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## **MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER JOSH SHIPP TO DELIVER KEYNOTE AT NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE JUNE 12 – 15, 2019**

ANAHEIM/GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA, February 3, 2019 – The National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) is proud to announce Josh Shipp, nationally renowned motivational speaker and former foster youth, will keynote the 49th Annual Education Conference, Navigating the Future, to be held June 12 – 15, 2019 at Delta Hotels by Marriott Anaheim/ Garden Grove. On Saturday, June 15, 2019, Shipp will engage many hundreds of foster, adoptive, and kinship families, advocates, and child welfare professionals from around the country. His message is powerful, entertaining and provides inspiration and strategies to care for and work with children and teens who have been abused and neglected.

Shipp inspires others by telling his life story of triumph over tragedy. He urges audiences to live life to its fullest and illustrates how to overcome some common, and not-so-common, struggles facing today's youth. "I am who I am today because I chose to take advantage of opportunities given to me," Shipp explains. "If you don't identify who you are, others will."

After his mother abandoned him at an Oklahoma City hospital, Shipp was shuffled around the foster care system for the more than a decade. During that difficult time, he was physically and sexually abused, causing him to be depressed, desperately overweight, and suicidal.

But then along came foster parents, Rodney and Christine Weidenmaier, who had cared for dozens of other kids. Shipp joined the Weidenmaier family when he was 14 and stayed until he graduated high school.

"They were truly one of the best things that ever happened to me," Shipp said. "The encouraging thing for other parents, whether your kids are your own or they're foster kids, is that my parents did miraculous work on me, but they're just your average, everyday parents. They don't have some kind of magic wand that the rest of us aren't capable of. They are just consistent and loving and gave me an environment of stability."

The National Foster Parent Association's mission focuses on education, networking, and advocacy. This conference has all of that — and more. With the theme, "Navigating the Future," participants easily can find their way to beautiful, sunny Orange County, CA. More than 50 workshops will be provided by presenters with expertise as foster and adoptive parents, kinship caregivers, and credentialed professionals.

Workshops will emphasize strategies to parent children who have experienced loss and trauma, issues regarding sexual abuse and self-harm, and unique perspectives for parenting children and teens of diverse ages and stages of development. Also featured will be sessions on caring for special populations of children and youth with an emphasis on cultural diversity, sexual diversity, children who have been exploited and trafficked. Tips to navigate the internet, keep children safe from harmful social media, and strategies to prevent children from disrupting family relationships will be discussed.

**Register for Navigating the Future at [www.NFPAonline.org/Conference](http://www.NFPAonline.org/Conference)**

### **About Josh Shipp**

Josh Shipp's speaking career began in Edmond, Oklahoma at age 17 when he began serving as a member of DECA, a national student leadership organization where he later became the state president. He gained a reputation for making audiences laugh and think, and he continues to build on that with nationwide appearances. Shipp now makes his home in the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information, visit his website at [www.joshshipp.com](http://www.joshshipp.com).

### **About the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA)**

The NFPA's vision is to have families and communities in which there is no child abuse and neglect and no unnecessary separation of children and parents. The NFPA is a non-profit volunteer organization established in 1972 to meet the needs of foster families in the United States with a focus on education, networking, and advocacy. The NFPA is a respected national voice for foster parents, relative caregivers, and adoptive parents. To help achieve this mission, the Association provides resources through its website and holds an annual education conference to promote best practices. For more information, visit [www.NFPAonline.org](http://www.NFPAonline.org).