LeKeesha Edwards ([16:07:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/xPuM0kHfphDPLQjokSm34eSM89E7rdzPS_uIjggzy964q1pkyqt4li-M4nbSDhv6_nzuv5Gn5_nr9XqWczBKKc0UDgo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.06)):

I'm LeKeesha Edwards. L-E-K-E-E-S-H-A Edwards. I am the regional director of program and services for Cook County. So I oversee the Roosevelt Square Village and the Chicago Village Foster Care Program.

Preston ([16:07:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Np9mjSsI7sv4rQPyNNw5cD8425FVmdCmdz_jghf-4CWPRj7roTk6ZkZvKdnYcYML8ak2u_0MfM59vloLb_DmpPSxFug?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=17.82)):

Small E, big L, small E?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:07:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/oOCHNntb1ucs893xez9IooXtDl1x0UmUKdS8TujA1M6uluXwgTuQuCRuGx7tZDIF_nAVDO-WQOruneE_WC8qmNb0DlM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=19.5)):

Small K, L-E Capital K-E-E-S-H-A.

Preston ([16:07:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/TJYmHIzPf8Ox3Ug9iojjUf5A50fcb3Tgm8WXU5f6FOTJN2Vd2PSNO4Fh5tojo2WTPx_EifUNknYPbECcD4TeQPuqF5M?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=23.49)):

Got it. Gotcha. Yeah, capital K. All right, so tell me about OneFamily. Just tell me a little bit about who is OneFamily, what do you guys do?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:07:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/7TD4Z-OryxPiWKydF-SA_nKEnuZFG2INZmfNKamjhiTAYAoZQwrM216qsiByXQfXrY87pb2T4e7aeVP3kGeQe0KStAM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=31.38)):

So what I could tell you is what attracted me to OneFamily. I've been doing foster care for, I've been working in this field of servicing youth who are displaced for over 25 years, and I've always thought it would be interesting if we could put some better services or create a better system to provide foster care for youth. And when I looked up OneFamily's mission and their model of keeping siblings together and creating a village for families, I just thought it drew on some things that I had been wanting to do for quite a while. So the fact that we focus on sibling groups, our foster parents are professional foster parents, and we focus on keeping siblings together.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:08:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/fS9sia3Zb9BvO6tZ1gDQnxmqjStrwPtqTFSE7qJ6QjjsPj75CasMCYA25xIIpOx8ckioHmihBj0cNoCo6SMg0URPnIA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=85.65)):

So at any one given time, what I particularly oversee at any given time, I hire screen and train foster parents to be effective in managing multiple kids so they could have up to six siblings, six kids in their home. So they really come on and become a multiple parent, multiple children, and we're right here centrally located in this community so their supports aligned to support them and to be a resource for them to make that transition a little bit easier. It is not easy because every kid comes with trauma, so it's not easy, but this village concept makes it a little lighter and it's always good to be able to call somebody 24/7, and I'm getting used to that all over again.

Preston ([16:09:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ZTKn83kioMMXY8rcaI1qCdzNQjhwd8O-M_U5qnZhBYVOnIEI2-D2f5XAc0bbNQNiZyuzGpvM680BnVnjG4Rq6r74buA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=142.47)):

You just touched on a lot of it, but you said that the model, you felt the need to make some changes to traditional foster care. And that this model is really something to attract you. So just tell me a little bit more about what exactly about it affects you? Why is it so effective?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:09:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/-_vL4bTYBYzySSlaE5IcHN1CW1OHgK7fmHmykq4SHVGSIaSMti3VvQ1s4wU963xqaV7_MBeJ6JuixwOXkbnpKSXAIrw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=160.89)):

Well, I think that the model is unique because I won't say, I don't want to say that traditional foster care isn't effective. It is in its own concept, but it's effective when it's a smaller entity. We've always struggled in traditional foster care to find families that'll take sibling groups, that'll take multiple kids. Even two could be overwhelming. So we always struggled in the traditional realm to do that. So when finding OneFamily and seeing that what they did was make the foster parent, because you as a parent, you have to work, you have to raise your children and you have to provide. So it's difficult if, I have four and a husband. So if I had five kids, six kids, I can't imagine being able to work. But when you're a traditional foster parent, you're required to work. So this concept of hiring our foster parent, this is your job.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:10:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qmmNE4bH060w91COO6pj5Wu9Yt8CK1jPIlBB5TBkZeBb-H--LjXdsq7bxU1xB6K_-af-VCOuwIvdKt-HZFNkCCAwzH0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=219.66)):

You are a professional foster parent, so you are a professional and an employee and a parent all at the same time. So trying to, I think the most difficult part is trying to get them to balance what that looks like because sometimes being a parent truly outweighs any of the professionalism that's needed, but you have to be reminded that you have an obligation, a professional obligation too. But I think it takes the pressure off of them knowing that we are providing a resource to make sure that they have a house over their head, they have a car, that they have resources and ways to make sure that they could feed and care for their children.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:11:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/UeJTpvEKFwZukyUKPI55eTcV32-sUaDNKQGNhwNaOcVfVfosz7z-AeJN1ljhfxz1mKZ0QD6sEyAeZ8NJ--UR-x3WZV0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=261.51)):

That's your biggest stressors as a parent, making sure you could house and take care of your kid. So we remove that stressor and allow them to just commit to being a parent because these kids, again, most kids that come into care, I've been doing this a long time, they come with a trauma even if they haven't experienced anything drastic. If you're not with your parent, that's trauma. The fact that you're not living at home no matter what age, if you've been ripped from your home, that's trauma.

