

UTAH'S ADOPTION CONNECTION

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

NOVEMBER 2010

Don Polo
10

Nick, age 13 is still waiting...

UTAH'S ADOPTION CONNECTION

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

QUARTERLY DCFS NEWSLETTER



In This Issue

3 We Want to Hear Your Story

Utah's Adoption Connection is looking for submissions for future newsletters.

4 Transracial Adoption- What about the nonadopted siblings?

By: Andrea Hardman

A study about transracial adoption in Utah.

8 Choosing Teens

By: Denise Kendrick

A personal story about a family's choice to adopt teens from foster care.

11 ADHD Training for Parents and Teachers

Upcoming trainings presented by CHADD.

12 November Events

Upcoming events and conferences.

14 Adoption Changes Things

By: Brenda Horrocks

A family's story of adoption.

If you are interested in more information on any of the children featured in this publication, please contact The Adoption Exchange at 801-265-0444.

NOVEMBER 2010 EDITION

Kathy Searle, Editor

Lindsay Kaeding, Design Director

To submit articles or for a subscription, call (801) 265-0444 or toll free outside Salt Lake County call (866) 872-7212. This publication is funded by the State of Utah, Division of Child and Family Services. The Adoption Exchange prepares and prints the newsletter and the Division of Child and Family Services mails the publication. The mailing list is kept confidential. One can be removed from the mailing list by calling: (866) 872-7212 or 265-0444 within Salt Lake County.

We Want to Hear Your Story!

Do you have a budding writer that lives at your house?

Utah's Adoption Connection would love to have teens, children and parents submit poems, articles and stories to share in future issues.

Whether things at your house are going great or a little crazy we would love to hear from you and share your experience.

If you are a therapist or caseworker please also feel free to make a submission.

We want to hear from you.

Please submit entries to ks@adoptex.org.



One of the first things you may notice about Kevin is just how service-oriented he truly is. This fun guy sincerely enjoys helping others. Outdoor and physical activities are tops on the list of things he enjoys. His favorite picks are swimming, camping, biking, skateboarding, tennis and basketball. He is very talented at using his hands, creating and building. Kevin is a friendly child with a great sense of humor to boot. He dreams of graduating high school and becoming a firefighter someday.

A fifth grader this year, Kevin will benefit from parents who are academically supportive. It is expected that he will need assistance as an adult, but he can have a great life. Kevin is attending counseling, which will need to continue after placement.

If your family can provide Kevin with a loving, stable and patient environment we urge you to inquire. Financial assistance may be available for adoption-related costs.

For Utah children, only homestudied families from all states are encourage to inquire.



Transracial Adoption

What about the nonadopted siblings?

by Andrea Hardeman

Adoption involves all members within a family. Most studies on transracial adoption until recently have looked at how it affects the adoptive parents or the adoptees themselves. As a result, we have limited information about how transracial adoption affects the birth children (nonadopted siblings) in these blended families. In the case of transracial adoption, parents have the additional responsibility of teaching their transracially adopted children how to identify with their birth culture and race.

Hollingsworth states that within the family “empathy and role-taking allows children to learn about themselves and about how to behave from observing the responses of those around them.” This is how children learn to identify themselves. What role does teaching transracial adoptive children about their birth culture and race play for the nonadopted siblings? To understand this question, I interviewed 15 non-adopted white siblings about their experiences being raised with black adopted siblings. All of the participants were active Latter-day Saints except for one. In each case, the participants were older than their black siblings. In evaluating these findings, it is important to note that this is a very limited

sample in terms of gender, class, domestic adoptive siblings, and religious affiliation. These findings cannot be generalized to be a reflection of the dynamics in all transracial adoptive families. Also, the participants’ views of what constitutes black culture are largely limited to the media’s portrayal. This research does, however, set forth patterns that help us gain a better understanding of how having black siblings affects the way nonadopted white siblings view and relate to blacks in general, as well as how they categorize their black siblings racially and culturally.

I had intended to limit the sample to Utah residents, but as a result of multiple factors (e.g. self-selection bias and sampling method) the final sample included some from outside the state of Utah. One aspect of my reasoning for selecting Utah was the homogeneity and predominance of the white race. I thought this would provide an isolated instance in which to study racial empathy with relatively few variables and interracial interactions that would taint the effects the black adoptees had on their nonadopted white siblings. While not all of the participants were reared in Utah, they each spent a substantial amount if not all of their childhood in homogeneous commu-

nities. Thus, the same sense of isolation was still captured with the exception of a few participants who spent time abroad or in inner cities while serving LDS missions (three participants) or had recurring contact with blacks in their local communities (two participants). The participants' ages ranged from 18-37; the majority of them were between the ages 19-23.

