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Statement gathered at Sipayik-Pleasant Point, Maine, November 13, 2014

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Focus Groups – General Information

Community: Sipayik – Pleasant Point

Date: November 13, 2014

Moderator: Rachel George

Commissioner: Carol Wishcamper

Topic: Native Foster and Adoptive Parents

Participants

1. Adele Moore (AM)
2. Stephanie Bailey (SB)
3. Garry Moore (GM)
4. Lynn Mitchell (LM)

Recording

RG: All right, it is November 13, 2014. We are here in Sipayik, Maine. The file number is FGS-2014-110010. My name is Rachel George and I'm here today with:

SB: Stephanie Bailey, I'm Wabanaki REACH Organizer.

LM: Lynn Mitchell.

AM: Adele Moore.

GM: Garry Moore.

CW: Carol Wishcamper, Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

RG: Perfect. Stephanie, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

SB: Yes.

LM: Lynn, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

LM: Yes.

RG: Adele, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

AM: Yes.

RG: And Jerry...

SB: Garry.

RG: Garry, sorry! Garry, have you been informed, understood and signed a consent form?

GM: Yes.

CW: And it sounds like we just got married.

SB: I know!

LM: I do!

CW: I do! We do!

(collective laughs)

RG: I have to let each of you know that if at any point during this recording you indicate that there is a child or an elder currently in need of protection or that there's imminent risk of serious bodily harm or death to an identifiable group or self, group including yourself... person or group including yourself, thank you, that that information may not be protected as confidential. Does that make sense?

SB: Yes.

RG: All right, so the first question, I want to start with this, what is most notable about your experiences as a foster or adoptive parent or someone providing care for a family member or child?

SB: I know something that I wanted to start with. I...with a little boy that I've had in my care since he was two years old. I got legal guardianship of him and then when I started adoption procedures, it's been over a year, I have to go through the Child Welfare Department, and --

CW: The State or the tribe?

SB: The tribe, Tribal Welfare Department, because he's a tribal child on the tribal census and they're not helping me. They won't help me, and so when I go to try to over, go over that, I'm told I have to go through the Child Welfare Department because they don't sever parental ties. You know, so it's about reunification or anything like that so they have to help take that step, I guess and I'm not getting help and it's been over a year.

LM: So they don't do that anymore, sever ties?

SB: They, they, they won't do it. The parents have to legally, the parents have to sign --

CW: The parents have to do it willingly.

SB: Willingly, yeah sever their own rights.

CW: Is that the mother of the child in the community or is she somewhere else?

SB: She's not in the community anymore.

CW: So, someone would need to be in contact with her to know whether or not she's willing to terminate her parental rights.

SB: And last we knew, because I have somebody who does case management for me, for my little boy and she went and checked in and they said that they were fine with allowing us to adopt.

CW: Did she sign an official papers?

SB: No, the Child Welfare is supposed to be going and, and then she's like 'well I want you to come with me' and I was like 'well tell me when you want me to go.'

CW: The child welfare worker wanted you.

SB: Yeah, wanted me to go, which I didn't understand.

CW: You can't, yeah.

SB: Yeah.

CW: Thank you. Helpful information Stephanie.

SB: Yeah.

GM: Can you come back with the question?

RG: Mhmm. What are the most notable moments of your time as a foster or adoptive parent or someone caring for a family member or child?

CW: Most notable meaning...

GM: The most notable for me was not realizing how my daughter would accept it knowing that my wife and me had to accept it. I brought up twins. Their mother had passed away and well it was only right that we take them in because she was the only parent and we were trying to do best for the child. Even though we asked our daughter, you know how'd she feel, she said

I feel good, but then the jealousy and the paying more attention to them not me; why'd you do this and this when you're not doing it for me. That was the most noticeable frustration that I had in trying to treat everybody equally. I think no matter if your own child accepts and agrees, you have to aware of the feelings that are really actually going to be, have a role in this I didn't adopt them, but we brought them up until they were on their own, went to college and they have their own jobs and everything, but it does have an effect I believe. And not knowing, like I said, not knowing what was going on at the time or even know how to handle it or approach it. You know that was my frustration whether hearsay "adopted," but you're taking in the children. I don't know, it, I think, I believe that, for me, if I was to do it again I'd have to go through the whole family again, but I think what would help would be, at the same time seeking family counseling to help the situation so you could all grow healthy and understand things healthy. You know, I learned that I think from that situation.

