**The Becker Family’s Transcribed Interview**

**“Love Multiplied” by Moriah Miller**

**Sheri:** My name is Sheri Becker my husband’s name is Gary. We have been married um, for 27.5 years. We have 10 children and five of them, we like to call them tummy, they’re our tummy babies, and then five are our heart babies. So, um... five bio and five adopted children.

**Sheri:** We had our last biological baby in 2008, um, and we have four girls and a boy, a son, and he always um, talked about having a brother, so that began our journey of desiring to adopt and that was in 2011.

**Gary:** Our initial intention was to foster to adopt one child. Uh, specifically we were looking for a boy. And then we ended up with four girls, and a boy out of foster care.

**Sheri:** Our oldest biological child’s um, her name is Katelynn and she is 24, and Aubrey is our second born, and then Collin is our third born, and we adopted Serena who is number four. Mariyah is number five and she is turning 17. And then we adopted Eden who will be 14 in June. Elise is our youngest biological child and she will be 12 in June. And Erin is our adopted child, she is 9. Lyle, adopted, is 8. And Gloria our baby adopted child [smile] is 4.

**Gary:** When we first started talking about fostering um... we brought our older kids’ kind of into the discussion, and we didn’t want to do anything unless we were all on board together as a family. And our kids were very supportive of it and we have made a conscious decision to, to try to still give our kids that 1-on-1 time and be there for them, and let them know we don’t love them any less then you know these other kids that we’ve brought into our house who’ve seemed like they need more love because of what they’ve been through, but we realize we can neglect the relationship with our biological kids in the process. And they’ve been very supportive of it. We have a lot of love to give, and these kids need forever families, forever homes and so our kids are definitely on board with it.

**Gary:** Our most recent adoption, initially we were asked to take her in for about 2 weeks, and she was medically fragile at that point and there were a lot of issues and we thought well we could do anything for 2 weeks, and uh that was over 2 years ago now [laugh] so, but we adopted her December 27 of 2019.

**Gary:** I would say this last adoption that the case worker probably played the biggest role as far as being an advocate for the, the best um you know the... the best interest of the child. Vastly different from the caseworker in our other um, earlier adoptions just because she was more engaged. That case worker amazed us with how she cared for Gloria and her well-being and her, and the best interest of her, um, for her life. She was able to focus, I think, more on our case versus not being spread so thin.

**Sheri:** We always gave them lots of credit when they you know, when they would come. Just lots of positive, um, affirmation because I do realize since we have been doing this for so long that I realize their caseload and what they’ve got and um... they have a huge role to play... in the state and in their, with their jobs. So, um yeah, I just, I just greatly appreciate this last go around with the caseworker and the GAL.

**Gary:** I became very passionate about it once we started doing it, and it kind of became our thing I suppose. So, I was asked to join the Board of Beacon Hill and that is kind of a public way of, of advocating for uh, foster care and adoption. Because there are so many kids in foster care in Alaska. It’s just amazing proportionally how many kids there are, and what a huge need it is. So, for me, if I can raise awareness in the publics sphere of the need for good foster parents or the need to um... help prevent kids from going into foster care if you can be involved in something like safe families um... that’s been my goal for the last few years is to try to bring awareness to this in my sphere of the people I meet on a daily basis.

**Sheri:** This journey of fostering and adopting has been life changing for my husband and I, and our family. Our children, our older children often talk their desire to adopt after being a part of this. Um, it has been beautiful for us in many ways, and if I could encourage, um, anyone desiring to do foster care just to let them know that it is beautiful. The most beautiful part is loving on the children when they come into your home, and seeing them transformed in a matter of hours, days. And being able to love on them. And to be to let the parents be able to feel safe and, um, knowing that we are caring for their child and that we are desiring also to have a relationship with them. It makes adoption and fostering much more beautiful um… if you engage in in the biological parents because the children do love them.

**Gary:** It’s a privilege and an honor to, to be able to make an impact in our community with these kids and, I think, we may not realize how big that impact is for many years um, because it’s, it’s, in so many cases, almost every case, it’s a generational thing, and if you can kind of break that cycle of addiction or abuse or neglect and just [made a clipping noise] and then start a new journey for these kids, and a new history for them, then there is nothing better. It’s just something that has been life changing for us, and I’d do it all over again.