



**County Commissioners**

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## **2019 JDCAP Special Event of the Year Christmas with the Stewarts**

Christmas is a difficult time of year for many of our residents because they are away from their homes during their stays with us. This year the Stewart Family invited our shelter residents and staff into their home on Christmas day to celebrate along with them.

Todd and Audrey Stewart are a married couple with 7 kids (3 biological and 4 through adoption). They just exude compassion and they are willing to go out of their way to engage with others in a loving and understanding way. They have experience working with Children and Youth as the past leaders of the resource parent association for Lancaster County and have been volunteering here at YIC for around two years now.

In preparation for Christmas they worked primarily with two of our shelter staff Youth Care Workers, Sarah Smith and Dylan Palmer, to get a gift list of five things from each child in the shelter as to what they wanted for Christmas. They then asked those at their church, Millersville Bible Church, to contribute and come up with the money to help provide all of these gifts to the kids. The Stewarts, Sarah and Dylan then went to the mall and bought the gifts and brought them back to the church for the church members to wrap. Then on Christmas day each of the shelter kids received gifts they actually requested as part of their Christmas this year.

They then hosted a full-fledged Christmas dinner at their house for the shelter kids that had off ground privileges. They still did all of their normal family traditions associated with Christmas, which included reading the Nativity story and singing some Christmas songs, they just included the shelter kids and staff in all of it. It was a time well spent and enjoyed by each of our residents and staff.

For these reasons we have selected Christmas with the Stewarts as our selection for the Special Event of the Year nominee.

Submitted by Bryan Hubbard  
YIC Program Coordinator  
(717) 299-7821, ext. 3329

