



## Featured Foster Family: Sara and Andy



Meet Family Works foster parents Sara and Andy. They live in the Pittsville area and have been doing foster care with Family Works for the last 6 years. Prior to becoming licensed foster parents, Sara and Andy provided respite care for other foster parents with Family Works. Respite providers give much needed breaks to foster parents and foster children. This is a great opportunity to get a feel for foster care and support other foster parents in the process. Sara and Andy still enjoy providing respite for kiddos as they are able.

### *Getting Started*

Sara and Andy decided to pursue foster care because they wanted to be a resource for foster children that needed somewhere to go. Andy stated, “I wanted to give kids a better life than what I had and give kids the opportunities that I never got as a kid”. Sara and Andy are both very caring people and wanted to help by giving children a safe, stable, and loving home environment.

Something unique about their family is that Sara’s parents are also foster parents with Family Works. This allows both families to be there for one another and provide support as needed. It is very important to have a support system when parenting and caring for children.



### *Family Lifestyle*

Andy and Sara have such a warm and welcoming home environment. They live in a single-family home in rural Pittsville and have ample space to enjoy the outdoors. They have two dogs, Creed and Max, and a cat, Lex, that also live in the home. They love to stay active and enjoy time outdoors. They enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, and having campfires. When it is not nice outside, they enjoy having family movie and/or game nights. They also have regular family gatherings and outings with their family and friends and enjoy attending school sporting events to support the important people in their life.





**Max**



**Creed**



**Lex**

### ***What Keeps Them Going?***

Sara and Andy enjoy doing foster care and continue to provide care each year because they love the everyday challenges. They enjoy that no two days are the same and there is always something new to keep them on their toes. “It’s not always easy, but it’s worth it in the end”.

Sara and Andy enjoy connecting with birth families of the kiddos placed in the home to ensure family connections are maintained. Sara and Andy provide regular respite for the siblings of the child currently placed in the home. They want to make sure these relationships are maintained and supported in every way possible. This is something that they really enjoy and will continue to do as new kiddos come into the home.

### ***Why Family Works?***

Sara and Andy enjoy working with Family Works because of the support that they receive from staff and other foster parents. Social workers are available to families 24/7 in times of crisis and are at foster homes 3 times each month. Sara and Andy share that they feel Family Works is very family oriented and love the family feel of the agency. In addition to the support from Family Works staff, they also enjoy the many educational and connection opportunities that they have with regular cluster trainings and monthly case consultations. Sara notes that she really enjoys our monthly case consultations as it gives foster parents time to reach out and connect with other foster parents within the agency. Case consultations are an additional support to foster parents and are a great way for families to build their foster parent support network! Cluster trainings are educational opportunities that are offered to foster parents by Family Works or outside agencies each month. Topics vary, but it is a wonderful opportunity to work on your required education hours and expand your knowledge on important areas related to foster care.

### ***Words of Advice from Sara and Andy***

- Don't have a plan. If you don't make plans, then you don't have the opportunity to be disappointed when things don't go as planned.
- Be an advocate. Don't be afraid to speak up and say what is on your mind!
- Be the voice for the kids in your home. They need someone to have their back.



### ***Family Works Social Worker says:***

*“Sara and Andy are absolutely incredible foster parents. They are both kind and caring. They have such a warm and welcoming home. One thing that I absolutely love about this family is how they support birth family connections. Sara and Andy drive 2.5 hours round trip each week to support birth family visits as well as supervising 3 zoom calls each week. They plan birthday parties with the birth family to ensure as much normalcy as possible. They also provide regular respite for the siblings of the child that is currently placed in the home. They go above and beyond to support each kiddo that comes into their home whether it be for respite or placement. I truly appreciate all that this family does!”*