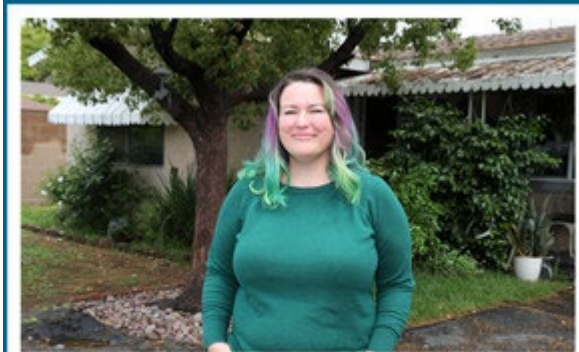




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Foster parent Sunshine Gates provides loving care to medically fragile children and young people in the very home where her grandparents did the same beginning in 1974.

In the 1970s, a couple in the San Gabriel Valley unknowingly made an investment that would profoundly impact their family legacy for decades to come. Empathetic and conscientious people, Royal and Marian Cresap opened their home to medically fragile children who could not safely stay with their own parents.

For nearly 30 years, the husband and wife fostered dozens of children and young people with special needs — all the while modeling a life of service to others for their own family. Granddaughter Sunshine Gates of Covina said being a caretaker and resource parent to those children gave her grandmother deep joy and purpose.

Recognizing how meaningful this calling was to her grandmother and that she too had a deep desire to serve children experiencing

serious medical challenges and emotional trauma, Sunshine came to her grandmother's aid in 2001 when her grandfather's declining health posed a threat to the viability of their ongoing service to children and families.

"Helping my grandmother continue to do this was an easy choice for me," said Sunshine, who today is a resource parent herself to five children with a variety of medical conditions that make it increasingly challenging for social workers to find them permanent homes.

More than 20 years after stepping in to help her grandmother, Sunshine said she has cared for some 50 children and young people in the same home where her grandparents became licensed caregivers in 1974. The home is set up to accommodate wheelchairs and non-ambulatory people. A former emergency medical technician, Sunshine also applies her knowledge and training to care for the children and young people she fosters.

Each young person leaves an indelible impression, no matter the duration of their stay, according to Sunshine. She cites a recent experience involving a resilient cancer survivor who spent the summer with Sunshine before attending college on a full scholarship — a story she often shares to motivate others in her care.

In addition to developing strong bonds with the children, Sunshine said she strives to maintain positive relationships with everyone involved in their lives, including social workers, school district personnel, medical practitioners and, most importantly, their biological families.

"I make every effort to work with the children's parents to teach them how to manage medical care, appointments, and navigating any resources they might need so their family can be reunified whenever possible," she said.

Sunshine calls it a labor of love and an honor to be someone who can offer support and guidance to children who need it the most. A legal guardian to one of her very first foster children — a non-verbal, non-ambulatory



Covina resident Sunshine Gates credits her grandparents for her family's legacy of serving children with special health needs.

toddler with cerebral palsy — Sunshine said, “Being a foster parent is a beautiful thing that more people should do and learn about. Watching my grandparents taught me that this role would almost never be easy, but definitely worth it.”

Sunshine’s son is now almost 21 and looking forward to college.

For information on how to become a resource parent, call 888-811-1121 or visit <https://bit.ly/3de1lxe>.

Report Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect to 800-540-4000

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