CW: How old was your daughter at the time when the twins came?

AM: Ten.

GM: Ten.

CW: And how old were the twins?

AM: Eight.

CW: Close.

AM: They were close.

GM: Yeah.

AM: Yes.

CW: Were these, was this kinship care or were these placed through the Tribal Child Welfare with you?

AM: We used the Tribal Child Welfare because they did have a dad that was out in California, and the mother brought them this way to get away from him so we did, we wanted to make sure that there was no way he could come and get them.

CW: Yeah.

AM: Because they were his kids, so we went through the Tribal Child Welfare dep-, you know, have it on paper and he, he wasn't going to get them.

CW: Yeah, good.

GM: They were divorced a long time at the time.



AM: I think they're divorced.

GM: Yeah, they're divorced yeah, she had full custody and everything and she passed away in May, but yeah that was a frustrating part as far as growing up and trying to treat them equal. And I think that would go for any child that any parent brings in, and I think it's even though everybody that agrees upon it, it wouldn't hurt to have counseling as a group toward family together.

AM: Because going back to when we had an actual foster child, you know once you got her she was like thirteen maybe going on fourteen. You know they send you a check every month then --

LM: That's it.

AM: That's it, you don't, nobody comes back to check in on you once everything go in or offer those type of services or anything like that. And so when it got to the point when she was like seventeen going to be eighteen, you know and didn't like the rules, and so she left and they told us, you know there's nothing really you can do because of her age, you know there's no sense, like forcing her to stay with you if doesn't want to. She's at that age. You know and so she left.

CW: Well was she under 18 at the time?

AM: She was, yeah 17.

CW: She was able to emancipate herself.

AM: Right, yeah that's why I don't know where she went, maybe with her grandmother. But I mean she finished high school, you know. She ended up being pregnant, you know, and that could've been the reason why she was leaving. I, I don't remember the timing of everything, but it's like once we got here, that was it. They just send you a check. Nobody --

CW: No supervision, no nothing.

AM: No double check, you know everything okay or --

GM: Recommendations.

AM: Do you need help or --

CW: With support.

AM: Support.

GM: Yeah.

AM: That would be good, for future stuff

LM: It's, it's funny you said -- when you say that I was thinking on the on the way down here 'what am I going to say?' I took care of this wonderful child and they sent me a check and you're all set, that's it. That's it. That's all there was (inaudible 09:37.4). There's a lot of emotions that went into that because I got my niece when she was five years old and Steph was part of it because she's my sister and I looked around and I was like I was the oldest. I didn't have no children so I didn't have that issue with another child so, and we grew up not having a lot of money and so, I mean not that I have a lot of money, but anything I could get for this kid. I'll tell you, we went to the Shrine Circus, you want popcorn, cotton candy, you know what I mean because we used to get to go but have nothing you know what I mean. (*laughs*) It's like I spoiled this kid and, but she was a good kid. She was oh my god, but I remember in third grade her teacher saying, 'oh Lynn, she just broke our heart when she sat on Santa's lap.' I was like, 'what do you mean?' She said, all the kids were asking for toys and she goes, I want my mom and dad and I said like oh, you know what I mean.

The counseling part because when she did turn like, probably between freshman and sophomore year she was at W.A. and I started getting feedback, you know that she was like kind of withdrawing and there was one time she was crying in the bathroom. You know I talked to her, 'no I'm fine Aunty, it's just you know I miss, I miss my mom and dad, I miss' and so and I knew you, Stephanie and she kept saying she's always asked me to move to Township, so she'd be closer with her family up there and I was like, 'mmm....' but now here she is bigger, you know what I mean and so, and we talked about it and she ended up going to Steph's and living with Steph.

