

Adoption Access

SPECIAL DELIVERIES

Adoption Access Winter Newsletter 2004



Notes From The Director

Dear Adoptive Parents and Friends:

I hope that everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I know the holidays are so often stressful, especially for mothers of young children. Try to do half as much for your families, and spend twice as much time with them. Helen Gurley Brown told my generation we could have it all. I found you could only have it all if you had plenty of help!! Now my children are grown and I am (finally) going to be a grandmother next June. I have told many grandparents who came with their children to pick up their babies that I envied them, because they get all the fun and very little of the work.

Parenting is the hardest job in the world, but it is also the most important and the most rewarding one (as well as the most expensive, frustrating and exhausting one at times). We at the agency are so thankful that our incredible parents willingly and lovingly take this daunting endeavor on with all your hearts. You are a constant inspiration to all of us about the best the human spirit and heart can aspire to be. In a world where communication provides us instant details of the horrors and atrocities that occur daily, it is easy to become cynical and discouraged. Our media outlets subscribe to the "if it bleeds, it leads" theory without exception. We are so fortunate to see the other side

of human nature. We experience first hand stories of incredible love, sacrifice, courage, compassion, strength, generosity, empathy and more almost everyday. I have never witnessed a birth I felt was anything less than a miracle. I have great peace of mind about the homes you provide for our children. We have placed over 800 children with families in the last 14 years, and less than a handful of those families have been disrupted by divorce. That is such an amazing statistic, given we all know the rate of divorce is over 50% for first marriages, and even higher for subsequent ones. We applaud you, we are in awe of you, and we are very thankful for you. So many children's lives are immeasurably changed because you are willing and able to love so much and so well.

We are recommending a book called *Tangled Hearts* in this newsletter, and will require that future parents applying with us read it. Anyone involved with the adoption process will find it moving and insightful. Adoption continues to evolve as we gain more knowledge about the impact the process has on adoptive children. We have had numerous counselors through the years that were adopted during the time when so little was known about their birthparents. They have helped us

tremendously in becoming more attuned to the needs of the children we place. We are continually striving to provide more information to answer questions about a child's history, and let each child know they were loved, not left.

We hope you have a peaceful and safe holiday season. We always welcome your suggestions, and would love to know how we can best serve the needs of our growing families. Please send us, as well as your birthparents, pictures from your holidays. We love seeing your children grow and change.

We also hope you will be willing to help with our Angel Program again this year. Being able to provide Christmas for a child and a single mom makes more difference than I can possibly communicate to you. To all of you who have helped us in the past, we cannot thank you enough.

Warmest regards to all,
Debbie Hug

Adoption Access Staff

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Rose Tarin, West Texas
Kerri Wells, East Texas
Kristy Grmela, Fort Worth

Handmade Gifts From Deb's Designs

Towel sets: Custom made towel sets for children. Towel sets are oversized and extra-absorbent, perfect for newborns and large enough to carry them through childhood. Just indicate your nursery theme and/or colors and Deb will do her best to match it.



Burp Cloths: These burp cloths, also oversized, are custom made to match your baby's room or personality as well as absorbent and functional.

All items are hand-made with love and can be personalized too!

Please contact Debby Christian at debchristian@sbcglobal.net to discuss themes, colors and price.



Every year Adoption Access recruits friends and parents for the Annual Angel Program so the agency can assist with Christmas for former and present birthmothers who need help.

You can 'adopt' a family and we will give you specific sizes and needs, or you can give in a more general format, such as gift cards, etc. Please email erynn@adoptionaccess.com. She will send you more information.

With your help our Angel Program has made a huge difference in the past. Please be generous and help us make the difference again this year. The face of a single mom who will now have presents for her children Christmas morning is precious and a gift itself. We never forget how much she gave.

Recommended Reading



One of the hallmarks of the teenage years is the lament, “Why me?” Be it hair, height, weight, or some other issue of the day, the question is always the same. For a child of adoption, the issue AND the question are always the same: “Why me?”

