

Transcript of Rosie O'Donnell

Show

5/8/00

ROSIE O'DONNELL SHOW
AIR DATE:5/8/00

Rosie: WE'VE ALL HEARD THE TRAGIC STORIES OF CHILD ABUSE ON THE NEWS. STORIES SO TERRIBLE, ONE CAN'T IMAGINE A CHILD GOING THROUGH THAT KIND OF PAIN. BUT WHAT HAPPENS TO THESE CHILDREN AFTER THE CAMERAS ARE GONE? THOUSANDS OF THEM WILL END UP IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM. TODAY, WITH THE HELP OF FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, WE'LL SHOW YOU THE JOYS OF FOSTER PARENTING. WE'LL MEET A SELFLESS COUPLE ON LONG ISLAND WHO HAVE OPENED THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR HOME. WE'LL ALSO TAKE YOU TO A SPECIAL GROUP HOME IN FLORIDA WHERE ABUSED GIRLS GET THE LOVE AND SUPPORT THEY NEVER HAD. THE FACT THAT YOU GUYS HAVE SURVIVED AND THRIVED MEANS THAT YOU HAVE TREMENDOUS COURAGE INSIDE OF YOU. AND BY THE END OF THIS HOUR, YOU'LL KNOW HOW TO GET INVOLVED AND BEGIN FOSTERING HOPE FOR CHILDREN IN NEED.

Audience Member:HI, I'M SCOTT. AND I'M SCOTT'S FORMER FOSTER MOM, JUDY. AND THIS IS "THE ROSIE O'DONNELL SHOW." ON TODAY'S SHOW, A SPECIAL UNOSTERING HOPE, WITH FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON. HIT IT, JOHN!

Audience Member:AND NOW HERE'S ROSIE!

Rosie: HI, EVERYBODY. SIT. RELAX. HI, SCOTT.

Audience Member:HI.

Rosie: HOW ARE YOU?

Audience Member:ALL RIGHT.

Rosie: HOW LONG WERE YOU IN FOSTER CARE, HONEY?

Audience Member:THREE MONTHS.

Rosie: AND THAT'S THE WOMAN WHO TOOK CARE OF YOU?

Audience Member:YES.

Rosie: HAVE YOU SEEN HER IN ALL THE TIME SINCE?

Audience Member:NO, I HAVE NOT.

Rosie: TODAY WAS THE BIG REUNION?

Audience Member:YES, IT WAS.

Rosie: HOW DID IT GO?

Audience Member:IT WENT ALL RIGHT. IT WAS VERY EXCITING TO SEE HER.

Rosie: HOW MANY FOSTER KIDS HAVE YOU HAD IN YOUR LIFE?

Audience Member:WE DID IT FOR FOUR YEARS AND WE HAD 15 CHILDREN.

Rosie: GOOD FOR YOU. ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH THEM, STILL?

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Audience Member: SOME OF THEM ARE. AND THIS WAS A DRE COME TRUE.

Rosie: I'M GLAD YOU GUYS GOT TO SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN. WE'RE HERE TODAY TO TELL EVERYBODY ABOUT THE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM IN THIS COUNTRY. AND IT IS IN NEED OF A LOT OF WORK AND A LOT OF IMPROVEMENTS. BUT IT IS FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH. AND WE WANT TO SHOW YOU WHAT FOSTER CARE IS ALL ABOUT IN THE HOPES THAT SOME DAY SOME OF YOU OUT THERE WILL ACTUALLY DECIDE TO BECOME FOSTER PARENTS. WHAT HAPPENED, HOW I GOT INVOLVED, LAST SUMMER, I WASEa IN MIAMI WHERE I LIVE, AND I WAS WATCHING CHANNEL 6 NEWS. THERE WAS A STORY ABOUT A YOUNG GIRL WHO WAS SEVERELY BEATEN AND VIOLATED IN HER OWN HOUSE. AND I CALLED TO SEE WHAT THE PROCESS WAS TO POSSIBLY ADOPT THE CHILD. ONLY TO FIND OUT THAT SHE WOULD BE PUT IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM AND SHE PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION FOR A LONG TIME. I THEN FOUND OUT ABOUT THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM AND WENT THROUGH THE COURTS AS REQUIRED TO BECOME A FOSTER PARENT, AFTER I FOUND OUT HOW MANY KIDS WERE ACTUALLY IN NEED. WHILE RESEARCHING THIS SHOW, WE FOUND SO MANY STORIES OF HOPE, INCLUDING A WONDERFUL FAMILY ON LONG ISLAND. TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

(WE see a video Clip)

Rosie: IT'S A WONDERFUL STORY. GLORIA, HOW IS ANDREW DOING?

Gloria: HE'S DOING VERY WELL.

Rosie: IS HE?