The initial intent of this research did not include a focus on the LDS community, but as I recruited participants through personal contacts and announcements in liberal arts classrooms at Brigham Young University, most respondents turned out to be members of the LDS faith. Similar to many Christian religions, LDS doctrine among other altruistic practices emphasizes showing love and kindness to others. To account for the effects religion might have on the way participants framed their discussion on race, questions were included that allowed me to explore how religion has impacted their lives, as well as their relationship with their black siblings. Several respondents mentioned that their LDS upbringing has helped them see their black siblings as "children of God" and that when it comes to race "it's not a big deal." However, this belief did not appear to prevent most of the participants from discussing the different dynamics of race. For some the LDS religion had a negative impact on their experiences with transracial adoption and caused cognitive dissonance between their personal beliefs and the actions of congregation members and the LDS doctrine. Here is an example of such an impact:

"I think [blacks not being able to have the priesthood] was wrong. ... If I lived in that time period I would probably would have had a huge issue with it to the point of choosing a different religion possibly. ... Like I said before there were two problems in the beginning when my parents adopted. One was [my mom's] parents and the other was the church. So, I think that our religion has played a negative role... But at the same time, I think that the fact that we have values and standards because of our religion has played a positive role... I don't know if religion has helped at all because Mormons not until [1978]... could blacks hold the priesthood. It was always a little bit weird about why they [felt that] way at one point. I don't know if religion helped tie it all together."

Throughout the course of interviewing, I did not feel that the religion component entirely impeded participants' ability to objectively dialogue about race and how their black siblings have affected their interactions with other blacks outside their family unit.

Ten out of the 15 nonadopted white siblings developed racial empathy – the ability to put themselves in the shoes of someone of a different race – toward black people as a result of growing up with black siblings. When they look at their black siblings, they do not judge them based on the color of their skin; they see them for who they are. One participant commented that his sister is a "white-black girl." Her skin color is black but culturally she is white. The majority of those interviewed had a similar view of their black siblings and did not

consider them to be real black people. In addition, many of the nonadopted white siblings felt more comfortable around other blacks because they have black siblings.

Overall, racial empathy was developed in four out of the five dimensions of racial empathy. Participants in my study showed this type of empathy in the following ways:

Forming Intimate Relationships with Blacks. Approximately half of the participants (8 out of 15) reported that they are able to comfortably welcome and at times seek out blacks to include in their inner circle of friends and intimate relationships, as a result of having black siblings. Amber stated, "I am very comfortable around black people, and I don't think I would be had I not been raised with black siblings." Two of the participants had been involved in at least 1 romantic interracial relationship with a black person. Others expressed a desire to date interracial but had not had the opportunity. For some participants this lack of opportunity was seen to be the result of the homogeneity of their community. When asked if he would ever consider dating interracial, Jonah mentioned that he had recently had a conversation with his roommates about interracial dating and that "it wouldn't bother [him] at all... [he] just hasn't had many opportunities [here]." Echoing this lack of opportunity Stephan stated an additional reason, "I just have never been in close enough association with anyone to do so." This desire to have meaningful contact with blacks was driven by their interactions with their black siblings. Three of those eight participants who reported not consciously thinking of the race of their black siblings acknowledged that the fact that they had black siblings compelled them to include blacks in their inner social circle. Jasmine commented, "When I was at school and stuff I would find friends who were black. After high school I had three black boyfriends. I was comfortable with the [black] race."

Engaging in the Black Culture. A common sentiment among all of the participants was that the burden of keeping the culture of their black siblings was the responsibility of their parents. All but two participants were content in engaging in that culture through osmosis. That is to say, they engaged in the culture to the extent that their parents incorporated it into the family's white culture. Participants were aware of the different cultures across races but generally felt that the culture was not different between them and their black siblings, which in their minds often meant that their siblings were not really black. In reference to his transracially adopted sister Jonah stated, "She [is] a white black girl..." He and many other participants recognized that their black siblings do not "act black," yet he and Anabelle were the only ones interviewed who understood a few of the nuances of black culture.