Preston ([16:12:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Uu36QQtPz4cFMJI2OlQXvWw_iOxdWAFrNQ6H27-E3z1-JA7TaJML0SjJYrC638129RZRq7yU3MkLfmoPccRTjFiRyIo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=297.54)):

So this whole idea of being a professional foster parent, I can see the devil's advocate argument being like, well, how do you protect against people not maybe doing it for the right reasons or maybe wanting to do it for monetary reasons. We were just with Fatina and you could feel the passion coming from her and that she just loves the kids. Tell me a little bit about, as somebody who trains the parents and who vets the parents, how do you think through hiring a foster parent, tell me a little bit about the passion of the parents you hired here at OneFamily have.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:12:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/klhFiXAJVfrZCP1gGmEFQBs_cY1jh16J_8wciyPQFXKnW9ujbXHXQt_RCIDQr15yJf4lZQ5K5LsM2dgwQd0Q8DatvJQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=329.91)):

I'm extremely selective, maybe to a fault. I don't know if everybody likes that, but I'm extremely selective because I do. I recognize that you have to live. So I give grace and I give mercy. When I'm interviewing, when I'm trying to screen you out, I do recognize that there's going to always come that question of finance, how does that work? Even with traditional, how much am I getting? What kind of stipend will I be getting to support? I expect that question. However, I don't expect that to be, if it's not what you think it should be, I don't expect you to be extremely disappointed that, "Oh, I thought it would be more than that." Those kind of things kind. I don't know. It makes me second, it makes me think.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:13:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/XpFTA_RTFWWnuk5w5YfimHomCJL6DfgmXeI8DJBMoWyio15b0La5Y2cFt7ewM335ZUnWvZuSivrh16lnl2bdW8l4DIo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=375.96)):

But you really can't. It's no fail-proof method to it because you could have people that interview very well and then after three months you're like, what just happened? Where did this wonderful person come from? I will say that our parents, though I have been pleasantly pleased at their motivations. Will they make mistakes? Don't we make mistakes as parents? So imagine parenting someone else's kid that you don't know their history, you're going to make more mistakes than what you make as a parent of your own kid. So I expect that too, but I expect their motivation to always reflect back on their why. Why did you apply for this job? Why did you accept it? And understanding what that obligation is. What makes it different for me as a manager or director is that a professional foster parent, I could remind you of your job description and understand that not adhering to that job description. That includes being nurturing, caring, attentive, present being, all of those things. When you fail to do that, I can remind you that it also affects your job.

Preston ([16:14:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Qp2NWZzLPIXfbzqkKaKFk1x8hPmYeBO_48mtzMaUZS3qFFoYYIAX4t_xap9BRc_hxdr1r_Who0UDcCVGp2swUriD8H8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=457.95)):

So let's get the positive of that because I love how you just listed those things that you expect out of your employees, but they're things that these foster parents are doing because they just love the kids.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:15:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/2aQ_WANy8a38iCavkwGVtXzXq5ZzREDWKjTbWdccfP2PNCJwX9VSONotJpcubK7-syX3hTp-a_ATsPKTzUL0RMGBBeU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=467.88)):

Oh yeah.

Preston ([16:15:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gxpfTxnKFu5aOsJsqTcisPE-bxgHCg8G6SegIS_obPVUp7adopEdo4VlaD5hnX9Jb8NtoeyOms2V_ZhtRWB83SPPsbc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=468.45)):

Can you tell me a little bit about the foster parents that you have and how they have the passion for the kids and the love for the work and then they have all of these things that you ask for.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:15:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/JBoVj8VAwKoIoGMYae69NYeXLzn-MoiHS2ea-DCCVlqnB1K2-q0E70g-TALDXZ91zzrSuO-Od2tPkBBDL_hNO3lxb6A?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=480.9)):

Even if you apply for a job in human services, it has to be something that you want to do, because I don't know if it's that much monetary reward in social services. I've done it for 25 years and I think my husband has been me for the 20 years that we've been married. Why are you doing this? But you have to want to do it. So our foster parents want to do this. They come on purpose and they come intentional. And if I could see that I can work with everything else. I think that sometimes it's more than what they expected.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:15:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/tAjPqmmqiHUuHtJApLYNnHTvoygAIJjUKg2stHr8sAUaURawG5PgA0voY8n1xI6QAJjFAouaUWmi0FmVbz0eY07jZjs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=519.78)):

You come in a sense, you think about village raising a family, that concept of a village. It takes a village to raise a family. Yeah, your family, you've probably done it. You've probably brought in a cousin or you've probably brought in your sister's kids when times got hard, but is a kid that you have no history with and they're coming with traumas that you don't understand. So you have to want to do it. And most all of our foster parents want to do this, and the ones that don't, it is revealed pretty quickly. Their tenure ends pretty quickly as well.

Preston ([16:16:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/BZyh5mK_tY3V94wdoEWWRsqGshzP0619kFnaUSkFnqA43tJS08abOCPS0NTHQkpMP60kRCVq6NoepSvMYl8uhtPRV2g?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=556.68)):

You've mentioned trauma a few times, and so these children come into your care with lots of different histories and things that they've lived through. Can you just give me a basic overview of just tell me about trauma and loss that a lot of children who are in the foster system have already experienced in their lives.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:16:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/OgdTFp-WrMvp5-vxi4fLjuQotG6MYgs4cxzTjKKs6ZRY5_kVvf8R9AT6JbvViRwliJegjcAQt_7Z0-KcrjTWxb8AvCg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=578.46)):

And a lot of it we don't know until you come into this situation to where there's this wraparound service. So you got this clinician and this caseworker that gets assigned this case that's right here in this village, and then they start asking questions that start bringing up issues or things that they may have wanted to stuff or triggers that we didn't know. You never know what happened. You could put a kid in a home with a female that looked just like an abuser at some point and you didn't know that when you placed this kid. And all of these are the things that you have to work around. So trauma, it could be trauma that's documented on their paperwork, that's clear. They came with history of sexual abuse or they came because there was domestic violence in the home. You could see that on paper.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:17:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Jx-YmkIsO0uxSROXjerpefy4X23dNxYV2FYTO0du7J0TpAJ2rgH6_MxyCbYMiF6tS3BXP5nzepkAKSeDs8iYrEPh6nk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=629.1)):

But it is what you don't see that the foster parents, the foster parents are prepared for what they read, but it becomes challenging and that's when they have to focus on their why, when it's the things that you didn't know that come about. And I say trauma, anytime a kid is displaced whether it was for no reason at all, except mom wasn't able to care or dad wasn't able to care, that's still trauma because they were displaced. That's trauma that kids who are born into their families and living with their biological families don't have to deal with.

Preston ([16:18:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/oAL1s7juMwhePBKokO9lctPZep_ahJozy6Jvk0aRQjsE7aVNy-ifr3mlhclt4cUn9NP3LHd8-BzhOvDkcT5dvlbKLZY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=671.43)):

What are the mental health ramifications for a lot of these children?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:18:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ZrF-Yg6PXFKF8a9AJeC-mD1ASlL79nUAsWv4LcC9DJWDyPn6f0-ZzrCp9W4tFrzqz8luJ-WhNcw2KAW46zbm_GN4mlU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=677.34)):

Meaning the unmet need or?