Gloria: YES. HE'S VERY ACTIVE AND WE HAVE HIM IN SCHOOL. TWO NURSERY SCHOOLS.

Rosie: RIGHT.

Gloria: AND HE DOES SOCCER ON THE WEEKEND. AND HE'S A VERY LOVABLE CHILD. AND THEN, OF COURSE, HE VISITS GLORIA EVERY WEEK.

Rosie: GLORIA, HOW WAS IT FOR YOUR OTHER CHILDREN WHEN ANDREW LEFT AND WENT TO LIVE WITH HIS GRANDPARENTS?

Gloria: IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR MY OLDER CHILDREN. THIS WAS THE FIRST FOSTER CHILD THAT MOVED ON AND WENT TO FAMILY. IT TOOK US ABOUT SIX MONTHS BEFORE WE TOOK OUR NEXT FOSTER CHILD. WE TOOK A LITTLE BREAK. WE FELT HOW WE WERE FEELING. AND THEN WE JUMPED IN AND DID IT AGAIN.

Rosie: NOW IT'S A DIFFICULT THING, NEEDLESS TO SAY.

Gloria: IT IS.

Rosie: YEAH. WHEN YOU HAVE TO LET THE CHILD GO. BUT DO YOU FEEL A SENSE OF SOLACE THAT YOU KNOW THAT EVEN FOR A SHORT TIME YOU SHOWED THE CHILD THAT LIFE IS GOOD?

Gloria: YES.

Rosie: AND THAT THERE CAN BE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM?

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Gloria: LOVING THEM GIVES A LOT BACK TO YOU.

Rosie: IT'S GREAT HOW IT ALL WORKED OUT WITH ALL OF YOU. SO MANY TIMES THEY'RE IN ADVERSARIAL POSITIONS, THE FOSTER PARENTS AND THE BIOLOGICAL FAMILY. AND IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THAT. IF THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD ARE SERVED, EVERYBODY, I THINK, CAN BE ACCOMMODATED. DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S TRUE?

Gloria: I DO.

Rosie: THANKS FOR BEING HERE. THANKS FOR SHARING THAT. UP NEXT, FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON WILL TELL US ALL ABOUT HER INTEREST IN FOSTER CARE, WHICH SHE'S HAD SINCE SHE WAS A VERY, VERY YOUNG CHILD. DON'T GO AWAY. WE'LL BE BACK RIGHT AFTER THIS.

COMMERCIAL BREAK 1

Rosie: I COULDN'T IMAGINE DOING THIS SHOW WITHOUT OUR FIRST GUEST. FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS SHE'S WORKED TIRELESSLY TO REFORM OUR NATION'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM AND TO PROMOTE ADOPTION. IT'S MY HONOR AND PLEASURE TO WELCOME BACK TO THE SHOW THE FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES, HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON. HOW ARE YOU?

Hillary: I'M GOOD. HOW ARE YOU?

Rosie: I'M GOOD, THANK YOU. GOOD TO SEE YOU.

Hillary: THANK YOU.

Rosie: I KNOW FROM KNOWING YOU FOR SO LONG THAT YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN CHILD WELFARE.

Hillary: YES. INDEED.

Rosie: AND THIS STARTED REALLY IN YOUR HOME WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE GIRL.

Hillary: WELL, YOU KNOW, AS I HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT AND TALKED ABOUT BEFORE, MY MOTHER DID NOT HAVE THE BEST OF UPBRINGINGS. BY THE WAY, SHE SAYS HELLO.

Rosie: HOW'S SHE DOING?

Hillary: SHE'S DOING GREAT. SHE WANTED TO SAY A SPECIAL HELLO TO YOU. AND I THINK PARTLY BECAUSE I WAS SO MOVED BY THE STORY OF HER STRUGGLES, AND, YOU KNOW, BEING IN THOSE DAYS A LONG TIME AGO, IN THE 1920s, A CHILD OF DIVORCE WHO BASICALLY COULDN'T BE RAISED BY HER OWN PARENTS, WHO WERE SO YOUNG, AND SENT TO LIVE WITH GRANDPARENTS WHO DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO DO IT. AND THEN EVENTUALLY GOING TO WORK AT THE AGE OF 13 IN SOMEBODY ELSE'S HOME, TAKING CARE OF OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN.

Rosie: RIGHT.

Hillary: AND SO FOR ME, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN COMMITTED AND REALLY CARING ABOUT HOW YOU CREATE GOOD CONDITIONS FOR CHILDREN TO GROW UP IN. AND WHEN A FAMILY CAN'T DO IT, THEN WE HAVE TO STEP IN.

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Hillary: AND THAT'S WHY I'M SO GRATEFUL TO EVERYBODY WILLING TO BE A FOSTER PARENT AND AN ADOPTIVE PARENT. BECAUSE IT MAKES SUCH A DIFFERENCE.