No matter how bright, popular, or attractive a child of adoption may be, he or she is always haunted by that question.

You probably know all about what happened in your life after you were born, but what about before that? How did it all start? How did you end up here today wondering, “Why me?” Read this story and you just may find a clue to your own entangled heart.

Patti Lynn Bongiorno

“As an adoptive parent, I read *Tangled Hearts* with great anticipation. I was not disappointed. I found it to be an engrossing story that brought to life the perspective of an unwed birthmother struggling with the many decision about her unborn child and the efforts those decisions had on those around her. It challenged me to examine adoption from a different view point other than that of an adoptive parent. I laughed and cried as the story reminded me of my own experiences with adoption. The story is wonderfully crafted as it deals honestly and directly with the often unpleasant and difficult issues surrounding adoption. I found the book hard to put down. I will definitely share *Tangled Hearts* with my children when they reach their teen years, as it deals sensitively with many of their anxieties about adoption. I would highly recommend this book to any parent, but it is a “must read” for adoptive parents or those considering adoption.”

Steve Budde, Adoptive Father

For more information, visit: www.TangledHearts.com

More Recommended Reading

Happy Adoption Day!

John McCutcheon, Julie Paschkis (Illustrator)

Noted folksinger John McCutcheon has written a joyful song commemorating the wonderful day when a child joins an adoptive family. Read or sung, the excitement and love of new parents rings through in these heartwarming verses that reassure adopted children that they are wanted, loved and very special. Complete with musical notation, this is the perfect gift for adopted children and their families to share.



A Blessing from Above

Patti Henderson, Golden Books Staff, Liz Edge (Illustrator)

Number 3 in the series, this tender tale about a mother kangaroo's love for her little "blessing from above" - the baby bird she has adopted is sure to warm the hearts of parents and children alike.



Talking with Young Children about Adoption

Mary Watkins, Susan M. Fisher

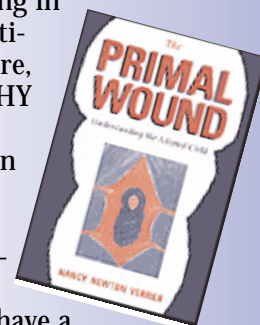
Current wisdom holds that adoptive parents should talk with their child about adoption as early as possible. But no guidelines exist to prepare parents for the various ways their children might respond when these conversations take place. In this wise and sympathetic book, a clinical psychologist and a psychiatrist, both adoptive mothers, discuss how young children make sense of the fact that they are adopted, how it might appear in their play, and what worries they and their parents may have. Accounts by twenty adoptive parents of conversations about adoption with their children, from ages two to ten, graphically convey what the process of sharing about adoption is like.



Primal Wound: Understanding the Adopted Child

Nancy Newton Verrier

Jo, wife of adoptee, mom of adoptee, August 20, 2003, an adoptive mother as well as married to an adoptee. In the last three years, both my husband and our oldest daughter have been reunited with their birth mothers, he doing so at 48, she at 23. I will have to say that even though the search/reunion and being in reunion has been extremely intense, it has been the best thing for both of them, and ultimately the rest of our family has benefitted from it. They know, at long last, who they are, where they came from, but more importantly, the answer to their lifelong question, 'WHY did you give me away?' As a pastor's wife, when anyone queries our unique situation, I purchase and give to them, with love, 'The Primal Wound' in an attempt to help them in their journey. I will also say that the relationship we now have with our daughter after her search is absolutely one of God's greatest gifts to us; as is the relationship and love that we now have with my husband/their father. I thought, ignorantly and yet innocently, that if I loved each enough, I could make up for the primal wound—WRONG. I loved them enough to walk through this journey with them, and go full circle, and we have a family unit now that is second to none! Thank you, Nancy, for your book...I will continue spreading it to those in need.



Cody's Courage

A Mom's Story

My name is Tina McCasland, and I am the nighttime Counselor and Foster Parent Coordinator for Adoption Access. Mike, my husband, and myself are in the process of training for the White Rock Half-Marathon for the benefit of Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children on behalf of our son, Cody.

