

# Keeping Families Together



## Family Snapshot: Linda, Arthur, Rebecca and Alexis

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Linda, Arthur, Rebecca and Alexis faced more challenges than solutions.

A family impacted by serious and persistent mental health issues, recurring homelessness and repeat involvement with the child welfare system, disappointments and dysfunction dictated that authorities take drastic actions that kept parents and children apart.

Prior to living in supportive housing, Linda and Arthur were cycling between homeless periods and also lost parental rights to their first child, Rebecca. The couple stayed together and had another child, Alexis, removed by child welfare representatives right after her birth and placed in foster care as well.

Although determined to raise Alexis, her parents could not satisfy child welfare system requirements until they secured a safe and stable home where they could be reunited with their daughter. Child welfare officials were adamant: Linda and Arthur must be able to provide stability for their infant before she could be released back into their custody. Homeless shelters are no place for small children and Linda and Arthur knew they must find something better for their daughter.

As a homeless couple, the odds were not in their favor and the track record did not bolster their outlook either. Rebecca had spent 1095 days in foster care before parental rights were terminated and Alexis did not fare much better, spending 517 days in foster care from the day she left the hospital.

Fortunately, the couple was found eligible for the Keeping Families Together pilot program and their daughter was returned to them once they were accepted and found stable housing. Today, this family is doing well and Alexis, now pre-school age, lives in a nice apartment and attends school with her peers, enjoying childhood with her family surrounded by a community of love and support.