Rosie: AND THERE IS SUCH A NEED. THERE ARE LITERALLY 300,000 CHILDREN, THERE ARE NO HOMES AVAILABLE FOR THEM. THEY'RE IN GROUP FOSTER HOMES WHICH ARE THE EQUIVALENT OF MODERN-DAY ORPHANAGES.

Hillary: THAT'S RIGHT.

Rosie: YOUR MOM, SHE GREW UP IN THAT SITUATION WHEN SHE BECAME A PARENT HERSELF DECIDED TO TAKE IN CHILDREN?

Hillary: YES, YES. AND WE DID. WE WOULD TAKE IN YOUNG WOMEN WHO WOULD LIVE WITH US AND BASICALLY MY MOTHER TRIED TO DO FOR THEM WHAT THE WOMEN WHO WORKED FOR HER DID FOR HER WHICH WAS TO PROVIDE A STABLE HOME AND A GOOD BACKGROUND AND HELP THE YOUNG GIRLS FINISH SCHOOL AND GO ON. AND I JUST THINK THAT THERE'S NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN TRYING TO PROVIDE THAT SUPPORT, AND I'VE BEEN WATCHING THE SHOW IN ONE OF THE ROOMS AND I HEARD ABOUT ANDREW AND MET SOME OF THE PEOPLE THROUGH THE VIDEOS AND THE FOLKS WHO INTRODUCED THE PROGRAM AND I JUST THINK IT'S GREAT YOU'RE DOING THIS, ROSIE, TO BRING MORE ATTENTION.

Rosie: WHOSE ISN'T WORKING? THERE WE GO. HOW LONG HAS IT NOT BEEN WORKING?

Hillary: JUST A MINUTE.

Rosie: EXCELLENT. YOU KNOW WHEN WE'RE LIVE LIKE TODAY WE ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING MESS UP.

Hillary: OH, WELL, THAT'S PART OF BEING LIVE.

Rosie: WHEN WE'RE TAPED, NOTHING GOES WRONG.

Hillary: YOU LIVE ALIVE, SOMETHING MESSES UP.

Rosie: EXACTLY. I KNOW THAT YOUR CHILD ADVOCACY REALLY BEGAN WITH THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND, WHICH WASN'T, IN FACT, THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND WHEN YOU STARTED THERE.

Hillary: THAT'S RIGHT. WHEN I WAS IN LAW SCHOOL I BECAME VERY INTERESTED IN DEFENDING CHILDREN. AND I WORKED FOR THE LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATION THAT WAS IN NEW HAVEN WHERE I WENT TO LAW SCHOOL AND I WAS ASSIGNED RIGHT OFF THE BAT CASES OF FOSTER KIDS. ONE CASE I HAD JUST MADE SUCH AN IMPRESSION ON ME BECAUSE IT WAS AN OLDER WOMAN. AN OLDER BLACK WOMAN WHO HAD RAISED HER OWN CHILDREN, HAD BEEN A FOSTER PARENT FOR A LONG TIME. HAD A LITTLE GIRL PLACED WITH HER RIGHT AFTER BIRTH WHEN THE CHILD WAS BASICALLY ABANDONED. AND THIS WOMAN RAISED THIS CHILD FOR FOUR YEARS AND THEN DECIDED SHE WANTED TO ADOPT THE CHILD. AND THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN ANYONE'S MIND THAT THIS YOUNG GIRL SAW THE WOMAN AS HER MOTHER. BUT THE RULES IN THOSE DAYS SAID THAT A FOSTER PARENT COULDN'T ADOPT. THANKFULLY WE'VE CHANGED THOSE RULES BECAUSE THEY WERE CRUEL RULES THAT REALLY TOOK CHILDREN AWAY FROM THE PEOPLE THEY HAD BONDED WITH IF THE FAMILY COULD ADOPT. SO WE FOUGHT VERY HARD ON THAT.

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Hillary: BUT IN THOSE DAYS THE ADOPTION AGENCY SAID, WELL, SHE'LL BE MUCH BETTER OFF WITH SOMEBODY'S WHO'S RICHER AND HAS A BIGGER HOUSE AND MORE TOYS AND DIDN'T LOOK AT ALL ABOUT THE BOND THAT HAD BEEN CREATED BETWEEN THE WOMAN AND THE LITTLE GIRL. SO FROM THEN ON I TRIED A LOT OF CASES AND TRIED TO CHANGE THE LAWS SO THAT PEOPLE WOULD LOOK AT THE RELATIONSHIP AND WHAT A CHILD NEEDS IN TERMS OF LOVE AND NOT JUST IN TERMS OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS.

Rosie: RIGHT. AND YOU ACTUALLY WROTE A LETTER TO MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN AT THE TIME?

