

Profiling Exceptional Caregivers - Meet the Simpsons

Kevin and Jeanette Simpson are parents and grandparents to many. For more than 18 years, they have cared for 15 foster children and their 25 year old daughter was adopted from Romania.

Residing on Hamilton mountain, this incredible family has helped countless individuals over the years and for their efforts were recognized during this year's *Heroes in the Home* caregiver recognition program by HNHBC CCAC.

When her own children were smaller, Jeanette had been trying to figure out a way to be at home for them at lunch and after school. With a deep love for children, the Simpsons began fostering infant children who would either go into adoption or be returned their biological families. The times when the children moved on proved to be emotional for the Simpsons so they often took a break before welcoming their next foster child.

"It's a grieving process we go through every time," said Jeanette. "It's easier when some of kids are younger and you know will be moving to a wonderful home, but it's still hard."

Although the Simpsons don't keep in touch with all their foster children two brothers they fostered for three and a half years refer to Jeanette and Kevin as aunt and uncle and remain involved in their lives.

At the moment, 5-year old Cammie brings joy to the Simpson home. Cammie has many challenges as a high needs youngster who lives with cerebral palsy. Cammie is non-verbal with no mobility but he's a beautiful, happy boy who is enjoying senior kindergarten.

Kevin and Jeanette have become advocates for Cammie encouraging him to be all that he can be. He's created a whole new world for the Simpsons who have a true appreciation for children with special needs. Cammie loves *Thomas the Train*, the jumpy castle, his I-Pad and playing with other kids.

As he gets bigger, Cammie's physical challenges grow more difficult. Kevin is now retired from his full time job at Stelco which gives him more time to help with Cammie's needs during the day.

When asked how they do it, Jeanette said, "we just go day- by-day. We have a terrific family that supports us as well. As long as we have our strength, we'll keep doing what we're doing."