Being Aware of Racial Injustices toward Blacks. Nine out of 15 participants developed a greater awareness of racial injustices toward blacks because they have black siblings. This di-

mension of racial empathy was more often than not displayed by participants (six out of nine) with a degree of passiveness. In the midst of racial tensions, these participants were more likely either subtly to show their disapproval or not excuse racist remarks as distasteful humor rather than become an advocate for the victim of discrimination and seek social justice. Participants' responses in these situations were usually in the form of body language (e.g. folded arms or furrowed brow) or walking away from the situation. They genuinely felt bad about the occurrence but did not feel it was their responsibility to rectify the situation. One participant stated, "I don't want to be the prude." Kelsey recounted an experience during her youth when a black boy in her neighborhood was denied employment at a local pizza parlor "because he was black." She felt "bad" about the situation but when asked how she would react if a similar situation happened in her current neighborhood she stated, "I wouldn't make a big deal out of it. ... You can't change people." Despite their disapproval of such occurrences, they are able to distance themselves from any form of social responsibility because people have the freedom to choose as long as no one is physically harmed. Two participants out of six who responded passively to racial injustices referred to the childhood mantra of "sticks and stones." Interviewer: "And how do you feel when they make those racial jokes about [your friend]?" Sam: "...it's just subtle. It's not that bad. It doesn't make him feel bad."

However, four out of nine participants who witnessed racial injustices made comments to the effect that they had become more attuned and sensitive to racial disparities and insensitive remarks. Janelle stated that she is "more aware" of racial injustices that blacks face because she has black siblings. Stephan shared a parallel experience that involved a high school debate where he was one of two students in favor of affirmative action. He had heard a statistic about minorities and education a while back that he memorized and used to passionately argue his stance.

Ability to View Situations from a Black Person's Perspective. Three of the participants (out of 15) in my sample demonstrated that they had developed racial empathy in this dimension as a result of having black siblings. They were able to set aside their white frame of reference and think of situations from a black person's point of view. The following excerpt from Stephan's interview illustrates this: Interviewer: "Based on having black adopted siblings, when you think of black people, what comes to mind?" Stephan: "Just from my siblings what do I think of black people? I get frustrated more than anything else, I'll admit, because of all of the perceived differences and notions that people have of the different races. [I've] grown up with [blacks] and [know] that [blacks] are no different on an intelligence level or on an abilities level. The fact that there is still racism all over the place and discrimination, for the most part, [is] frustrating. It's frustration mixed with regret for society in general [because] there isn't equality." He was able to racially empathize with the frustration that blacks sometimes feel being on the receiving end of

racism.

Most participants (12 out of 15) had never given thought to how the stark whiteness of their communities would affect their black siblings who stick out like a fly in milk. They seemed to share the feelings stated by Megan, "I think he should be ok. ... I've never had to deal with any racial tension or anything like that." It was as though they were so caught up in the notion of being color blind that they could not fathom skin color having any effect on any person in contemporary society. White Americans are accustomed to what Waters refers to as symbolic ethnicity, where the possessor of this type of ethnicity has the ability to choose when to be ethnic or not. It enables one to "express [his or her] individuality in a way that does not make you stand out as in any way different from all kinds of other people." This is an element of white privilege that a few of the participants had in their minds ascribed to their black siblings. They thought that being black was something that made their siblings stand out but had no real bearing on their station in life; being the token black person was viewed as a good thing.

Feeling Interconnected to or a Sense of Shared Fate with Blacks. Dawson suggested that blacks make up a social group by virtue of their shared heritage and sense of solidarity in regards to strongly believing that in essence what happens to one happens to us all. This dimension of feeling interconnected to blacks proposes that having black siblings will cause the nonadopted white siblings to adopt the concept Dawson put forth as they reconstruct and redefine what it means to be white to them. None of the participants in my sample developed racial empathy in the dimension of feeling interconnected to or a sense of shared fate with blacks. However, two participants (out of 15) had begun to understand Dawson's concept and how it applies to their black siblings. They stood up to people who made comments about blacks in an effort to defend their siblings. When asked about their motivations for standing up to the offenders, their response indicates a subconscious understanding of the principle mentioned by Dawson. The offenders were in no way talking about the participants' black siblings; they were merely speaking crudely about blacks in general. These participants subconsciously were beginning to make the distinction that what happens to a random black person has a ripple effect upon other blacks, including their black siblings. For instance when Janelle's friends or other people with whom she associates make racial jokes, she is typically quick to tell them to stop because she has black sisters. She has a few black friends, but feels she stands up to people who are making racial comments more so because of her siblings than to defend blacks in general. This dimension may be the most difficult to develop because for participants it forces them to recognize that not all ethnicities are created equal. Ethnic minorities do not receive the same privileges afforded to white ethnicity in America. The symbolic ethnicity of whites is shrouded in the cloak of white privilege and gives them a sense of being part of a collective but with the added ability to maintain their individual destiny without regard to fate of the collective.