Hillary: I READ ABOUT HER. AND WHAT WAS THEN TO BECOME THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND. SO I WENT TO WORK THERE AFTER THE FIRST YEAR IN LAW SCHOOL AND STAYED INVOLVED AND WENT ON THE BOARD. AND IT WAS AN INCREDIBLY GOOD EXPERIENCE FOR ME BECAUSE WE SPENT OUR TIME TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO HELP CHILDREN.

Rosie: TELL EVERYONE ABOUT IN 1997 THE LAW THAT WAS PASSED?

Hillary: WELL, SINCE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO ANYTHING FROM THE WHITE HOUSE WE'VE BEEN INTENT UPON CHANGING THE FEDERAL RULES THAT GOVERN ADOPTION. AND WE WERE ABLE TO PASS FIRST THE ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT, WHICH CHANGED THE RULES ABOUT HOW WE COULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO ADOPT KIDS WHO WERE NOT EVER GOING BACK TO THEIR BIRTH PARENTS. BUT THE LEGAL SYSTEM JUST TOOK TOO LONG TO MAKE THEM FREE FOR ADOPTION. AND WE ALSO WERE ABLE TO SEE PASSED THROUGH THE CONGRESS A TAX CREDIT FOR ADOPTIONS, SO THAT PEOPLE CAN GET SOME OF THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THAT YOU NEED WHEN YOU BRING A CHILD INTO YOUR HOME. AND THE CREDIT'S SLIGHTLY GREATER FOR SOMEBODY WITH A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD. AND THEN WE BEGAN WORKING ON SOME 6 THE OTHER PROBLEMS LIKE THERE WERE BIASES IN OUR SYSTEM, IN THE COURT SYSTEM, IN THE SOCIAL WORK SYSTEM, AGAINST PLACING AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN WITH WHITE PARENTS, OR, YOU KNOW, BIRACIAL CHILDREN WITH BLACK PARENTS. AND THERE WERE JUST A LOT OF BIASES. AND SO WE HAD ALL THESE CHILDREN WAITING IN FOSTER CARE BECAUSE THE SOCIAL WORKERS AND THE JUDGES WOULDN'T PLACE THEM WITH PEOPLE WHO WERE ON THE WAITING LIST FOR ADOPTION. SO WE PASSED A FEDERAL LAW THAT WOULD END THAT KIND OF DISCRIMINATION. AND, AGAIN, FOCUS ON WHAT THE CHILD NEEDS. AND TO ME, IT IS NOT AN IMPORTANT WHAT COLOR THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND THE CHILD ARE AS TO THE QUALITY OF THE HOME AND THE LOVE THAT THE CHILD CAN GET THERE. ESPECIALLY IF THE ALTERNATIVE IS TO KEEP A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE.

Rosie: EXACTLY.

Hillary: SO WE TRIED TO CHANGE THE LAWS ABOUT FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION TO ENCOURAGE MORE ADOPTION.

Rosie: AND I KNOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN VERY VOCAL ABOUT THE WHOLE AGING OUT. A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE WHEN YOU'RE A FOSTER KID, WHEN YOU GET TO BE 18, UP UNTIL RECENTLY, IT'S BEEN OVER.

Hillary: THAT'S RIGHT. EVEN THOUGH I'D WORKED IN THIS FIELD FOR A LONG TIME, I HADN'T FOCUSED ON IT AS A BIG PROBLEM AS IT IS. AND YET, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT A CHILD TURNS 18, AND IT USED TO BE THAT A SOCIAL WORKER WOULD SHOW UP AND SAY, IT'S TIME TO LEAVE. AND YOU'D BE IN THE MIDDLE OF HIGH SCHOOL, MAYBE YOUR SENIOR YEAR. AND YOU WERE GONE. YOU HAD NOWHERE TO GO. AND SO I STARTED MEETING WITH FOSTER CHILDREN AROUND THE COUNTRY, AND THEY BEGAN TELLING ME WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO HAVE THAT EXPERIENCE IN THEIR LIVES.

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Hillary:AND THEY HAD NO MEDICAL CARE. THEY HAD NO PLACE TO LIVE. ONE GIRL SAID, YOU KNOW, I HAVE NOBODY TO CALL AND ASK WHAT I SHOULD WEAR OR HOW TO, YOU KNOW, MAKE A THANKSGIVING DINNER. NOTHING. SO WE'VE CHANGED THAT LAW, TOO. AND WE'VE CHANGED THE NUMBER OF YEARS THAT YOU CAN STAY IN FOSTER CARE WITH FULL MEDICAL BENEFITS AND WITH THE KIND OF INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS AND EDUCATION THAT CHILDREN REQUIRE. SO, I THINK WE'RE MOVING TOWARD A FAIRER PLACE FOR OUR FOSTER KIDS.

