

# Fostering, adoption among her greatest blessings

## PERSONAL JOURNEY



*Peggy Hanna with her late husband, Jim Hanna, on their 50th wedding anniversary. The couple have five biological children of their own, fostered dozens of teenagers over the years and eventually adopted four children.*

CONTRIBUTED

### By Beth Anspach - Contributing Writer

In 1965, when Peggy Hanna and her husband Jim moved to Clark County from Chicago, they were hoping to find a house in which to raise their three little boys. They ended up in an old farmhouse that turned out to be a blessing for their family and for others.

“I’d never been on a farm my entire life,” Hanna said. “We found this farmhouse in the center of 150 acres, and I fell in love with it.”

At the time, Hanna’s sons were Brian, 3, Mark, 2, and Kevin, under 1 year old, and she thought it would be fun living on a farm and raising her sons around animals.

Within a year, she would have another son, Patrick and then a daughter, Colleen.

“We had so many different kinds of animals,” Hanna said.

“From bunnies to chickens to hogs. I got the idea that it would be great to share this experience with a city kid, like I had been growing up in Chicago.”

Though Hanna and her husband never set out to become foster parents, when she contacted Clark

County Children’s Services about hosting a child for a few weeks in the summer, the person on the other end of the phone asked her “why not?”

“The next thing I knew they brought a 16-year-old boy out to the house,” Hanna said. “We didn’t have a lot of training to be foster parents back then.”

That boy came to live with the Hannas, stayed through high school and even after he started college at Cedarville University.

“We never quit fostering,” providing a home for mostly teenage boys and a few teen girls after that

Hanna said.

“We decided to retire from foster care in 1990,” Hanna said.

“But then in 1991, our caseworker begged us to take a group of three little girls because it was an emergency.”

The girls were young and because Hanna and her husband usually only took teenagers, she hesitated. She was pushed to make the decision immediately, however, before she could talk to her husband.

But knowing Jim would say yes (he always did), Hanna agreed.

“I needed to pick them up at the hospital,” Hanna said. “I took them to Jim’s office and surprised him. And of course, he was great about it!”

The girls, Beth, Lois and Crystal, became the latest members of the Hanna family and eventually, both Lois and Crystal were legally adopted into the family.

Then in 2000, Hanna said their caseworker asked if they would take two young boys, Joe and Jon, both of whom were also adopted by the Hannas.

“After we adopted Jon and Joe, we decided we were officially done this time,” Hanna said. “And three years ago, Jim passed away.”

But Hanna has never had to deal with an empty nest. Today she lives in a duplex and her son, Joe, lives in one half while her daughter, Crystal, lives with her. At the age of 81, Hanna is now working to advocate for teen fostering and adoption through a nonprofit organization she created — “Under S Productions, Inc,” which she established in 2022. Her goal is to produce a film to help educate and inspire the public about the need for more foster homes.

“I’ve always loved writing,” Hanna said. “It was always therapeutic for me, especially with the stress I went through with all the kids!”

While working at Wittenberg University, Hanna decided to take a screenwriting class and learned the skills she needed to complete her first screenplay, based on a story she had written for a middle school audience. She self-published the story in 2003 and has since found a director who is interested in turning her script into a feature film.

“It’s a positive and realistic look at a foster family,” Hanna said. “There are two boys — a biological 14-year-old son who is tired of his parents fostering and a foster son the same age.”

The story is about circumstances that eventually lead to the boys bonding and becoming true brothers.

Hanna has been working to raise money to get the film produced, including writing grants and looking into crowdfunding. All the proceeds from the finished film will go to support local foster care agencies and support groups.

“I think knowing that the money will go to help kids find homes is good incentive for people to

help," Hanna said.

As Hanna looks back over the years, she said that though it was often challenging, among her greatest blessings have been her foster and adoptive children.

"I don't think we ever set out to have so many children when we got married," Hanna said. "But it's been a great life and I'm happy I went out of my comfort zone to make a difference."

For more information, log on to [undersproductions.com](http://undersproductions.com)