For those of you that don't know Cody, let me tell you about him. Cody was born with a condition called Sacral Agenesis. His legs were missing the tibias and knees. Our choices were few—to leave him in a wheelchair with legs that would not function for him, or to have the portion of his legs from the knees down amputated to give him the opportunity to walk with prostheses. Cody had his amputation surgery in January 2003, and by March 2003 he was fitted with his first prostheses and was walking with assistance. By September 2003, Cody took his first independent steps!

Just this past September 2004, Cody received his first set of prostheses with knees, one of which he is learning to bend while walking! It is a tremendous achievement for such a young boy, but Cody is truly a fighter. He has a will about him that will get him anywhere he wants to go. NBC was so impressed by all that Cody has accomplished that they recently did a story about him on the news. For those of you that would like to see the video, you can go to: <http://www.nbc5i.com/health/3758494/detail.html>. You can read the story, or click on Cody's picture and the news video will play.

All of this has been made possible for Cody by Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. Cody has been a patient there since he was just 2 months old. This year, he has been named the Junior Race Director of the White Rock Marathon, and, while we are running, he will be out there cheering us and all the other runners on!

Neither of us are runners, but it is definitely a great cause! If Cody can learn to walk and persevere through the last 3 years of his life, we feel that we can learn to run. Our goal is to raise awareness to issues such as Cody's and raise funds for children like Cody with orthopedic issues. Our mission is to raise at least \$8,000 for Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children! To put that in perspective, one of Cody's knees on his prosthetics costs \$2,500. If the prostheses that he received in September were billed through insurance, it would have been about \$50,000!

So as we trek through each of those 13.1 miles, both of us will be thinking of all that Cody has accomplished in his short little life and others like him who are participating in support of Texas Scottish Rite Hospital. What is 13.1 mile when there are others fighting to take just one step? So,

in honor of Cody and other children like him, we are setting out to raise \$8,000 to aid in the assistance of treating children with orthopedic impairments.

If you would like to participate in our cause there are several ways to do so. We have a web page set-up for financial contributions at <http://www.active.com/donate/fundraise/teamcody> where you can read more about our goal—100% of your tax deductible donation goes to Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. If you would like to volunteer the day of the race please go to <http://www.runtherock.com/volunteer/index.html>; you can run the Marathon, Half-Marathon or Five-Team Relay; or come out and cheer us on! Anything you can do to help promote our cause would also be great.

Please pass our message on to as many of your friends and family as possible and help us to achieve this goal with your love, enthusiasm, care and generous financial contribution to Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. We really appreciate your support and will let you know how we do after the marathon is over!



And Baby Makes . . .