But also in my head I was thinking 'umm', you know what I mean, it's like she's a teenager of mine too, you know what I mean and of course it's the first child and I didn't have the experience. I didn't know anything about teenagers then, so, how can I make you happy, you know and so then off she went, yeah. But that counseling piece, yes that is big. That's big.

AM: No matter what, they always want their mom, no matter --

LM: No matter what.

AM: Whatever happened, they always want their mom.

LM: Yeah, it's true.

SB: Yes.

CW: In these arrangements that are caring of kin, are those done informally independently or is Child Welfare involved in those placements?



GM: So we have a belief, I believe you know is that is we take care of our own, family members, you know. You don't go through the court system or anything like that and we take care of our own even though we take care of our own, in doing that we are not, no one's obligated to help us or pay us for anything you know and maybe even though we do it because this is the, this is who we are, we still shouldn't be denied any type of services or any type of support system you know that we might be able, when we do take in someone. Because we lose all that because we do it on our own.

CW: Right.

GM: You know and that does not, that doesn't help either.

RG: Can you tell me about a time where you felt very positive about your experience in providing care.

LM: I loved every moment of mine. I was able to, my whole world circled around that girl. I became a Girl Scout leader, tap dance and ballet, you know what I mean. I really engrossed it and just hung on tight and it was a wonderful experience. I had a good experience. She was a good kid. Then I had my own, different story! (*laughs*). No, no – she's (**SB:** That's not luck though, that's parenting) Yeah. (*laughs*)

SB: I mean with the good kid!

LM: One's a little more testing. (*laughs*)

AM: Well when I came I wasn't really thinking where he was coming from. I was just going towards my godchild and, but you know thinking of them how proud we are of them because of what they went through, you know losing their mom at a young age and everything and what they became you know, it's amazing. They're just like really like awesome stories, both of them, you know. Tiffany just finished her master's in nurse practitioner in the mental health and Nicholas graduated from Maine Maritime and has just finished up five years, a five-year contract you know with a certain company in the you know federal government. So it's you know, those are proud, they did, they did awesome.

GM: He's getting married.

AM: And he's going to get married, getting married in June -- and with my godchild she, I mean she was a good student. You know she did all the teenage stuff you know, one of the, one of the things that stands out is I paid for a class for her to go do cake decorating and when she had her own kids, you know she would make Winnie the Pooh cakes and you know, I thought that was cool. Yeah, with the little things, but that's what comes to my mind.

GM: The proudest for me was when they tell you that they love you.

LM: Yes.

GM: You know what I mean, so you feel you're doing something right. You know, when they still call for you amongst their problems, sharing with you or ask if you can help. I mean that's a real reward within itself you know, not being your own child, but still --

AM: But still come to you.

GM: Yeah, still come to you, you know with their problems you know what I mean. It's a good feeling, the feeling that you can be counted on. You know that you're still there for them. No matter through their ups and downs and when it comes to the twins, you know I tell people that they were easy. There was no work to them because before their mother passed away she, and I have to give credit to their father too. You know even though the relationship wasn't healthy for my sister and her husband, but I still have to give credit to their father you know on both of them on how they taught the two children, you know education, knowledge, you know was important, for my sister and her husband to try to teach these children, to instill it. So it was easy. You know I say it was easy to bring them up because they're all on the right track you know so I don't try to take all the credit for it. They were easy. You know so, but you know call you up, talk to you and chat about problems, you know, how good they're doing and then that's just part of the, you know you're part of the family then. You know you're, here's a son that I never had because I've grown up with all women.

AM: Poor thing and you're still surrounded by women.

GM: I've got two granddaughters (**AM:** three granddaughters, another daughter) I have two daughters, you know and I had my mother-

AM: Mother-in-law.

GM: My mother-in-law, my wife. I get it from, you know all directions right now.

LM: Sun up, sun down.

AM: Sun up, sun down you've got it.