Rosie: I THINK SO, TOO. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT. THERE'S ALL SORTS OF ISSUES ABOUT THE EXPEDITING THE TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS.

Hillary:ROSIE, IT'S THE HARDEST THING IN THE WORLD.

Rosie: IT IS.

Hillary:I'VE BEEN IN THOSE CASES WHERE, YOU KNOW, A CHILD WOULD BE LIVING IN A CAR, BEING COVERED WITH, YOU KNOW, SKIN DISEASE, BE MALNOURISHED, MOTHER WOULD BE A DRUG ADDICT, OR ALCOHOLIC, CHILD BE PUT INTO FOSTER CARE. AND THEN, YOU KNOW, THE MOTHER WOULD NOT MAKE A LOT OF EFFORTS, BUT MAKE SOME EFFORTS TO TRY TO GET HERSELF BACK TOGETHER, AND FINALLY THE DECISION WOULD BE MADE TO TERMINATE THOSE PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE MOTHER WOULD COME IN AND FIGHT THEM BECAUSE SHE WOULDN'T WANT TO GIVE UP THE CHILD, EVEN THOUGH SHE HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILD. IT'S A TERRIBLE SITUATION. BUT AT SOME POINT, A CHILD'S RIGHT TO A SAFE AND PERMANENT AND LOVING HOME HAS TO BE PUT AHEAD A PARENT'S RIGHTS.

Rosie: I AGREE. AND ESPECIALLY IN CASES OF EGREGIOUS ABUSE.YOU KNOW, WHEN THE CHILD IS SO INJURED. BECAUSE THEY WAIT AND THEY LANGUISH FOR YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS AND THEY LANGUISH UNTIL THEY'RE NOT OF ADOPTABLE AGE. THERE ARE SO MANY CHILDREN OVER 10 WHO ARE STILL WAITING.

Hillary:BUT, YOU KNOW, IF WE PUT FACES AND STORIES WITH THESE CHILDREN, THEY'RE NO LONGER THEN STATISTICS. YOU KNOW, WE HAD AN EVENT A FEW YEARS AGO AT THE WHITE HOUSE WHERE I WAS TRYING TO PROMOTE ADOPTION, AND A YOUNG GIRL CAME AND READ A POEM, WHICH I WILL NEVER FORGET. SHE TALKED ABOUT HOW ALL SHE WANTED WAS A ROOM OF HER OWN. AND SHE'D BEEN REMOVED FOR SEXUAL ABUSE IN HER HOME. AND SHE'D BEEN IN FOSTER CARE FOR I THINK LIKE SIX YEARS BY THE TIME THAT I'D MET HER. AND BECAUSE SHE WAS ABLE TO PRESENT HERSELF IN PUBLIC, A LOT OF PEOPLE SAW HER AND WITHIN WEEKS, SHE WAS ON THE WAY TO BEING ADOPTED. AND I'VE STAYED IN TOUCH WITH HER. SHE AND HER PARENTS HAVE COME TO THE WHITE HOUSE TO VISIT WITH ME. AND YOU WOULD NOT -- YOU COULD NOT RECOGNIZE THE GIRL THAT WAS SO SHY AND SCARED IN THE WHITE HOUSE, AND THE YOUNG WOMAN THAT SHE'S BECOME. SO THE MORE WE CAN PERSONALIZE THIS, AS YOU'RE DOING, THE MORE PEOPLE WILL SAY, YOU KNOW, I WANT TO BE PART OF ONE OF THOSE CHILDREN'S LIVES.

Rosie: BECAUSE EVEN FOR ME, IT WASN'T UNTIL I WENT ACTUALLY TO THE GLADSTONE CENTER, WHICH WE'RE GOING TO ROLL IN A PIECE LATER AND I ACTUALLY WIPED THE TEARS FROM THE FACE OF THESE CHILDREN THAT I WAS MOVED TO DO SOMETHING MYSELF. EVHOUGH MY WHOLE LIFE I'VE BEEN A CHILD ADVOCATE, IT WASN'T UNTIL I SAW THEM AND KNEW THEM PERSONALLY THAT I FELT COMPELLED TO ACT AND TO BECOME FOSTER PARENT.

Hillary:THAT'S RIGHT.

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Rosie: SO I THINK THAT'S WHAT IT'S GOING TO TAKE. WHAT HAPPENS TO A KID WHEN HE DOES GET TOO OLD FOR THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM? NEXT WE'LL MEET A GUY WHO'S FACING THAT CHALLENGE AND WE'LL TELL YOU HOW HE'S DOING. DON'T GO AWAY.

COMMERCIAL BREAK 2

Rosie: WE'RE BACK WITH HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TODAY TALKING ABOUT FOSTER CARE IN AMERICA. AND I KNOW AGING OUT IS SOMETHING THAT'S NEAR AND DEAR TO YOU.