Congratulations to all our new Adoption Access families

Ron & Sue Ann
Conner Griffith
December 31, 2000

Reed & Vicki
Lyndee Louvesta
March 1, 2004

Arthur & Michelle
Gracie Julianna
April 21, 2004

Crosslin & Leslie
Kellie Marie
May 20, 2004

Kelly & Ellen
Jacqueline Akexus
May 20, 2004

David & Kathy
Lauren Michelle
May 25, 2004

Stephen & Martha
Sarah Nicole
May 25, 2004

John & Joanne
Jack Taylor
May 28, 2004

Matt & Susan
Jack Matthew
May 31, 2004

Charlie & Julie
Rebecca Grace
May 31, 2004

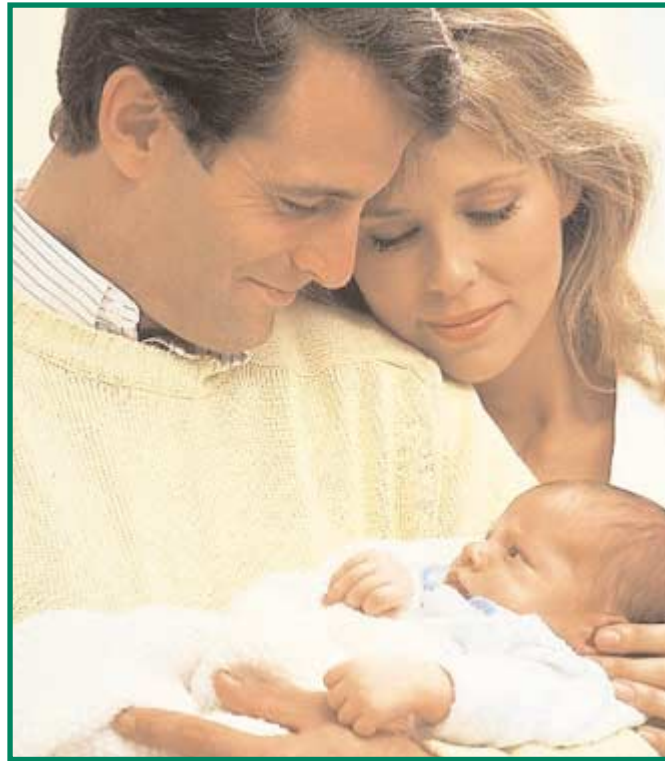
Richard & Laura
Kathryn Marie
May 31, 2004

David & Tracy
Mackenzie Ann
June 2, 2004

Lori
Chase Xavier Michael
June 11, 2004

Rick & Kerri
Olivia Georgina
June 20, 2004

Alan & Stephanie
John Alexander
June 23, 2004



Kyle & Carin
Briana Marie
August 31, 2004

Tim & Lori
Jada Josephine
September 7, 2004

Brian & MaryAnn
Leila Naomi
September 9, 2004

Ron & Jessica
Miles
September 15, 2004

Ian & Valerie
Jon William
September 24, 2004

Gregory & Elizabeth
Mason Gregory
October 8, 2004

Clint & Angie
Charles Antonio
October 13, 2004

Todd & Kimra
Marissa
October 18, 2004

John & Laura
Emerson Ann Wilson
October 23, 2004

Harry & Chad
Sarah Nicole
November 1, 2004

Troy & Melinda
William Arlen
November 5, 2004

Tom & Marilyn
Sarah Naomi
November 6, 2004

Lee & Julie
Charles Ryland
November 11, 2004

Audrey
Samuel Steadman
November 12, 2004

Mark & Melissa
Samuel James
November 22, 2004

Rodney & Leslie
Abigail Hope
November 29, 2004

John & Jennifer
Anna Virginia
June 28, 2004

Eladio & Karin
Maya Kaileia
July 2, 2004

Dana
Jaylen Christopher-Keith
July 4, 2004

Rick & Trisha
Richard Joseph
July 20, 2004

Elaine
Katelyn MacKenzie
July 20, 2004

Ben & Kirsten
Marielle Isabelle Ruth
July 23, 2004

Gary & Josie
Joshua David
July 26, 2004

Lynn
Jacob Terrell
July 28, 2004

DJ & Nancy
Peter Andrew
August 22, 2004

Mark & Mary Beth
Carrie Elizabeth
August 23, 2004

Paul & Amber
Kiebba Jaide
August 24, 2004

Bill & Karen
Laura Catherine
August 24, 2004

Tim & Janet
Isaac James
August 29, 2004

Steve & Debbie
Lilie Adele
August 31, 2004

Dear Josh:

Hi, I'm Jessica and I'm the adoption counselor who worked with your birthmother, Jazmine through her pregnancy. I wanted to write you to tell you a few things I noticed about your birthparents and adoptive parents through your adoption.

I'll start with your birthmother. From the first time I met Jazmine, I knew she was special. She is a genuine, kind, and compassionate person. In so many ways, she puts the needs of others before her own. She is generous and giving. Throughout her pregnancy with you, she focused on your well-being not only taking care of herself physically, but also thinking about giving you the best in life. I never doubted her love for you. She wanted the moon and stars for you, and felt she couldn't provide that. In the time she spent with you in the hospital, her love for you was stronger than ever. Don't ever doubt that. Your birthmother is an amazing person who has been forever changed by the blessing of you.

