



SIUE Couple Recognized as National “Angels in Adoption”

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Two staffers at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville were selected as “Angels in Adoption” by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI).

Jesse Langston, building mechanic for Facilities Management; and his wife, Shrylene Langston, assistant director of the SIUE East St. Louis Center, will be honored at an awards ceremony and gala on Sept. 16 and 17 in Washington, D.C. The couple will be recognized for fostering 19 children and adopting two boys through the Department of Children and Family Services.

“The Angels in Adoption program is a unique annual opportunity in the Nation’s Capital to spotlight the power of adoption and the unspoken heroes who have made the dream of a family a reality for children,” said Becky Weichland, interim director at CCAI. “Since the program’s inception, more than 2,000 ‘Angels’ have come to Washington to share their firsthand adoption experience with members of Congress, highlighting the joys, as well as the barriers encountered in the process.”

“In May 2012, I got a call regarding a 9-week-old baby boy who was taken from Alton Memorial Hospital to Children’s Hospital in St. Louis,” said Shrylene Langston. “The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) worker wanted to know if I would take the baby once he was released from the hospital.

“We agreed. We were directed to a beautiful baby boy named Alex and immediately fell in love with him. Alex’s biological parents became pregnant again and on April 6, 2013 gave birth to another beautiful baby boy. We couldn’t think of separating the babies, so on April 8, we picked up Parker from Alton Memorial Hospital.”

Both babies became available for adoption and the Langston’s request became finalized on Tuesday, May 27, 2014.

The “Angels in Adoption” program is CCAI’s signature public awareness campaign and provides an opportunity for all members of the U.S. Congress to honor the good work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans in the United States and abroad. Each year, more than 140 Angels are honored through the program.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) is a 501c3 nonpartisan organization dedicated to raising awareness about the tens of thousands of orphans and foster children in the U.S. and the millions of orphans around the world in need of permanent, safe and loving homes through adoption. CCAI’s goal is the elimination of the barriers that hinder these children from realizing their basic right of a family.

For more information, visit www.ccainstitute.org and www.angelsinadoption.org.



Photo: Jesse Langston holds his adopted son Alex and Shrylene is shown with Parker.

Our adoption of Alex and Parker began with the keen eye and training of Police Officer Michael Morrison of the Alton Police Department. Officer Morrison was dispatched to a home regarding domestic abuse. When he arrived, he noticed the baby (Alex) didn’t look good and a red mark on the neck of the baby. Officer Morrison convinced the child’s mother to accompany him to Alton Memorial Hospital. The baby (Alex) was later airlifted to St. Louis Children’s Hospital where we later picked him up and brought him to our home.

We can’t thank Officer Morrison enough and have had the opportunity to meet him. Officer Morrison has stayed in touch and tracked Alex ever since and is the baby’s Godfather. In 2012, the Boys and Girls Club recognized Officer Michael Morrison for

his heroic act as the Officer of the Year. I don't know who placed the call, but my husband and I are eternally grateful to Officer Morrison for his observation and handling of the situation that has saved Alex and Parker possibly from a life of physical and mental abuse and neglect.

We are excited about the recognition but unfortunately we are financially unable to attend. The recognition does not come with any financial assistance for the travel required to our nation's capital. But if we can use the stoplight the recognition brings to heighten the spotlight of children in foster care and the thousands waiting to be adopted, we are honored to do so.

-Shrylene Langston