Hillary: IT REALLY. AND, YOU KNOW, I'VE MET A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE, AND A FEW MONTHS AGO, WHEN I WAS OUT ON LONG ISLAND AT A HIGH SCHOOL DOING A TOWN MEETING, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET A YOUNG MAN WHO IS ABOUT TO AGE OUT OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM. AND I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET HIM. SO PLEASE TAKE A LOOK.

(WE SEE A CLIP)

Rosie: GRACE AND ALEX ARE HERE WITH US TODAY. WELCOME THEM TO THE SHOW, PLEASE. IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU BOTH. GRACE, WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO DECIDE TO BECOME A FOSTER PARENT?

Grace and Alex: I BECAME A FOSTER PARENT IN THE YEAR 1980. AND I GOT ALEXANDER IN THE YEAR 1993. AND WHEN HE CAME TO ME, HE HAD A LOT OF PROBLEMS, BUT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I TOLD HIM, THAT HE HAS FIRST TO BELIEVE IN GOD, AND THERE'S A LOT OF LOVE IN MY HOME FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM. AND I MAKE HIM UNDERSTAND THAT HE'S GOING TO BE SOMEBODY SOME DAY. NEVER LET HIMSELF FEEL LOWER THAN ANYONE ELSE, AND I ENCOURAGE HIM WHEN HE HAD PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL. I CALL IN FOR TUTORS RIGHT AWAY TO HELP HIM. AND I'M VERY PROUD OF HIM, BECAUSE HE'S NOW ON HIS WAY TO BECOME A VERY SUCCESSFUL PERSON. I INVOLVED HIM IN THE URBAN LEAGUE. IN ANYTHING THAT I KNOW IS GOING TO BE WORTHWHILE FOR ALEX.

Hillary: ALEX, WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THE OTHER KIDS WHO ARE OUT THERE WAITING TO BE PUT IN FOSTER HOMES?

Grace and Alex: YOU KNOW, DON'T GIVE UP. DON'T GIVE UP, BECAUSE, YOU KNOW FORTUNATELY I WAS ABLE TO FIND -- TO BE PLACED IN A GOOD FOSTER HOME LIKE THIS. BUT DON'T GIVE UP HOPE, YOU KNOW NO MATTER WHAT. DON'T GIVE UP HOPE. AND IF YOU SEE, YOU KNOW, ANYTHING GOING WRONG, THEN SPEAK UP.

Rosie: WITHOUT A DOUBT. THERE ARE SO MANY KIDS WHO NEED LOVING HOMES. AND THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SO MUCH TO GAIN FROM OPENING THEIR HEART IN THAT WAY. NEXT WE'RE GOING TO TAKE YOU TO A SPECIAL PLACE IN MIAMI, WHERE I LIVE, THAT'S HELPING ABUSED GIRLS THERE. DON'T GO AWAY. WE'LL BE BACK RIGHT AFTER THIS.

COMMERCIAL BREAK 3

Rosie: OFTEN KIDS WHO ARE TAKEN AWAY FROM THEIR PARENTS BECAUSE OF PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION AND THERAPY THAT CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN GROUP HOMES FOR FOSTER KIDS. ONE OF THESE PLACES THAT I TOLD HILLARY ABOUT MY LOVE FOR IS A PLACE CALLED THE GLADSTONE CENTER IN MIAMI. IT'S A WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL ORGANIZATION. TAKE A LOOK.

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(WE SEE A VIDEO CLIP)

Rosie: PLEASE WELCOME STEVE MANNING, THE DIRECTOR OF THE CHARLIE PROGRAM IN SOUTH FLORIDA. HOW ARE YOU, STEVE?

Steve: JUST FINE. THANK YOU.

Rosie: GOOD TO SEE YOU. THAT PIECE WE SHOWED, THE CENTER FOR ABUSED GIRLS. BUT SADLY IN THE AREA WHERE WE LIVE IN MIAMI, THERE IS NO SUCH CENTER FOR BOYS.

Steve: NO THERE ISN'T, NOT YET.

Rosie: AND THE REASON FOR THAT IS JUST REALLY FUNDING, CORRECT?

Steve: WELL, FUNDING IS A PROBLEM. AND THERE IS SO MANY NEEDS IN THE AREAS OF FOSTER CARE AND GROUP CARE THAT IT'S ALL PART OF A LARGER PLAN.

Rosie: STEVE AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER IN AN EFFORT TO TRY TO RAISE MONEY TO OPEN THE EQUIVALENT OF THE GLADSTONE CENTER FOR BOYS DOWN THERE IN SOUTH FLORIDA. AND THE FUND-RAISING IS GOING PRETTY WELL UP TO NOW, IS IT NOT?