Preston ([16:18:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/DXja1__x2kEKsIKtKCdtdFkmQ-SA3bJLFC6MFlRT3fHR570xtJB6c9Uibz9aIdNf6F2mgY7Fp6iRyWIUus8QRmrnd7o?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=682.71)):

Well, just in terms of all the trauma and loss that these children have faced, it takes a toll on even at a young age where you're talking about things that are documented, but you're starting to find things that are below the-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:18:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/LH7q2e47GJBDnTqZKfltU-XEy9E6B_8D1YcCO6LTlpYbscPJmrS_7iXn1S8vAo7rTSdxk9Xew2gDn62Dq1XwxzKUdU4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=694.74)):

And this is where they begin to heal. So that's the whole premise of it. That's the whole goal. That's what you're hoping that once they go back to permanency, either go home or independent or whatever the case may be, the goal is to do some healing while they're here. So whatever they use to be able to cope, whatever they learn that help them to manage that emotion, that they take that with them for the rest of their lives. So the purpose, that's why there's this clinical team that's set up. The purpose is to provide, to recognize it, acknowledge it, let them process it, and now let's heal. And so the ramifications to me, we know that they come in with these mental health concerns and issues, but what are we doing? What do we do to ensure that they're getting the treatment that they need to heal?

Preston ([16:19:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/KbS4yr8gw0f-tnFpSzSCw-YpEmxyiYiqyX6lHFRUw94Fixh55H6MfSwJ2VvcJCA8BPbuMUyGlVv-ORFz09svQDN7-Hg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=750.69)):

So that's just another really unique part of what OneFamily offers. So having the wraparound services.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:19:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/cFomJIuyykLVHH7NzX3BSZc6Y70ufIWnp-HloFcUodeavuP7-EiXAZLLxKj4siaMW7eGIdI7nwFibJHJMl86o1kPK1Y?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=755.67)):

Yes.

Preston ([16:19:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/IEbOutN0wD9rTjXnKLB76MivJnZRgwR5BKtwGETvUp1y48Yq-OO-nMc6eppyLxpuACka8vq-WPUJMg1KsgizP8JSrmk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=755.85)):

You mentioned in-house clinical therapists, and can you just tell me a little bit about those services?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:20:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/tlOCyIC2Nqcf8EJhnvlagKrZtqf163V3cMbMrjDNBREaAcTF1X-iZnkcjRsrIygS33gcaGFTwbfUEiqpbAsYQUawcWs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=766.14)):

And I want to stay, be specific that I know what I know, but I know what's around. So we have educational services. So we have a team that helps to ensure that academically our kids are in the right schools, getting the right care if there's some IEP that needs to happen. We have a whole education department and team that supports the families and ensuring that they have what they need to ensure the kids getting their educational needs met. We have a whole health and wellness department, which includes the individuals of our clinical team to ensure that every kid that comes into OneFamily, every placement has an assessment within 24 to 48 hours. I believe, and I'm sure clinical will correct me if I'm wrong, but every kid has an assessment and at that point we determine what resources they already have into place and what's the gaps so that we can fill those gaps. So we offer that. It's just programming.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:21:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/e7Id_aMt9e11cwwLUUt_V6oOgiqlwIDjYTHWi7sPkB2cyjoiQ2sztVds1LwQPqQbj7Wqesy6XgehHTeTNPksMy6gCJ8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=829.89)):

We have a community. We are a community, so we have so many community opportunities. We have so many volunteers that come, so many resources that we make available that otherwise they would not have. We have amazing donors and amazing people that contribute to the organization that without them we wouldn't be able to offer these kids experiences that they would never have otherwise. It's like sometimes you're like, wow, I don't think they realize the opportunity that's coming, but it is always good. It takes some years, but it's always good to have that one kid that probably was your hardest kid to deal with to tell you, "Thank you. I'm so glad that I was in this program."

Preston ([16:21:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/aSAXk5nJo-JslGJTv-pJsR_64eRQbDO2k6JME_HkZmvFr-mWPhwloOHNDLoCfbSY9wTaul6DXlO2AF7-nfVSE3NPFD8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=870.3)):

Can you just tell me that last part again? We just had a really low, and I love what you just said about that.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:21:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bZGRxq0yvFE2O6Twr7tdqBAwW2R7r4Z-Yzcl9sKHQyywe2MfncWRRAd6f4_t5ZacFFfi7ycggGL540GE0vq80YP0zkk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=873.96)):

I ain't going to remember that.

Preston ([16:21:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gS0qY8jqjP-h9vWn7n3powOSuB34to98iZGrgKmI-217kCX7VUWZ4HDowTEdwnZvTc9e51tYlQ-Ap0zgGwdyLCQ2jHw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=881.76)):

I mean, you've had children come back and you've seen the success.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:22:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/SeDPuYtzKMIN2qyD2Li-A6sQ3tFHkxmKjgiktwBMfWsKevZFJscGaS-t1_l42rXbCHqmeYG9Fcmmpz2_QiCXHA9qajg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=884.04)):

That's probably the most rewarding. And I always tell my staff, I always tell people that I supervise that if you could make a difference in one out of the 50 that you've served, you have made a difference because it's so difficult to see it. And they don't even realize too, that they've made a difference and they'll never hear it because people just don't, some people just don't say thank you, it just happens. But when you get that one that you knew had a situation that was, you didn't see how they would manage or how they would heal or bounce back from it, come and say thank you and I'm so glad that you listened or I'm so glad that you were there and I'm so glad that you had patience or you didn't give up on me. When you get that, when the I didn't give up on you, that's when you have to remember your why. Okay, now every time I want to give up on somebody, I can't because that may be the kid thank me later for not giving up on them.

Preston ([16:23:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/KuRM6rK_bbO6fSq9zZe4ORFfQ97akZRdwCd6vFAghj0RLHCrLnmKJOwx-pzYwIBXAmgJbLNsgat40dG2XTy0hSaH9u8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=947.73)):

Beautiful. So one of these experiences that donors are going to provide is this new playground that we're going to have.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:23:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gK5jiteYDBTyPLdVfjiOeVe61Ng73rURkFpn86dfmUL3TrIPws_eQM4xcuyEGezrqFp9yWoYADRD1Evp8BAoncV5vck?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=966.99)):

Oh, yeah. I didn't mean to put that plug, but yes, that's good. That's exactly it.

