

# "Children Loved By Grandmother"

**Let us tell you a story...** Energetic 3 year-old \*Angela and 6 year-old \*Michael are now living with their *disabled* maternal grandmother, \*Geraldine Carlin. The *seventy-four year old* grandmother survives on a limited monthly income of \$778 since her husband left after 30 years of marriage.



Geraldine is the relative caregiver of her grandchildren so she can protect them from being placed in foster care. *"These children mean everything to me and I could never give them up to foster care,"* said Geraldine. **(Fact: There are 345,000 children statewide living with grandparents or other relatives.)**

Bay Area Legal Services' Attorney, Heather Tager representing Geraldine states, *"Grandparents step into the role of caring due to the death of parents, drug and alcohol abuse by parents, teen pregnancy, unemployment of parents, HIV/AIDS, or incarceration of parents."* **(According to DCF, between 9,000 and 10,000 children in Florida will become involved in the foster care system this year.)**

*"With Geraldine being the sole caregiver she will have access to community support services to assist with social and financial issues,"* says Attorney Tager.

Of course, Geraldine is trying to provide the best care she can for her grandchildren, but she faces many challenges due to her limited income. Ms. Carlin was paying \$600 rent for substandard housing. The house was NOT meeting building code requirements, such as faucets not working, rotted floorboards, in addition to being roach infested. To receive additional financial assistance for the children, the devoted grandmother had to pass a home study. Due to the substandard housing however, she did not pass. With the help of the Bay Area attorney, and the Family Enrichment Center, they were able to find another home for less rent at \$550. Geraldine was then able to pass the home study and receive an additional \$258 making a monthly income of \$1,036.

Withholding tears Geraldine says, *"I don't know what I would have done without the help of Bay Area Legal Services."*

\* names have been changed for confidentiality