

FROM ALL WALKS

A Jersey City foster family sees a small miracle in grant money

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The Rev. Eddie Williams Jr. and his wife, Margaret, always knew that when their foster daughter, Miracle, turned 2, she would need - based on state regulations - to have her own room.

But as Miracle's birthday approached this month, the couple, with four boys ages 13 to 23, didn't have the room to spare. Well, a small miracle happened.

A \$25,000 state grant is paying to carve out a room for Miracle in the large upstairs hallway of the family's Stevens Avenue house, Williams and Jersey City officials said last week.

"I was so happy. I told my wife, 'We accepted Miracle into our house and now she's bringing a miracle with her,'" Williams said.

The \$25,000 is part of the larger \$100,000 grant the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation is administering locally. Three other families will benefit, officials said.

The "Foster Care Rehab Program" is funded by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in conjunction with its Neighborhood Preservation Program.

The grant helps prospective and current foster families correct physical problems in their homes that could legally prevent them from caring for foster children.

Jersey City is one of only three New Jersey municipalities to be awarded the funding.

"In these difficult times, our city is working to find ways that we can help as many people as possible," said Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy. "We are particularly concerned about helping the generous families who want to provide displaced children with safe, loving homes."

Williams, pastor at Mount Zion, Church of God in Christ, is "ecstatic." Miracle had been sleeping in a crib in the Williams' bedroom.

"We were hoping that one of the bigger boys would be moving out soon, but you know how those boys are - they don't want to leave mommy," said Williams.