Preston ([16:23:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/L6HPRyhP-hMAH4VcJd6ruLeHCATMFBFwOoU-EnT1in2bxfDB2QEph-0otbQsuQJ5gWJDj4PO7KG8j5iqGZmoO-uTwZ0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=966.99)):

You're my leading into my question. So can you just tell me a little bit about the excitement around the new playground that's going to be built?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:23:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/B0a-LaYt83VcirUwxYE2o-f2dtuGnqn_P3H475dXtmh1mQqGKYRcr9Piuberb2dY114R2sYmWH8h09OHoeOlAwnMsko?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=968.46)):

So this is something that I'm hearing because I'm still a bit of a newbie. Well, I guess in social service years, one month, that's it. But this is something that they have wanted on this village for a very long time. So I know there was a lot of excitement, a lot of buzz. As a matter of fact, before I came, before today, I went to a home to visit one of my newer foster parents to just check in and make sure, just do a temperature check to make sure she was okay. And the kids were, they was like, "Well, I'm going to tell that I want this and we want this, and we got to have swings." And I was like, "Are you headed to the meeting because you got a lot of ideas?" And she was like, "Yeah, I'm going to the meeting." So the whole house was packing up, getting ready to come to the meeting so that they could share. I said, "Your input matters. So if this is what you want, if this is how you want it to look, go ahead and say that."

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:24:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/n6dA04VC_01l4I4mpgvKZK0uZ_LcN5IMytgKEJ8CarWaffiPA2FfaWNpdVQI7595B9fGr1nDPgwI11XaCiZsfY0NBYI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1023.36)):

So yes, it's excitement. It's excitement to have it right here, centralized. We don't have to go to a park. Our park is right here. Our playground is right here in our backyard, literally in our backyard.

Preston ([16:24:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/q1vAum6udJEFt4rEr9Iaki_P6ogi1q6dbDe1LfcL7-dQSDCqqaCh-nxzzQjfuwWyFy9NIxmTO16MY0demghdsFoGNXo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1035.51)):

And so Travelers is the corporate sponsor coming in to fund the playground. Can you just speak to your gratitude for companies like Travelers who are not part of your immediate community, but they're part of the-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:24:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/-P2HsmVoNZe0mV6nBS6zcMpoyAs_f3Nf6QCmT4qM_6HK7jGuCv5h4e8lW8gqSZ47mE6_bEdVvJMlJDZPSuZQRhxU2AE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1047.84)):

The bigger community.

Preston ([16:24:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/7k9LKLoiSHM9N0_d_TjU8BkrwJyXKcHwjDdtJD4gXNrzSimpOoxgmQSjQy-LvBlduI6ysR7QDE8JvmZyd9xWdSVr3fU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1048.68)):

And that's really what you're looking for is for people to come into your community and share that with each children.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:24:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/k2FckP1ER-tGJVVxRf0jIC3GqVWzHMU_LUvIzCcY-1GRKHLUx0ahCVcyqsVnnWJz2zXidsvl_OZsv69w6qPfliQmBNo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1056.93)):

I think I want, I don't think that they really know the impact. You think it's just a small gesture, we'll get it done, but this is huge. So I want to thank them because they don't realize what a simple playground does for us, for as parents, for as workers. The safety that it presents, being right here in this community, centralized in this community, it makes you breathe a little easier. They can say, "Go outside and play." And then you could play safely. So I just do want to extend the heartfelt thank you for the donors and for the contributors to even consider little old OneFamily for this project.

Preston ([16:25:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Sm44F7PDCLj2XpcBe8kDPfZsQ8S2AFvI0De5XitG6iyqDZqx0aV_Y6EZvxwSCWuewvZJ9TZITyj_hUpXChieqpkeumo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1099.2)):

Can you just give me a version of that answer, and if you could just use the name Travelers in answer that-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:25:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/xvoygWYqAS5WWiL9O5D8ECshTe9CDnIb8TzXNoMnclTxod56ac7stC8fo7vHnwCUpHQJdPGCxbGcZpKfamQOOAoyP5k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1103.64)):

Oh, gosh, you should have told me that before.

Preston ([16:25:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/lY1sWlsl0vodK2P354fvkfGk6OUzNUDjvFcOiBo4KBxnZm1xB-AYo3SIB9KPwuY52UOwy35Jbg8RuC29JwF4KhnFi0E?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1104.6)):

You don't have to say the exact thing either. So again, what is?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:25:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/zQjllH3yEVMo250mfLjinhWEdbXq06_TuFPWrwSHnTByN-x-uU82BDbR6oA_Y25paWjOuMvD0jlAhJQ1BLZkb0TG318?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1110.9)):

But it is important for me to recognize Travelers for their generous and contribution to shaping and changing lives right here at Chicago Village. I don't think they recognize the impact, and if they do, I want them to really understand that we recognize the impact and we do thank Travelers for their contribution.

Preston ([16:26:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/3HKfumaeuS-0spRsjL4kalaz8yToz_abS1IPRg80MFM9IgDnKzQcFJ1b1B925H0RyV53s5x4N4SMuWIq_bvwPzspOeg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1133.52)):

And fostering can feel like a very lonely thing at times. And you guys have done a great job to build your own community, like I said before, but what does it mean to you to know that Travelers has your back?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:26:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/sOZ-plaVKQ2gtAItRepHHg7L8LI7W-oKxJW9sX19pQhdU5qooS1v1Wv9dCJSpwOsE26EUuE9WB7aPF9F2BBLsHjlqrY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1149.96)):

That's what I was saying, the fact that you even recognize that we are here and that that's a need and that they can fulfill that need. That was amazing in itself because it's so much need. It's so many things so many people need. So how do you figure out who you're going to support and who you're going to help? So for us, yes, we are eternally grateful because you didn't have to, Travelers didn't have to choose us, but they did.