Steve: WELL, WE'RE STARTING. WE'RE REALLY MOVING ALONG AT THIS POINT.

Rosie: OFFICE DEPOT IS A COMPANY THAT IS BASED IN FLORIDA. THEY ARE VERY PHILANTHROPIC, AND THEY CARE VERY MUCH ABOUT THE CHILDREN IN THEIR COMMUNITY. AND IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY. WE HAVE SHAWN MCGEE FROM OFFICE DEPOT WHO'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU, STEVE.

Shawn: STEVE, AFTER SEEING THE INCREDIBLE DIFFERENCE THAT YOU MAKE IN THE CHILDREN'S LIVES IN SOUTH FLORIDA, OFFICE DEPOT WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT YOU THIS CHECK FOR \$1 MILLION.

Steve: THIS IS GOING TO -- THIS IS GOING TO GO A LONG WAYS TO HELPING THE KIDS WE SERVE, AND JUST ALLOW US TO PROVIDE SO MUCH MORE FOR THEM. THANKS A LOT.

Rosie: WHEN IT'S TIME TO SEND YOUR KIDS BACK TO SCHOOL, REMEMBER OFFICE DEPOT GAVE \$1 MILLION TO HELP KIDS WHO DON'T HAVE A SCHOOL TO GO TO. GO SHOP AT OFFICE DEPOT, WOULD YOU? WE'LL BE BACK WITH HOW YOU CAN BECOME A FOSTER PARENT, RIGHT AFTER THIS.

COMMERCIAL BREAK 4

Rosie: SO IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT, EACH STATE HAS DIFFERENT RULES, BUT HERE ARE THE BASIC STEPS -- IF ALL GOES WELL, YOU'LL BE ON YOUR WAY TO BECOMING LICENSED. JOINING US NOW IS SHARON DAVID. SHE WAS A FOSTER MOTHER FOR EIGHT YEARS AND IS THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK "DO YOU WANT TO BE A FOSTER PARENT?" SHARON, ELABORATE FOR US BRIEFLY THE STEPS ON BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT.

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Sharon:WELL, THE FIRST THING YOU NEED TO DO IF YOU HAVE A FAMILY IS TALK TO THEM ABOUT IT. BECAUSE EVERYBODY NEEDS TO BE ON THE SAME PAGE AND SUPPORTING THAT DECISION. AND THEN, LIKE YOU SAID, YOU GO TO SOCIAL SERVICES, OR THEY'LL SEND IT TO YOU IN THE MAIL. IT'S A VERY EASY PROCESS TO GO THROUGH. THE APPLICATION IS LENGTHY. IT ALSO INCLUDES THE RELEASE TO DO THE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK WITH IT. AND THEN YOU SEND IT BACK. SOCIAL SERVICES WILL CALL YOU AND MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO COME VISIT YOUR HOME. CLEANING YOUR BATHTUB FIVE TIMES IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE CHECKING FOR CLEANLINESS, THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR A LOVING, SAFE, HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT TO PLACE THESE CHILDREN INTO. AND, AFTER YOU'VE DONE THOSE -- GONE THROUGH THOSE STEPS, THEN YOU WAIT FOR THE PHONE CALL. AND MY EXPERIENCE WAS THAT IT DOESN'T COME AFTER YOU'VE HAD YOUR SHOWER AND PUT ON YOUR MAKEUP AND YOU'RE HAVING YOUR MORNING CUP OF TEA. IT COMES ABOUT 10:30 OR 11:00 AT NIGHT, AND THERE'S A PANICKY VOICE ON THE OTHER END OF THE PHONE SAYING, CAN YOU TAKE THIS CHILD?

Rosie: RIGHT. SHARON, YOU'VE HAD SOME AMAZING EXPERIENCES, THOUGH, WITH THE FOSTER CHILDREN YOU'VE TAKEN IN. COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT ONE OR TWO THAT REALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE TO YOU?

Sharon:I HAVE ONE REALLY SPECIAL STORY. AND I HOPE I CAN GET THROUGH IT WITHOUT CRYING. SHE CAME TO US WHEN SHE WAS 14, AND SHE HAD BEEN IN THE SYSTEM SINCE SHE WAS 11. WHICH I FOUND TRAGIC. DIFFICULT TIMES WITH THIS CHILD. ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS IS THE FIRST MONTH, MAKING THE CHILD FEEL WELCOME IN A NEW HOME AND IN A NEW FAMILY.

Rosie: OR PERHAPS TO FEEL SAFE WHEN THEY NEVER IN THEIR LIFE HAVE FELT SAFE.