GM: But, so Nicholas is like the son I never had you know but I call him Bud, you know like my friend. I want to call him son, but even when we get into conversations I can say you know I think of you as a son, but I never say it.

CW: Impose that on him.

GM: Right, I never, never did it because I --

CW: (*inaudible*)

GM: You know I never denied his knowing of his father either.



CW: Exactly.

GM: Yeah, but yeah, there's a lot of rewards.

AM: And I just call him my Nicholas.

LM: Yes.

AM: And I don't think I'll be able to do that after June 6th. I'm going to cry, I won't be able to call him my Nicholas after that.

(laughs)

RG: What are some of the challenges you experienced in providing care?

SB: I know one for me was the, I have a little boy who has autism and when I took him in, I used to be his childcare provider before I became his foster parent. I knew there was something different about him when he was a baby and then as he got older and he was taken into custody, Child Welfare custody and then placed into my home, you know I didn't know really, I mean I, I had an idea because I had already been watching him, but I didn't know specifically what was wrong with him. So I had to seek out all the services myself because Child Welfare didn't support so I called in CES and everything. That was a real challenge because I needed to figure out what was different. He hadn't hit any milestones and he wasn't developing. He was unresponsive and as he got bigger, the biggest challenge was, is because nobody helped the family, his biological grandmother and aunts and everybody understand his diagnosis. Even like I, I would tell them the best I could, to take him, you know they wanted to visit, so I would take him over to visit, but as he got bigger he'd get so much anxiety and he would freak out. He would dig me and when I would try to take him over he'd be scratching me and trying to come out of the house and so I would be like, I don't know what to do. I can't just leave him there, you know. He's scratching and screaming and crying and the grandmother had a problem and so like she wrote to the local newspaper and went to the government and everybody saying that I was keeping the child from her and this is what happens in the tribal community, like I was really painted as somebody who was trying to keep him from them, when I was trying to. I mean I said come over to my house we'll start there and they would come over and he would hide and I would try to drag him out of closets to have a visit with his siblings or with his grandmother and he wouldn't do it. And so I didn't know how to explain that and Child Welfare didn't help, but that they just would feed, like everybody, the governor called me and Stephanie Winetree let me, the, and I'm like that's not what's happening, I'm trying. I don't know what else to do, like come over and watch when we try to do these exchanges and you tell me a better way to do it. But Child Welfare, nobody helped me with that. So I ended up in this battle with the family, the biological family, which really hurt me because even to this day he won't go there. He knows if I even slow down near the grandma's house because he has an unbelievable memory. He will scream. He just does

not want to go. I don't know how to change that. So it was really hard for me to make people understand what his, his you know, about the diagnosis and his sensory issues and all of that and I became a monster in all of that. So that was really hard. I mean just to put in the Calais advertiser for god's sake.

CW: It sounds like, you're using past tense, but it sounds like it's continuing, the situation.

SB: Yeah, the grandmother is a little bit better with me because every time I see her I'll say look, I try to be friendly and create an atmosphere where he feels like it's safe and he'll hide behind me and like peek at her, but you know she'll come over and she just kind of shuts me out and pic--, that's fine, I'm you know as long as she feels that she can get that, I don't need a relationship with her because I really tried to mend it, gone to her house you know even made up at one time and I hugged her and said 'I would not try to keep him from you deliberately, like that's not what I want to do.' You know, I do CASA volunteer and I learned the importance of family and how kids, when they're in care they want their parents. I learned a lot. I learned a lot from doing that kind of work.

GM: One of the challenges that, is not knowing the challenge until later on. The reason why I say that is especially with one of them, it was Tiffany. To think that, really one of the things is I might have hurt her and we just took it for granted and not thought anything of it and just continued on was that we wasn't there for the games, soccer games, basketball games. We didn't make it a point, which that means a lot to the children. You know and either I was always working or (*inaudible*), I mean I could have all kinds of excuses if I want. I didn't make it a priority because I just never thought of it until later on in the years when through her frustration she was able to share one of the things with me, you know and just knowing the challenge I guess is like half the battle too than not knowing the challenge.