In summary, for most of the nonadopted white siblings (14 out

of 15), their family represented diversity in their neighborhoods and schools for the most part. A few of the nonadopted white siblings spoke of enjoying the attention they receive because they have black siblings. They felt that having siblings who were the token black kids on the block was “fun.” This inhibited their ability to recognize current and potential future racial issues and struggles faced by their black siblings. Many of the nonadopted white siblings (13 out of 15) tended to view their black siblings as Oreos – individuals who are black on the outside but are really white on the inside. This perception resulted from their black siblings assimilating into the white culture of their families. Despite this lack of authentication of their transracially adopted siblings as a real black person, 10 out the 15 nonadopted white siblings in my sample developed racial empathy in at least 1 dimension of racial empathy.

One of the most important take-home messages from my study, in addition to pointing out that blended families need more resources made available to them when they deal with a mix of races within their families, is that race can be discussed and included within a white family without having strong negative effects on the birth children. The majority of the nonadopted white siblings in my study were able to be more comfortable around other blacks and enjoyed mixed race company despite not thinking of their siblings as real black people. One of the siblings stated that having black siblings opened a “portal” to the black world. It is important to note that siblings interviewed who have racial empathy are still in the beginning stages of developing it, thus more research needs to be done.



Article by Andrea Hardeman

*All names of individuals interviewed and mentioned in the interviews have been changed.

Andrea Hardeman was raised in suburb south of Dallas, Texas. She graduated from Texas A&M University with a B.A. in Sociology in December 2006 and from Brigham Young University with an M.S. in Sociology in 2010. She is currently interning as a research assistant at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Office Building and will be teaching a Multicultural America course at Brigham Young University in January 2011. Her future plans include obtaining an M.S.W. degree and creating training programs for transracial adoptive families, as well as hosting transracial adoption camps.

2010 CONFERENCE ON ADOPTION

Sorensen Student Center

Monday, Nov 22nd, 2010 9 am - 4 pm

(registration starts at 8 am)

Free Registration for UVU Students

\$19 Early Registration before Nov 15th

\$29 Registration after Nov 15th

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO
UVU.EDU/CHSS/ADOPTION



Elex, 16



Erik, 16



Amanda, 17



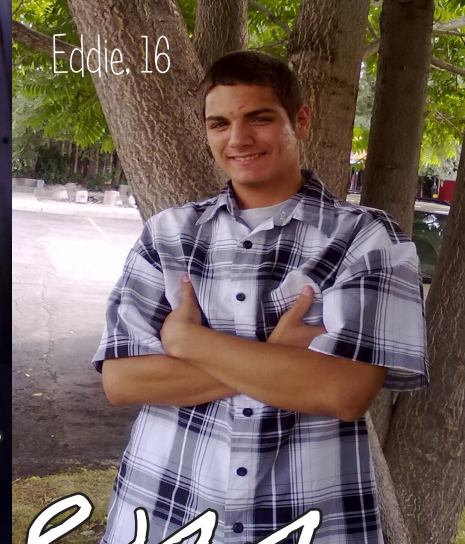
RJ, 15



Alivia, 16



Trevor, 17



Eddie, 16

Choosing Teens



Charles, 17



Jazzmen, 17



DeAndre, 16



Ann, 16



Bo, 17



Micheala, 16

For more information on any of the teens shown please contact The Adoption Exchange at 801-265-0444

My husband and I had fostered younger children for several years before we discovered the need for families to adopt older children. While looking for information about training on the CPS website I stumbled upon a link to the profiles of children waiting for adoption in our state. I scrolled over 90 pages crowded with the photos of sibling groups, teens, and children with special needs all waiting for adoptive families. The profile descriptions accompanying each photo gave vague insight into lives shattered by abuse and neglect:

“Johnny (14) loves to ride his bike and play outdoors. He struggles to build relationships with his peers. