

Clinical & Community Services

NYEMA'S STORY

Nyema is a lucky little girl. She came into her foster mother, Lutisha Handy's, life when she was just 5 years old. She wasn't even potty-trained yet and she didn't walk very well.

"Some nights I didn't sleep," recalls Lutisha. "I was worried about Nyema's development ...regularly taking her to Lurie's Children's Hospital several times a month."

Now, a third grader, Nyema is a happy, healthy and thriving young lady with dreams of becoming a baker when she grows up! Nyema does well in school, loves working and playing on computers and has lots of friends.

"You just have to work and pray with them," says Lutisha sincerely. "You have to love helping kids with challenges." And it definitely comes from her heart... Lutisha has helped raise over 30 foster children in need in over 25 years! "I have a calling in my life," she says humbly.

Most foster kids stayed with Lutisha until their families were "back on track" and then reunited. However, Lutisha has amazingly adopted 5 children and served as guardian for 2 other youth over the years as well!

"I first got involved with Allendale when my husband volunteered there," says Lutisha. "Allendale has a great support system. No matter what time of day or night, someone will call me back if I need them. My case workers go above and beyond. That's what makes Allendale special. I would refer anyone I know to Allendale!"

Incidentally, Nyema's birth sister has been placed with another foster mother who has become a good friend of Lutisha's through the many sibling visits. The two foster moms often attend trainings together at Allendale.



NYEMA & LUTISHA EXEMPLIFY WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT FOSTER CARE!

Our Clinical & Community Services Program:

- Assists nearly 500 children, adolescents, adults & local families each year through outpatient counseling & therapeutic mentoring services.
- Helps create individualized "life-plans" with the youth & family & provide clinical consultation to the family of every Allendale resident, day student or foster care youth.
- Offers volunteering, mentoring, & fostering opportunities to those who want to make a difference.
- Offers psychological testing & diagnostic assessment; as well as anger management evaluations and skill building program.
- Supports professional development including state-of-the-art training opportunities & the REStArTSM Institute.

heal.

"IT'S HEARTWARMING THAT TWO "SUPER FOSTER MOMS" FROM DIFFERENT PROGRAMS ARE COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT NYEMA AND HER SISTER STAY CONNECTED."

— Andrea Becker, MS, Allendale, Director of Clinical & Community Services, Foster Care

Also important in her life is her foster sister, Nikia, pictured to the left with Lutisha and Nyema.