

# A shelter from the storm

BY MARIE KROLIKOWSKI  
The Lake Sun

Gravois Mills residents James and Kate Radford have been fostering children for over four years. It's through their experiences they realized the unique, unanswered needs of both foster children and their foster families.

"During our journey we've identified a significant need in our foster community - the need for respite care," James explained. This is the purpose of Kids Cove Respite Home, on track to open its doors in the summer of 2024.

Radford explained Kids Cove is a sanctuary designed to offer respite



James and Kate Radford

care for foster families in the Lake of the Ozarks area. "Our mission is clear," he added. "We want to provide up to five weeks of respite care per child annually free of charge. We believe that by supporting foster families with this vital service we can help create stronger and more resilient homes for these children."

Basically, Kids Cove Respite Home will offer foster families a lifeline, allowing them to take a break when they need it most. "This initiative is designed to not only ease the burdens faced by foster families,

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## FOSTER CARE

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but also to ensure that foster children have access to stable and supportive homes," Radford said. The State of Missouri, he said, only offers 12 days of respite care per child. The vision for Kids Cove is to offer everything from a single night of care to entire weeks.

Married for 21 years, the couple lived in Sacramento, Calif., until 2018. They have three biological children, a nine-year-old daughter and two sons aged 18 and 21. They also have an 18-year-old adopted daughter. James is a full-time dad and Kate is a caseworker with

Easter Seals, working with families who have children with autism.

They are licensed for foster care in the State of Missouri as well as being licensed for Emergency Placement and Medical. This licensure is for traditional and level A children, and their next step is to become licensed for children with additional needs.

Their 3,000 square-foot home and retreat is nestled on three-quarters acre of land and has lake access. They're currently at stage one, but their vision is to turn it into a pirate island-themed facility that would include a pirate ship, playground, a natural swim pond, a room for video

games and workshop and more. Children who stay would enjoy a variety of activities, including swimming, boating, fishing and tubing. Day trips are also part of the plan. The home will feature large bedrooms that can host up to four children in each. With additional hired help, their goal is to house up to 16 children at a time.

"There's no permanency for a lot of these kids," Radford explained. "If this can serve as one constant for them then we've served our purpose. We want to be a part of their family and their story. Something they look forward to."

"Everybody talks about what religion is," he said.

"In the Book of James it talks about caring for infants and children. These kids have zero control over their situation, the majority with parents who aren't responsible. The personal reward comes at the end of the day knowing we've made a difference in these kids' lives. We focus on our mission in life, which is these kids."

Currently, the Radfords are actively reaching out to the community for support and partnership. For additional information about their initiative and ways to become involved, visit <https://www.facebook.com/kidscoverespitesehouse>.

FRIDAY, NOV. 10, 2023

# COMMUNITY

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## Lake Area



## FOSTER CARE

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