

Martin Altman, LAPC  
Expressive and Play Therapist  
138 Wynthorpe Way  
Douglasville, GA 30134  
(770) 595-6475

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To Future Supporters of Under His Wings.

I am writing in support of Cindy Milsap and Under His Wings Ministries, and I would like to point out the great asset that local respite care for foster children with behavioral disorders could be. I have worked with foster children and their families in clinical settings for over 10 years, and I have seen first-hand the great strain that parents can experience when no respite is available. On the other hand, I've seen how foster parents who have respite resources tend to revitalize their ability to parent and to give much-needed affection and structure to their foster children. The family with respite options almost always stands a better chance of supporting the child.

Foster children often have severe behavior problems stemming from attachment, or the child's ability to form trusting and lasting relationships. Attachment has been a part of human survival since our beginning, and it still plays an important role in every close relationship that we form today. Healthy attachment tells a child that the world is mostly safe and that they are capable of fulfilling their dreams for their own life using wisdom and good judgment. Unhealthy attachment, however, tells a child that they must always be in conflict with their world, especially those they need and love the most. This often results in deception, manipulation, and suffering for the whole family. Children naturally develop their personal understanding of attachment before they are three years old, and those with unhealthy attachment begin showing behavioral symptoms early on. You can imagine how frustrating it can be for the foster parent whose child consistently instigates conflicts, lies, steals, fights, and irrationally refuses good things, all for no apparent reason and despite traditional means of discipline. You can also imagine how frustrating this could be for well-meaning foster parents who just need a short break, and how beneficial such a break could be for the entire foster family.

Foster children also deal with many other mental health problems that drive their difficult behaviors. These can include trauma, anxiety, depression, being the victim and sexual and physical abuse, grief, loss, and many others. Some foster children also suffer from genetically inheriting their biological family's mental health issues, such as bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia, autism, and others. This means that it is very important for our community to have qualified respite homes with hosts who understand these disorders and their effects on children's behaviors. *Cindy's long history of providing care to foster and adoptive children means that she has a solid understanding of how to manage these behaviors appropriately and an understanding of how to handle emergencies.*

I have known Cindy for over three years now, and I've observed her parenting her adoptive children through several difficult situations. I can attest that she keeps a calm attitude in crisis situations and provides the consistent support, structure, affection, and attention necessary to handle difficult emotions from the child in crisis. Likewise, I've entrusted my own three children many times to her adult daughters, Hannah and Hayleigh, and have found them to be reliable, stable, and consistently affectionate daily care-givers.

I hope you will consider supporting Under His Wings. Your support means that our community will have healthier and happier foster families, making our world a better and safer place.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Altman, LAPC', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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