Preston ([16:26:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/CIdEDKSjJdksi5neGYqjw1w_KUjqFbBIrSV2ALVcpyVPSAlV9KWpWO11LUDzXF8LpgEo4fU6J4-wEYkyQL8L1RNMpqc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1181.67)):

How important is just looking at the word community as a broad term, how important is community to OneFamily, your foster parents, your children, everything that OneFamily is, what does community mean?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:27:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/XYi8hbziDT_bnQ0xEVtwLbo5uk6EQDfkzLxTXHT5RWDHSjQpRhBGYeZiCwYYjSmKAtkJL3cIlWJGcFvv7hXcbTjOS3Y?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1191.57)):

Everything is, every decision, every choice, every consequence, everything that we do within OneFamily affects the community, and this is the OneFamily community. Whatever positive decision that's made, whatever negative decision. So it is really the name change, the rebrand is true to what happens when this person does something, it affects the entire family, so good or bad. So the fact that we are making positive choices and it's reminding us of the value and the importance of a community.

Preston ([16:27:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/eSKDbhza2zWqEOCGm7dAqcy28VsC8rIS5jcavg6ZhaVH2JqHwB04vCcrvf2blWgPXdWQlou_SepRE9ev6PCd07LU9BM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1234.89)):

Can you speak to the power of play a little bit? So we talked a little bit about the mental health challenges and just the ability for children to get out to a safe place and play. How important do you think that's going to be for the mental and physical security?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:28:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9Z4zaBpjfdxh0-xqtynkbvbk50RuUPXm67lua2PGW2ZonT70VkpRA5-ziQl55MPK8cDJQX0okrbG12d044XH6P1BDIw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1247.91)):

So two things that playground is going to produce laughter and exercise. And you can't go wrong if you're happy and you're laughing, you're healing. If you're exercising, they don't even realize that you're healing. So the two things that for me, I don't know for anybody else, but for me, that I could honestly be confident or feel secure in knowing that our kids will get the recreation and it'll be self-initiated recreation, doesn't have to be structured, just go out. If they need to reset or if they're having a crisis and they need to go reset, they could go to the playground and say, "I'm just going to go to the playground and I'm just going to swing. I just want to go to the playground, I just want to jump on... ". Whatever it is that they could jump on. So it has a therapeutic healing. It'll be a therapeutic healing opportunity for laughter and for health.

Preston ([16:29:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/lnNYKi_1KUJM2LJ2Wr4XCppZH3AUt0jBJAgF8qGZ7BiDE8jEMSY-Cd_i10XURBwZWaIsir5N2MT8OnyLF9c6MwDh_mU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1309.47)):

So you've been in this space for 25 years-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:29:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/vUzh4Eqk9ewSQYl1eZOyt22h-jtulWWEttrudJKeLaIER-rYvLDpzhVYo2dXttFlxUbXt5FX-FDJybaB-XKHTZxWNpI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1312.56)):

Plus.

Preston ([16:29:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/nqE1H30SHtJ946pZr8GOm6nZiM0R4W_QpUBl2XfY17hBDRFhfP5cNY8esyVp71AOkmQIgkqnI0_J8hlps5_RF2Y4ooA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1312.68)):

Your husband says questions why you do it sometimes.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:29:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ATYcMJVQOa2AgwsLOZLg-5JSHFW7HDwK_2crWpYNVLL_n5IjJq1q2vg8uWOCeQ4USWlRTMWEwdahz76wt8xb3gw0L0o?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1315.59)):

All the time.

Preston ([16:29:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/5-CRsv4e-2vuGugzRg5fml7-GthSZ5PEv_uiiyy2ObHdRbmHp328LdluFs9H3mIMjPwUhx5RzZ9WxCnjBDjy2YsgvIU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1315.74)):

But why do you do it?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:29:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/_HW-CZ5rNf7rE5lsN4SpQ1lkBUrefzl8YztBOLIw2CfXpiajGRg5wak06Ynq2FFycwPgmRigIfK2Bi-Y6VEWmlHArWA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1317.81)):

My why? Every time I've tried to do something different, I have been pulled back here. I don't know why. So except that I think it's what I'm supposed to do. I think that I'm effective at it, saying I'm good at it or I'm really good at it is probably relative to whomever, who I'm talking to at the time. But I think that I'm effective at it. I'm hoping that I make an impact and I'm a servant leader. And so because of that, in order for me to serve, this is the kind of work that I do. My degree was on purpose. It was me getting an MBA, you know, when most people would get an MSW to work in this field or some kind of clinical degree. But it was intentional for me to get an MBA because I understand that in order for these organizations to stay and be effective, you got to have some kind of business and organizational leadership knowledge behind it to keep it going.

Preston ([16:30:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/B2Z_tTDND8w2julQazYInYkhgi-W-rC2tGO-VR_aJ8cl_mcZjGyNMKwih55Y_z7dNFOBZjNgDDCZyjtZ-jjC443yIBs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1385.55)):

You had mentioned when you're running around and laughing and playing, you're healing. What does it do for you when you see these children who have been through so much laughing and playing and healing?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:30:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/UfX-WYG-CoU9qXnfpQ1x5ZUid_C-oZkpdEav3EUZk72ngvi4rPG9ahUYdmBL6vK7xfrF9kF8HBRxZMj-ihIbFQ1YX0I?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1399.92)):

Well, I'm a crybaby. So when I could see anything, any kind of success, it could be the smallest thing. I just feel like that we brought some joy, we brought some peace, we brought something positive, we made a difference. And you have to take those smalls. I tell people, I tell our foster parents, I tell staff that I've worked with over the years, please take a small victory. A small victory goes a long way. Just let it add up and then it'll turn into something big. But I can't really describe it because this is just the part of what I do. And I just feel like that, okay, I've done my job, I've done my job today. Some days I don't feel like I'm very effective. But today, if I got this kid and we got this process and this kid was happy about it, and this family was content with the decision, then I've done my job effective today.

Preston ([16:31:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/XqQaM1hDiV0t8OZzbDBdqbe3AUMkvZ9eR4LFa26vIXTU9HWZ21TYK-UtZ2wjj25H5RW2HTikmZvMJT4PjzilaDuFbZE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1459.11)):

That's great. So earlier you were telling me about the success story that someone comes back and thanked you. Can you tell me of anything specific people have come back and said to you, you talk about celebrating small victories, but there are big victories too. What have you heard from?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:31:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/BulBxiacjcVKbo9vRanZDrURNRRH_kR-mOwkMDjTvxvRjOesoemT-1OH62w3MxTuDSnxM6w14fGXn6H7PqEJvJLZlQ4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1475.91)):

Oh my goodness. I mean, it's been is years. So I'm trying to just narrow it down to my experience here. I think the experience here that I've gotten from my parents were, "Thank you for being consistent. Thank you for... ". Maybe not getting, because it gets frustrated. This field of work can be frustrating. So it's almost like the thank you's for not giving up on us is probably what keeps me committed.