CW: Getting the information too late.

GM: Yeah, too late.

AM: But it helped because now, like with the grandchildren and that younger daughter, so I make sure I'm at those frigging games. (*CW making a comment in background, inaudible*). Last year I did go to Lubec. This year I said I'm not going to Lubec, it's too far, (*laughs*) Yeah, but you know I try to you know home games, Pembroke... you know.

CW: Standing around...

AM: So we...

CW: ...with all the black flies this year

AM: Yeah.

CW: It's an act of love.

AM: Yeah.



RG: Is there any support that you wished you had received that you didn't receive?

AM: Probably just people coming in and you know checking to see if everything was okay, just having that kind of support. You know, make sure you feel like you're doing the right job or whatever.

LM: Yes.

AM: You're doing it right.

SB: Yeah, that was we'd thought there'd be, because I had a little boy with autism that was unresponsive and didn't hit milestones. Nobody checked in on me. And I used to call them and say I just wanted to tell you this has happened and we did this and I went to CDS and this is what they're saying and all of this, but like if I was an abuser or I was somebody that hurt children, I could've been abusing a child and then I started making, how many kids are in care because sometimes we do have foster people that are not appropriate foster care placements and I was baffled at the lack of engagement that they gave to me with somebody, that I had a child with special needs, so many special needs, and they knew it. They knew it... but they didn't care...yeah...

LM: That's true.

SB: Yeah.

CW: And even if the child has special needs there's no recourse for financial assistance, you want to tell me about that? You have to... you're paying for whatever services he gets or do you get --?

SB: No, he was on MaineCare. And that was another challenge, just like they would let his MaineCare lapse, the Child Welfare up at Township, so I'd go sometimes to the doctors with two of my foster children, MaineCare lapsed and I was like 'what!' (*LM: Wow*) so yeah especially both... and with the two kids that had the highest needs, their MaineCare lapsed and that was very upsetting to me, yeah. That's something they should be on top of and without me calling and say hey can you recertify...

RG: With any of the kids who were in your care, was DHHS involved?

AM: Would that be the State one?

CW: Yeah, the State.

AM: No.

RG: What's your relationship been like with Tribal Child Welfare?

LM: Minimal.

CW: Sounds like pretty minimal.

AM: Minimal.

LM: That's a good word.

SB: Mine's been tough and minimal.

CW: Maybe tough because it's been minimal.

SB: Yeah. Well I... One of my foster children really had a lot of emotional... emotional issues and mental issues from the different abuses that she had endured when she was in her home and so I had reported to the Child Welfare (*inaudible*), that they had told me... and when I realized I couldn't provide care for her anymore because it was affecting my home life, I had to go in and let them know that this wasn't working out and they didn't have a placement for her so I had like this tremendous amount of guilt, but I was really proud of myself in knowing that I couldn't take care of this child and know that she was going to progress in a healthy way. It was very difficult. I was the one that had to find a placement for her, but unfortunately it was off the reservation, which I didn't like, but nobody else would take her and I couldn't keep her in my house anymore. It was affecting my own children in my home in a really unhealthy way and it ended up, like there was this big, it ended up being a big, giant mess because they went and forcibly removed the child from the home in the middle of the night and she was fifteen at the time and so she was calling me like 'I need your help. I want to stay here,' and you know, I didn't, so I did my best to try to help and intervene. I even went to court. I mean, I wrote letters to the Judge and she was going to be placed with her family then, which I was like oh man this is really good placement, why is this hard, but I didn't understand the bigger story. Even though I was involved in her life before she was in care and then during care and after care like they left me out when it come down to something happening and then they shut me out, but yet the child was coming to me to help, help, help me and I was outside of that, that family confidentiality. I was outside of it because I wasn't her foster care provider anymore. She wasn't somebody who was being abu-, you know, before she went into care she was in my youth group and she was telling me stories and then it changed. It ended up being really messy, and we ended up fighting and, me and Child Welfare, and we went to court and it was really a disgusting mess because there was a path for disruption like at least it brought attention to it because they got a guardian ad litem on her case and they got all kinds of support services, so it did something. You know it... I ended up looking like an asshole, but... (*laughs*).

