



LEAH AND KEVIN NAMED AS SA FOSTER CARER WINNERS

Leah Potter and Kevin Rewell of Elizabeth Downs have been selected as the Foster and Kinship Carer winners in the South Australian finals of the National Carer Awards.

In 2005, Leah and her partner Kevin took on the full time care of two brothers who were in foster care, approaching the age of 18 and needed ongoing support and nurturing.

They have also cared for other children and young people requiring short term or respite care and have continued these relationship where possible.

They work collaboratively with agencies from all sectors and take a care team approach driven by their passion for protection and advocacy

Under the care and guidance of Leah and Kevin, the young people they've supported have grown and transformed into strong, more independent young adults.

During this time, Leah and Keven have become even stronger advocates of foster care and the importance of ensuring every child feels loved, wanted and has a place to belong.

Leah and Kevin model a therapeutic approach to the care they provide; and demonstrate a thorough understanding of attachment theory and the impact of trauma for children and young people in care. They provide a loving, stable, safe and predictable care environment, where they create every opportunity and encouragement for the children to reach their full potential.

Leah and Kevin were nominated by their carer supporter who says they are highly skilled in disability and work hard to ensure the young people in their care receive extra support, advocacy and the opportunity to learn through reflective conversations and non-judgement.

Previously working in the disability sector, Leah had sustained a spinal injury and could not continue working in the role. She said through a two year period of medical intervention, while she regained her mobility, she learnt about foster caring and found this gave her purpose and the inspiration to recover and get back to helping others.

Kevin approaches foster caring with the philosophy of supporting people as well as he can. He has a strong personality with an amazing sense of humour. He is honest and a deep thinker with a very positive approach to caring.

Leah says Kevin has such consistency in his attitudes and care. He continuously re-establishes boundaries and reinforces values in a structured and supportive way and has an ability to tune into the young people to assist them to go forward and progress in their lives.

"It's the hands on care and consistency that really helps these young people. We believe they have grown and matured due to the continuity of care we've been able to provide" she said.

Leah and Kevin have made a significant impact on the young people in their care by facilitating strong community connections like the local rugby club. This has assisted in

building social and interpersonal skills, providing trusted male role modelling and helping them to develop self-esteem through achievement.

The couple have been active in foster carer recruitment also participating in a recent promotional DVD for LWB and they have volunteered their time to support other carers.

Leah says they find great satisfaction in assisting young people to overcome challenges and break down barriers that can be associated with disability and care systems and attitudes.

She said Foster Caring has enriched their lives by allowing them to share their family and experiences.