Preston ([16:32:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ZWrqVq1THL-vZCA8eo3eS-8-pca2FIYep4ql3y5MttzbjpGiSruu9eLbIfOQRRjauU_CwHlQIRuV_d7JBibIUPETo8g?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1513.2)):

Great. Heidi, Erling, anything?

Peggy ([16:32:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Zr-uYMg89LYl97YB4Y53IosVg77t2bO-oYMtZWtKtIkGJ0DNfUV4rPwmN7vSKtm8-3VsWc5tOvR8xFP_RkcGSeftZcQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1517.52)):

I feel like that last question was where I wanted to explore a little bit more. Do you have a favorite memory or a favorite story over the years?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:32:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/YSVucwoMj65osN5RbEvYQmtKUHRijPVjL75P9A0Hezz_bgjPR7ixeAoHK6xzFnH5Ir5Tz2dRiTcXjnTTa6d7nKOZgRM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1526.94)):

Over the years that you knew over the years? I do. I do. I worked with a pregnant teen, and this was early on in my career. So funny because this was my first encounter with a pregnant teen, a youth in care, and she was a pregnant teen, and I was probably maybe four or five years older than her. It was my first job and she literally hated me. She hated everything about me. I couldn't figure out why I was a trigger for her, but I stayed. I figured out, okay, I could do something from a distance and then somebody would be like, "She'll say, well, why did I get this?" And they'll say, "Well, LeKeesha said you could get it." And she wouldn't say thank you. She wouldn't do any of that. She was released and I was still at the job.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:33:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gzb3Aik4J6D2hTczMuq3BYIPPd5y4Sw3Nq5nDsQIyjDu9gL97havSTHWGhMFTgVQho9LGW7CBHelHwdYeRbGpW-9gCE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1579.11)):

And I want to say it was definitely before my last name changed and I had moved back home. This was someone in Florida and I had moved back home. So sometimes when you're a professional, they post stuff on the websites, welcome our new. So she must've Googled me. She sent an envelope to my current employer. It was about six years later, she sent me the baby that she was pregnant with pictures of the baby who was now five years old, pictures of her husband and pictures of her new kids. And she said, "Thank you." She said, "You changed my life. No matter how horrible I was, you never responded to me bad." Her name was Miranda. I don't have to say the last name, but her name was Miranda. And I was just like, what? It was just amazing. So we kept in touch just briefly. We kept in touch, checked in every now and then life happens. But that was rewarding because she was actually married and in a healthy relationship and she was displaced because of domestic violence and domestic abuse.

Preston ([16:34:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/3tTrW4DarQvcyKPHFLG0nxoJSPgveCkFSqnKE7nFby0F33EKaQxespSNFnBr9TGwytf6nQCtBNwUzD26_s7bQv_3b4U?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1648.59)):

So before she wouldn't give you-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:34:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/r-3qUbSIZSlLFYu0ouCKXUb345Bz8PjWqYwIHdNYU75NfrpOtO9qyw6Fbt71oVipbhg9z3tss6L5YBXnJBIKpVr1gng?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1653.93)):

Before she was released, it was better, but I just didn't know the impact. So the way that it was presented to me was that if it had not been for you, I would've given up on myself because you didn't give, it was a long story, but it was one of those stories. It would be easy for someone to say, she's not going to amount to anything. That's the way you would've chalked it up.

Preston ([16:35:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qOLTYzRqdgkATLKYHm7uXJW_6Af48WecMLMGpjUOnEVsPNi1fKT0WeNVNndeTHPHrKk44CM05EfElcEMKfWW8V9N2GA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1682.82)):

And your impact was so great she sought you out?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:35:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Qxk7kh7kNc7VBEbTzPOxYxUKCj5nlcFbY1tFTGKFa8xZRejp-4HkxZKj489laPxnERHX7ME5RdwQl-B1dVD2MclF09k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1685.97)):

Well, it was just the fact that I didn't, I never resorted to responding to whatever reaction she gave. I didn't respond to it. I didn't try to hurt her feelings. I didn't do that. And I don't know if I was young and I just didn't have a spicy comeback. Some of the seasoned workers may have, but I just didn't do it for some reason. I just didn't feel she needed that. She needed to see something different, probably what she always got. So she just needed to see something different. She needs to see still that I'm going to make sure you get this still. I'm going to buy you this graduation gift still. I'm going to give you this because you've reached the next level. I'm still going to give you these little things or write you this little note or write you this card and say, "I am so proud of you. Keep it up." And toward the end of her stay, the relationship was better, but I just didn't realize, I didn't think she still cared for me.

Preston ([16:36:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/LyxFNMIZ3BdIohzHgeu1U-xia5iyZA7HHFKIgOcO_aqV6Lm_CEvmuaiPO2k5Y8tifmw9CJkzhuJGmXwHO1rREA4FzpU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1745.58)):

You obviously made the right, approached it the right way.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:36:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/oKd_Sq7ncGwg2UHmFfKlW_n_IfU6QGSSINyjvAapzSx42xg5m165bXgpLXV30yyDgUmJS3gs8MyoBdMeCO6xQC7QRr8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1748.7)):

Yeah.

Preston ([16:36:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/k07ti8tFMoVsLof3-N36v-fP0yBJJTYfxbSSoj9UGSv1hOo2RPIErpnjqesINKDhFq4LTRsAiI6KLlYFGYoCs33DTro?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1750.89)):

Made a very big impact. That's great.

Peggy ([16:36:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gMZC4Qq6um6dcLA4F2TbSNB65hnZto_g35g-c8hY1Rf5NgA6pM0lobEQZC-I122noQh7zBMW-QFQLsRLp0-uNkEpcRs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1755.48)):

I think we've had an opportunity to speak to so many wonderful people that work here at OneFamily today, and I think the model of bringing families back together again really resonated. It stood out for me in the conversations. Can you talk to us about a particular story again, you don't-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:36:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Aj3bSWqShsq0HU_kqiiKd3G-6PxnXj8VE9WxKxM_GaZlj7h8sLRyULeouix0vYV5A-uO5vLpeawops75434h47XXg64?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1776.87)):

Of reunification?