CW: So how did you... I missed it...how did you end up getting involved in the court case? She was removed from the family that she went into...

SB: Yep, they went in --

CW: From, you placed her in another family...



SB: I didn't place her. Child Welfare placed her.

CW: And you found --

SB: But I found the placement, actually because the girl that was in my home knew the people, knew the family well and she was like yes I wish I could get placed here, so she was fifteen. I was like yeah, I mean if you know them and you're safe then by all means and they were already foster in the State Child Welfare system and so she went there something happened and they went in 8 o'clock at night the other foster, cops are there everything, Tribal Child Welfare swooped in. They had another young child there, eight years old who, and so the foster parents were calling me like 'what's going on, why is this happening?' I'm like 'I don't know what's going on.' It was a real mess. It was scary.

CW: So it's interesting, there's such minimal supervision, but then all of a sudden something triggers and there's a hyper-reaction.

LM: Yeah.

SB: Yes.

CW: You understand what those triggers are --

SB: To this day --

CW: That caused all of a sudden the energy to go --?

SB: To this day, I don't fully understand what really happened. I just know that I did the best that I could to help the child, to help the foster family who I thought were really decent people, but then I didn't really know them either. So I don't know what happened.

CW: Were they a tribal family or not?

SB: Nope, they're a nontribal family.

CW: So they can't find --

SB: They couldn't find a tribal family to foster her.

CW: So was that part of the issue or you don't know?

SB: What's that?

CW: Was that part of the issue in terms of their (*inaudible*)?

SB: No, not being tribal wasn't the issue. Something had to have happened for them to go in, some sort of jeopardy, but I didn't know what the jeopardy was because for them to do that in the middle of the night, you know in a foster family's home where there's other foster children; they're with the State Police and the Sheriff and the Tribal Child Welfare showing up at an off-reservation home, it was, I knew there had to have been something and I kept saying what did you guys do? Something had to happen. I kept asking them what happened, what happened. I said, I don't, you know, so I asked the girl what happened, what happened and I said do you want to be in this home? Do you want to be with them? 'Yes, yes I want to be with them.' She was running away and going to the, where they just took her from.

CW: To run back there.

SB: She was at the new high school and she would go and take off and call that family and say 'please come get me, please come get me.' It was freaking mess. It was a mess. Confusing; to this day I still fully don't know the story. I just know I had to back away because once we went to court and they put a guardian ad litem on her case, you know and of course they wouldn't let me be an intervener, but I gave it a shot in the dark, you know. I said I'd go because she wanted my help, so, yeah.

CW: Big story.

SB: Yeah.

CW: How long ago, Stephanie?

SB: Three.

CW: Three years?

SB: Yeah.

GM: Can't think of any problems we had with Child Welfare.

AM: The only thing was when she was, when the godchild was you know seventeen and wanted to move off you know. They just came and said that, that really wasn't anything they could do or I could do. I just more less had to let her go, so I said okay, and I did.

GM: But I did forget the autism child that we did have. We didn't bring him up.

AM: He didn't have autism, you nut.

GM: What do you call it? (*laughs*) He wasn't all here, he doesn't have a full deck.

AM: Right, he had cerebral palsy. He was born too, cerebral palsy. He was born like 2.-something months - no wait a minute - he was 2.-something pounds when he was born. Yeah, the mother was like six months.

GM: He was a challenge. That was --

CW: There's another story, (*inaudible*) case.

AM: Yes, his mother had him a little bit when he was like six years old. Yeah that was a whole, that wasn't Child Welfare related though.

CW: So he was with you and then went to his mother at six and then came back to you or?

AM: No, no, no. We didn't get him until he was all grown up.

GM: But had a problem.

AM: But still, but still disabled you know in his mind.

GM: Right.

