their minds to, fostering an environment where there are no limits to what they can accomplish.

"Family is the most important thing in life," stated Myrlande. This resonates as a guiding principle in her actions, affirming that she lives each day in a way that reflects this profound truth.