Peggy ([16:36:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Qz0lMZ8aIMxiQAjdWuVT_4xNui9HJ83DK0N8qp070mjhZwcB_IUNQCBRLxQTJtNVTbKoD0vX9Orj9tnsWq12Sq40Wyk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1776.93)):

Yeah, reunification. I just found that it's just such an important goal here at OneFamily, and I don't know, maybe that's the goal across your 25 years.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:37:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gdmLmdi7VPCAU5SIrP1f04Z_X-4XNr0FEIcPVplvDaX0H3hFFX23Z0dfQois6Ukv9fURj_J8WEvOssY1aaM98FRUoJM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1784.49)):

That is the goal. The goal is never, the goal... And I had to step out back working with foster care, but I started my career in foster care and for about 10 years I had to step out because I had grown to truly not appreciate or not, I took for granted what the parents who were going through their issues, what they were facing to get back on track. So I was judgmental the first part of my career, very judgmental of the biological family. Didn't give much break, didn't give much concession. So when I started working with the family, so I guess I could say this would be a story.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:37:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/yngmONFFtwRRd2F4v1aXACJOE6Py9n8VjIf1s2h8kCCMAUMt7KXnDU1G9qnAQvsN7skHLuZODcAQQxdtmKO9Bw8rCbQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1830.09)):

When I started working with the biological families, it was one case in particular, a lady who lost her kids because of substance abuse, and I had worked with her closely for a year. So she was on the path of reunification. The kids had started doing visits and she was almost ready to right at the, she was testing clean every week for a year. And so it was like, "We're here, you're here. You're going to get your babies back. Can you believe it? They're here. You're going to get them back". And right before it was time to get her babies back, she relapsed, right before court.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:38:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/jagZf7ustEUYct_yjwo0aVrYP3zNPmn-fL1W4YoFVEXAIgnECZGz0qiijDVGsjwwrq2L7OFHxRI3U3zRFO3QydNyKwI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1867.83)):

So right before court, you get tested. So we get to court and she tests positive, and I started crying. I'm bawling because I'm bragging to everybody about how great she's been doing. And then I had a conversation with her and I said, "What did you just do? What did you do? All of this for, for a year? You got a job, you got your apartment." And she was like, "My kids are in dance. They're in gymnastics. They're in all of these things that I won't be able to keep up when they come back home. So I did it for them." Talk about a different perspective. Talk about the love that you have for a kid that you're willing to sacrifice, whatever you want to make sure that they have. It tears me up now. It made me think so different about some of the things that they go through and the habits and things that they have to kick.

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:39:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/sgz7CeMwZS0KZ9ZQoQuD_MDeZozf9G0IUVovoiqFldUk3bSCrHMF3rKXq_yUi2sssUh9ccjyWCj8VvQ87c5hQLJ-WLM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1923.06)):

She did get her babies back, but it was another six months. But she did, but that's why, that was her reason why. It wasn't because she wanted the drugs. She purposely sought it out so that she could test positive for court so that they would not return the kids home to her because she wasn't going to be able to. They were so excited about what the new school year was going to bring, and she knew that they were going to be coming home and that's not going to be the same school season. But they didn't care about any of that. They just wanted to be home with her. I said, that's what she failed to remember and failed to forget. Because that opportunity, it'll be some opportunities, may not be the same ones that you had in that home, but it'll be some opportunities for them to have recreation.

Preston ([16:40:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/uVEt5Yg-xcXy0zxkW1pLjmz0KJMi5nSnVi52ujJgFABfoN9oIFkFGWwKngnvwxA5loBA_uw1jvNgHs__Bgn7cX6W1DM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1970.19)):

You're fighting, here at OneFamily you're fighting to keep families together. That story that you just shared gives a personal look into something that somebody might've been judgmental about, right? But when we're looking at these foster parents and children, why do they deserve the kind of care and attention and support that OneFamily is providing? Why do they deserve that?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:40:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/oJ2Pagkf-u8Pag0QbVtGscBwqtKG7tybzVeOq5Qdx9GEEAswM7nWJoMmdnQgYdHpR5REhPh7cvO9jKcpEjdTLnNGhog?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1994.34)):

Because this is the hardest job you'll ever have. So they deserve whatever we could give them. I go home. I personally go home at the end of the day, and if I choose to, if my heart says, you be cruel today, I'll cut my phone off too and won't respond to anything. They do not have that option. They chose a job that's 24/7. The kid did not choose their situation that they're in. They were born into a situation and sometimes a crappy situation. So the goal here is to make life better, make life better for them. And the only way we can make life better for those kids is to be as supportive as we can for our foster families.

Preston ([16:41:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/p2vBOV6nS5gs3VpouxHBZCCgIkvzFQAw8mPhG_YY8_I0GPlETuvL2oDqdvzzOmIhYDBqBsabbDEbLHQ09OWJ1QbQQao?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2043.24)):

What is the feeling that you get when a family's reunified when you see those?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:41:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/m4JHtpHJizD9CUwTDCIAOMcM4rTkSyE6EyG-wTX1gzdmvIyCvtajFaJuP8Bs-VXeEO4HVkhefT2Q6HUjUtKAjJNK4P4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2045.76)):

Oh, I'm excited. I'm delighted for reunification. I'm excited for adoption because sometimes that's not the option. I'm excited for permanency. So whether that's adoption, whether that's reunification, whether that's family stepping in and saying, "Hey, bring my babies, bring our family home. We want our family here." My family is a part of that. There's a blended sense and sense of community in my own personal family. You open up the door when someone was struggling and sometimes that person ended up doing better, but the kids never wanted to leave. So you ended up becoming that surrogate parent.

Preston ([16:42:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/W3pMHZoisFQXX0HdOvkDxldh7xMGgsnf2xXNf8PIGl-WR6CqgAA47oNYeGs23tBWzJhRswbe_E5PXq1vMjfZmlA_8A4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2088.6)):

That's good. We should get a little bit of room tone of this. This is rain right here we hearing?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:42:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/aIaL8KewVprK22zuY86lE6IOfHSK_ssPQisasWhZ7uFBBgcjaAM9vqXvG2QDAKNWMeFExJCFsMv5arp9MkeOjDNO0E0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2095.68)):

No, I think it's the ventilation system.