Sharon:THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE IN A FAMILY. AND THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TEACHING THEM, HOW TO LIVE IN A FAMILY AND HAVE APPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FAMILY MEMBERS. SHE STAYED WITH US FOR A YEAR, BROUGHT HER GRADES UP, ATTENDED SCHOOL, AND I JUST NOW GOT A GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE MAIL THAT SHE'S GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL. I THINK IN ABOUT 15 DAYS. AND SHE'S PLANNING TO GO TO COLLEGE AND COMING TO VISIT ME IN JUNE.

Rosie: THAT'S AMAZING.

Hillary:SHARON, THERE ARE SO MANY STORIES LIKE THAT THAT I HEAR ALL THE TIME FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE OPENED THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR HOMES TO THESE CHILDREN. HOW WOULD YOU BEST ENCOURAGE SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE WATCHING THIS SHOW, BECAUSE ROSIE'S SO INTERESTED, TO REALLY TAKE THAT STEP, THAT LEAP OF FAITH TO DO THIS?G

Sharon:I THINK WHAT -- WHAT WE DID WAS WE LOOKED AT OUR FAMILY AND WE REALIZED THAT WE HAD A LOVING HOME. AND THAT WE NEEDED TO SHARE IT. ALL OF THESE CHILDREN, WHETHER THEY'RE OUR BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN OR NOT, ARE IMPORTANT. THEY'RE OUR FUTURE. AND WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THEM. AND THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WAS OUR FAMILY PHILOSOPHY DURING THE EIGHT YEARS THAT WE DID FOSTER PARENTING.

Rosie: YOU KNOW, AND WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THEM ONE KID AT A TIME. BECAUSE SOMETIMES IT SEEMS SO OVERWHELMING. AND I READ A WONDERFUL BOOK ABOUT THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM CALLED "TURNING STONES" THIS WEEKEND.

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Rosie: AND THE AUTHOR HAD A QUOTE FROM MOTHER TERESA IN THE BACK SAID THERE ARE SO MANY KIDS TO HELP, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD. AND MOTHER TERESA SAID, I'M NOT DOING THOSE CHANGE THE WORLD, I'M DOING THIS SO THE WORLD DOESN'T CHANGE ME. AND I THOUGHT THAT WAS VERY, VERY PROFOUND. YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW YOUR HEARTG AND YOUR SOUL. AND ONCE YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE CHILDREN IN NEED, AND IF YOU HAVE THE MEANS, IT'S YOUR TIME TO STEP UP. WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK AFTER THIS BREAK. DON'T GO AWAY.

COMMERCIAL BREAK 5

Rosie: WE HOPE THAT YOU'VE ALL GOT A FEELING FOR HOW REWARDING BEING A FOSTER PARENT CAN BE. AND WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE INFORMATION?

Sharon: WELL, FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FOSTER CARE AND BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT, VISIT THE NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION WEB SITE AT WWW.NFPAINC.ORG.

Rosie: WHATEVER.

Sharon: OR HERE'S EASIER, OR CALL TOLL FREE 800-888-6830. FOR A GREAT BOOK ON THE SUBJECT, PICK UP SHARON DAVIS' BOOK "DO YOU WANT TO BE A FOSTER PARENT?" AND EVERYONE IN OUR STUDIO AUDIENCE IS GETTING THIS BOOK.

Rosie: NOT ONLY ARE THEY GETTING THE BOOK BUT EVERYONE IN THE STUDIO AUDIENCE IS EITHER A FOSTER PARENT OR HAS JUST BEEN APPROVED TO BE A FOSTER PARENT. TO ALL OF YOU IN THE AUDIENCE, WE SAY THANK YOU, BRAVO. IT'S A WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL THING. DON'T GO AWAY, EVERYONE. WE WILL BE RIGHT BACK AFTER THIS. PAY ATTENTION. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.

COMMERCIAL BREAK 6

Rosie: WELL, WE'RE BACK. AND IT'S BEEN A GREAT, GREAT SHOW. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BEING HERE.

Hillary: THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR DOING THIS. AND THANK ALL OF YOU IN THE AUDIENCE WHO ARE FOSTER PARENTS, AND ALL THE FOSTER PARENTS WHO ARE OUT THERE. THERE'S SO MUCH WE CAN DO FOR OUR CHILDREN IF EVERYBODY REALLY WORKED TOGETHER. AND I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR EVERYONE WILLING TO BE A FOSTER PARENT AND AN ADOPTIVE PARENT.

Rosie: AND TO TAKE ONE OF YOUR QUOTES, IT DOES TAKE A VILLAGE TO RAISE A KID. AND THEY'RE ALL OUR CHILDREN. AND AS A NATION WE HAVE TO STAND UP AND NURTURE THEM. I THANK YOU VERY MUCH. WE'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW WITH JOHN TRAVOLTA AND HANSON. WHOO IS THAT A SHOW! BYE-BYE, EVERYONE.