

'We'll be there for them FOREVER'

Stand-in grandparents Gail Mayberry, 65, and Neville, 68, have found a new lifetime of love

Gail says:

Three years ago, my husband Neville and I took semi-retirement after our kids flew the nest. We bought a caravan to travel around the country. It was exactly what we planned but something was missing.

We're not grandparents but we have always loved kids, so we decided to look into options.

Fostering seemed too much responsibility, especially as we liked to travel. I did some online research and, to my surprise, came across a website called Find A Grandparent with lots of lovely families looking for surrogate grandparents.

I liked the profile of a family and called them the same day.

Adele and Jerome Steyn were both working full-time in financial services and had two children, Giselle, now seven, and Raffa, six. They lived in Perth and their own parents lived in South Africa. It was such a welcoming and warm feeling to be invited into a family to share their lives. We've since had barbecues together, a boat trip to Penguin Island, lunches, walks to the beach and regular bike rides.

Whenever we travel, we think about the children, sending postcards, and I love to buy them pressies and spoil them. We'll be there for them forever.

Neville says:

When Gail first mentioned the idea of becoming a surrogate grandparent, I chuckled. She's full of surprises and I'd always expected her to do something out of the box like this. She's creative that way, and a problem-solver.

Becoming surrogate grandparents seemed like the perfect idea. We had the best of both worlds as we could continue to have our personal freedom, while having a family to love and care about.

After Gail's chat with Adele we met for coffee to see if we all got along. We were quite nervous, but within minutes we were getting along famously.

We talked about family, friends, local community and how much we all loved living in Australia. Our surrogate grandchildren are gorgeous and we both love them dearly. We even went to Grandparents Day at their school. We feel truly grateful to be a part of this family. Becoming surrogate grandparents to Giselle and Raffa was the best decision ever.



Jerome, Gail, Giselle, Neville, Raffa and Adele.

The couple with surrogate grandkids Raffa and Giselle.

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Words: Astha Gupta.