Preston ([16:42:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Zius3zWhC6IiB2EiT3D0qY8dWKx71HfbXUEzxxkTWy9cRu96Le0b59OrQR9doIPikc1FGZIP9I4ZpMQ1Ctg48cBRZks?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2096.49)):

Yeah, I thought it started. Heard the thunder-

Speaker 4 ([16:42:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/-XK6K8KyGwU1C6oFQeIrnCOsmhhWrXbfqe0y73jPbAvTIIlqWY8D1LzA6bxWabKcNe7V1e0NqctJy8kpwkvq3WWr3ko?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2101.35)):

I did hear the thunder. Yeah.

Preston ([16:42:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/DYktZDC93sZqQAtC9tffBb_rcTmMbg06wy4ChUETr19JepZmANUUL62N7drjQrQ2i5uJ4NtgoLEkKQPbLe1oxecoZwg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2102.07)):

Okay. Anything?

Peggy ([16:42:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/xS1ZJQTL6VoJP-hzZwafLpTnfcOFG0YjAURp-mS8Bov-LTaoejePWl67DXekU24N6eKvNUIZGVPcJpfmYZVStg8fM4M?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2105.94)):

What's your definition of family?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:42:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/dg9QgoId7fY1OLWZiA-Frnxq9dub52pcsqduvRAqksf7Nr56t9dhrUJDnavT_UhQfK7oqXZR10fc3lb4wjg6n7xOqp0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2111.82)):

Anyone who makes a decision to choose to love and care for you?

Preston ([16:42:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/1HAkXTj0ur4YwFHEjutxvSc6zGTG-foe0SIe08fCcCkcO6e5n4yedfFRjQyLlo_im1JtmEc1vw6iI7eL5qfgc0g98Ek?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2121.24)):

Can you tell me that again? You can look right at me there. What is-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:42:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9r8O6BVykk_YMzsCvJJf0Y0WOVWawCgWZB25GUxLh_Z7wTwNFXZ8mOMddX5spC7BGgqCD9tNDDKKQq7CTA5Irh-Ib9c?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2124.33)):

My definition of a family is anyone, whether it be an individual or a group of individuals that make a choice to love and care for you. So it doesn't have to be blood, it doesn't have to be, it can be so many things, but if you choose to love someone, whether you have that person or whether you didn't, because you could have a kid and choose not to want to be a parent or not to want to raise a kid. So a family to me is anyone or any community that chooses to love and care for one another.

Preston ([16:43:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/WrXKTWru85VDdox__mAn-HMRsZ8YFERLJVJl-a8NeT1591qdPFGfziz7FszbjtyKzOWYzws5_cmaqrRNOUBtHoQJyXc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2161.95)):

So when you see something like we're going to see in October, when the community gathers, when Travelers comes, when KaBOOM comes, when OneFamily's here, tell me a little bit with that in mind as what you see as family. How does that make you feel to see that kind of support?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:43:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/oUKvB2DvyUWWcDJ8W0QjZAEA-7MPXqXoKOwgh5jVEPxRQpQv_6zDnStwbbuV9r0nNrhZx-b0wCqvdfq78MrfKvVvuw4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2178.3)):

You'll see a village that's going to come together, you'll see a community that's going to come together mixed of several families that's going to create this community of love and care. Anything else?

Preston ([16:43:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/_LvHscBGzGMOwgw1liaEryPD0FCxuLdog8YRYvKpRn5FoeLPD1g6fWP_adiOElGeXmXT8IenUaD969w18jk2hBcCVKM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2197.8)):

Anything that you've been doing this for 25 years, is that part of this that you don't feel like we've touched on very well or anything that you'd want to-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:44:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/r7M7-smPbVLkpXONqAuJmLoKH4zH9FHND1ndJY2Q613PrwXnm6_tdGXnS5vBHLpxvkX_GV1dapEkzwivBt5_7-kI_EA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2207.49)):

No, I think I was trying to just stay centralized to OneFamily. But you pulled out 25 years, so 25 plus years? I don't think so. You asked the question, why have I been doing this for so long? And I have asked myself that more than enough. And to where I'm finally saying, if it's meant for me to do something different, then the tides and the shift would turn that way and it'll be easy. But if it's not meant for me to do something different, it won't be easy. Every job that I've gotten in this field was easy. It was just easy. I didn't have to do too much hurrah for it. I remember saying I was going to stay at home and be a stay-at-home mom one time. And my husband agreed for a year, and I said, "I'm going to apply for one job just to see." And they called me and I denied it. And they called me back with a different offer and I was like, "Okay, maybe I'm supposed to take it." So I started working and was there for eight years.

Peggy ([16:45:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/A7n-FkZzRjdirr4RWu5SySsxyPsUmXL_hmpHCn6WUTQV5XJT_WEVgefkHls-tEoDt-G0rbRTbWB1g38QeZUcetmLfDo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2270.13)):

Do you think this is your purpose?

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:45:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/d71XSbWE7o86CwtTeg8LE9P_xevUQqoW9RmyMt_5clDy325JS2U3pGrNtUD2pW9OkyTcyLllEvtO77Dpbjv6FQZaIMA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2277.03)):

I think so.

Preston ([16:45:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/S7it1ZurS8tu19RsITEhWDplnrFHvoHPk9sYrTtrIG3Q4MeJGhScQU7E5guDAbZ9R-GkXdRsMYqzH5ffxllWfvPZK1o?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2277.6)):

Go ahead [inaudible 16:45:16]-

LeKeesha Edwards ([16:45:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/1BVlkx7XWqH5jMZL9Is6VHUae4LDgmxtBsf4ByXpj3YYCtzZTYejQUxcoEiJqj-3_4sba8yUoYW04OO5Ja44cs57TG0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2277.93)):

I think so. I hope so, because been, if not, I've wasted nearly 30 years of my life. But I think so. I think that it makes me happy for as frustrating as it makes me, it does make me happy. It gives me some sense of service. So whether I could go out into the community and do volunteer work or not, I serve every single day at my job.