AM: So he needed like a guardian you know to make sure you know, but --

GM: I wasn't ready for that. Thinking that I could've been ready for it, there was a challenge on both of us. I wouldn't do that again.

CW: How long did you have him?

AM: Holy. A good couple years I want to say. A good two years definitely, could be longer.

CW: And how were you able to make a transition for him -- being taken care of someplace else?

AM: He ended, going back to Township where his mom lived.

GM: Ended up going back with the mom. Yes, that's a wicked challenge.

AM: That was, yeah.

GM: But, as far as the welfare people, I know, never really had a problem. They never really got involved.

AM: (*Inaudible*) again because it was already --

GM: Right, I don't even know what the negative and paper --

AM: Oh right, no.

RG: I only have one more question left, what, thinking back on your experiences, what has been the most important to you? What did you want or what do you want for the children that have been in your care and still are in your care?

LM: Love.

CW: *(laughs)*

SB: I would still like to adopt my little boy. I just think that, that permanency would help for him because it's been, I've pretty much had him since he was five months old and he's going on nine in March and he, you know he has autism and he's communicating more now and he's progressing and you know he's taught me to be a better person and a better, a better mother and he's taught me how to communicate in ways that you know you just don't when you have an average child you speak and you can't do that with a kid. You have to learn to do it different, so he's really taught me a lot about myself and I just want to give him that permanency.

I don't know why he has so much fear that his siblings and with his grandmother, but he's, he has a memory that's unbelievable. You tell him your birthday once and he'll remember it. And so I don't know what he remembers. Like I oh, sometimes he'll sit and I look at him and I wonder what's in his mind while he's flapping and you know being all fun and bouncing around and I wonder what's in his mind, like what does he think about. And then when I, when we're near somebody that is his biological, well I'm his relative too, with biological relative, but you know his immediate family, I wonder what's in his mind. He gets so anxious, so you know, I don't know, I just want permanency for him and for me because of the attachment with our family is so great that if something changes I'd probably get violent... *(LM: Get violent?)* Yeah... because I'm so attached.

LM: He can stay and sing Patsy Cline with you forever.

SB: yeah.

(collective laughs)

GM: I think with the four we had living with us at one time or another, what I'd like to feel that comes out of that is that, I would like them, and I believe they do, but right or wrong in their eyes you know they're growing up now, but whatever I might've done right or wrong that they, they know that I care for them and love them and I'll try to be there for them. That's, yeah the only thing I'd like to see, you know.

AM: And I'm still close to my godchild, you know more than my, things were heading off to was you know her two daughters got inducted to the National Honour Society.

LM: Yes, yeah.

AM: And so --



CW: You guys... (*inaudible*)

AM: We're heading, yeah we're heading that way.

CW: Happy moment. That's tonight?

AM: That's tonight, yeah at 7:00 at Shea, so that's why --

CW: Yeah, you don't want to miss that.

AM: Right, so we you know...

CW: That's a big deal.

AM:...we still have a relationship with her and of (*inaudible*) too you know, they're family and... It's all good.

LM: It's all good.

AM: It's all good.

CW: It's all good and there's a lot of hard times and pain along the way. But, it's all good.

AM: Yeah.

SB: So I just want to tell you that coming and participating, over on the right side of that bench there, there's earrings or couple puzzles and there's some books there. If you want any one of those or whatever, take one. Thank you so much for coming today.

AM: Okay, thank you.

RG: I want to thank all of you as well for coming here today. I'm feeling there's a lot of, a lot, a lot of love for the kids that you guys have taken care of and I want you to know that that is very much honored and respected.

CW: One of the things at the Commission that we're hoping to shine the light on is the strength and resiliency in these communities and the stories that you're telling about these children who had some bumps in the way through the care and love that's been here for them (*inaudible*) and an important part of the story. Not just highlighting the places where the system failed or where things didn't work out, but truly highlight the strength that's here. Thank you very much for sharing.

AM: You're welcome.

SB: Grab a sandwich before you go. (*laughs*)

AM: I ate first 'cause I knew I wouldn't have time.

[END OF RECORDING]