Although I didn't spend a lot of time with your birthfather, Andrew, I can tell you a little about what I know of him. He is a quiet and kind soul, whose emotion was very deep. His interests are much like Jazmine's including automobiles, travel and music. Andrew, unlike Jazmine is very interested in and studies computers. He has a big family, which has been very important and influential to him. One thing that was easy for me to see is that he felt bonded to you early on. He was there for your birth, and took amazing care of you with Jazmine in the hospital. There is so much love for you from both your birthfather and birthmother. Their decision to place you for adoption was very difficult because they love you so much.

When it was time for Jazmine to choose an adoptive family for you, it took very little for her to feel a connection to your adoptive parents. When Jazmine, Gary and Josie met for the first time I was also there. The magic could be felt in the air. There was no denying that a deep connection was made, but with no effort. There was joy and excitement in the eyes of Gary and Josie, as well as peace and adoration in Jazmine's



expressions. Everyone clearly felt genuine respect and common concern for one another, and you. It was a truly magical match, unlike any I've ever seen.

After this meeting, we all still had some waiting to do before you were born. Jazmine always let me know how her doctor's appointments went, and we kept meeting. I called and emailed with Gary and Josie because they were always eager to hear how Jazmine and you were doing. Finally, on July 26th Jazmine called me really early in the morning to tell me that you were on your way. When I called to tell Gary and Josie, they wasted no time to come out to Texas. After you were born, your birthparents and adoptive parents all met again. Your well-being was everyone's primary concern. I'm sure by now, you know all about leaving the hospital and going straight to Babies-R-Us having your diaper changed in the car, and the nurse stopping to say hi and fix a bottle! There are so many great stories-and none of them would be possible without your amazing adoptive parents.

From the first moment they saw you, it was obvious that Gary and Josie were enamored by you. Their faces lit up and lives were changed instantly when they held you for the first time. The glow about them was amazing. The incredible part is that through their extreme joy, they continued to have genuine compassion and concern for Jazmine and Andrew. I can't say enough about how great your adoptive parents are and how great they were through the difficult times of the adoption process. Their dedication is unmatched, and their love for you is true.

From my perspective, I have gotten to learn a lot about four people who love you more than anything they've ever known. Every one of them is amazing and has thought so much about what they want for you. There is no denying their love, concern and compassion for you.

I feel lucky to have been a part of your adoption story. I see great things in your future with so much love to back you up! Knowing Jazmine, Andrew, Gary and Josie has inspired me and changed me for the better. Their strengths will drive you in all you do, I am sure. Feel confident in that. All the best is waiting for you and I wish you the greatest fortune.

Truly,

Jessica



Our Network Connection

This is our networking forum for the friends and families of Adoption Access. One of the primary purposes would be to share resources helpful in raising adoptive children. However, I believe our networking can be unlimited in scope. Networking is a great way to help others. Please email us and let us know how this could best serve our families. Send us your recommendations for resources for families touched by adoption. What about services or products you could share enthusiastically with our families? In this often uncertain economy, how about a place for resumes for our friends and family members who are highly qualified, but need contacts? Please send us your network connections and we will publish them. Here are our first two for this issue:



Jacqui Gripman
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From Baby Rooms to Faux Painting

Need some special artwork for your baby's room? A mural? A hand-painted toy chest or cradle? A chest of drawers? I would love to recommend an artist friend of mine who does beautiful childrens' rooms, as well as decorative arts faux painting of every kind. He also owns a paint contracting company.

Ray Finfer faux painted nearly every room in my house and I have seen his childrens' furniture and murals. His work is wonderful and reasonably priced.

Here are a few pictures of his work. Please call him for estimates on any painting work you may need.

Call him for all your painting needs at **214-543-2597** or you can see more of his work in photo albums at <http://photos.yahoo.com/rfcompany43>. You will love his work.

