

days solid and another put me up against a wall with a knife."

One child they took in was so bad "we bet he wouldn't make it to 21."

Today, that child is a young man with a wife.

"He came back to visit and he was so different.

"He said what kept him going through it all was he always knew we cared.

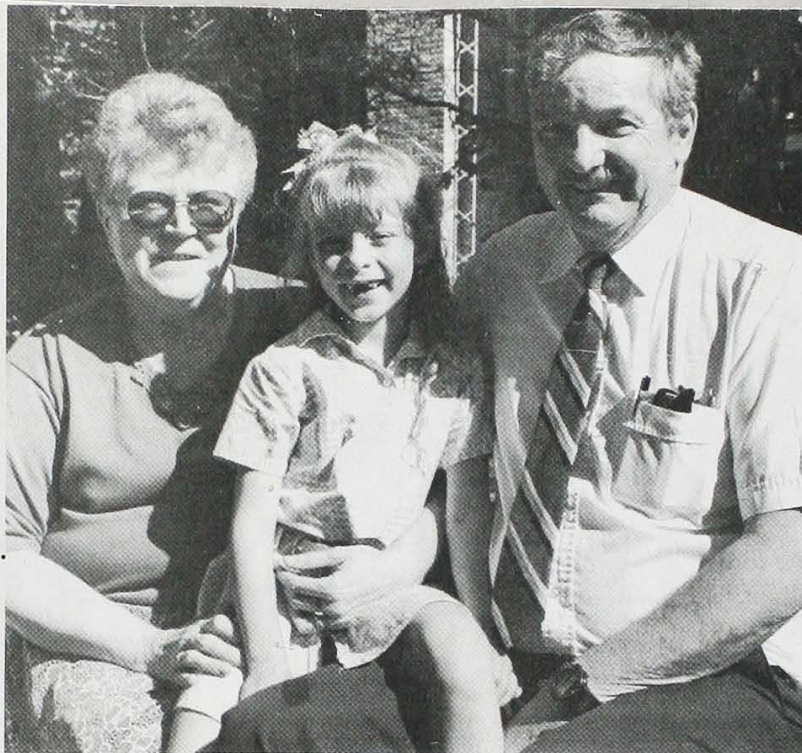
"That makes everything we do worth it."

She said they get through the tough times by "believing all children all beautiful. You have to believe in that."

They've also received a lot of training and "gradually you become experienced so that you can handle the bad situations."

In all their years as foster parents, she said there have only been three children which were "not beautiful. There was nothing positive to hold on to."

Elaine does a lot of assessing for the CAS and "because of that experience I'm good at judging things. One of the resources I have within myself is that I know what I can and can't do."



Elaine and Richard Porter with their "special daughter" Shealene. (Davidson photo)

"Great models for other foster families and the children they foster", says Bruce County CAS

The Bruce County CAS nominated the couple because they are "great models for other foster families and the children they foster."

Being recognized before their peers was a highlight because "they know what it's all about".

They received a standing ovation from 500 people when they accepted their award.

"It was overwhelming," said Elaine. "You know they know there are stories behind all you've done."

Porters one of 12 families nominated for FPSO award

Elaine and Richard Porter's involvement with the Bruce County Children's Aid Society goes beyond fostering children.

Richard is now serving as the President of the Board of Directors for the Children's Aid Society (CAS) and Regional Director of the Foster Parent Society of Ontario (FPSO). He is also a trustee of his church, treasurer for the Walkerton Performing Arts Group and a volunteer driver for the CAS.

He also has his own piano maintenance business and is a full-time driver for Can-Ar of Toronto.

Elaine, who enjoys being a homemaker, has an educational background in business management and human relations. She is currently co-editor of Bruce County's Foster Parent newsletter called 'Because Kids Count'.

The Porters were one of 12 foster families nominated for FPSO's Foster Parent of the Year Award. The awards committee, which had a challenging time selecting a single award winner, chose two candidates for the position. The other recipient was Beatrice Quesnel of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Children's Aid Society.

The FPSO represents approximately 3,600 foster parent families and 37 Children's Aid Societies in Ontario.

A press release from the Bruce County CAS said the Porters "have demonstrated tremendous love and dedication to the children placed in their car. They have met an endless number of challenges through their 25 years of experience and they certainly exemplify the role of foster parents."

Cargill couple receives Foster Parent of the Year Award from FPSO

By Debbie Davidson
WHI Staff

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involved in the Porter foster team.

Elaine and Richard Porter have been making a difference in the lives of children in need for 25 years.

The first child the Cargill couple took in, before they had two children of their own, was the son of a friend who died in a car accident.

"We decided from there to sign up for fostering. We've always loved children."

The Bruce County Children's Aid Society nominated the Porters for the Foster Parent of the Year Award by the Foster Parent Society of Ontario (FPSO). At the Annual FPSO Conference in Kingston on Saturday June 3 the couple received the award. Last year they were recognized by the Canadian Foster Parent Society.

Since 1970 they have fostered approximately 120 children, ranging in age from infants to teenagers. Some have been long-term placements, with the longest being 12 years, and now they are foster grandparents to seven children. The Porters two home-grown children, Shawn, 24, and Tyson, 20, have been actively

Until a few years ago, both Elaine and Richard had full-time careers. They usually had four foster children and two of their own in the house, "so my husband would be going in one direction and I'd be going in another."

The family and their long-term foster children have stayed in touch with phone calls and visits. A downstairs hall is covered with pictures of their "sons and daughters".

A foster home offers a place of safety for short-term and long-term placements, she said, adding they have one short-term child now who will stay with them until her own family situation is resolved.

Sometimes she said they would often get "really attached to a child, but for certain reasons you can't keep in touch."

Even though they have a lot of love and patience to give, it hasn't always been smooth sailing for the Porters.

"There are the downsides," said Elaine. "I've had a parent with a gun at the front door, one kid screamed for three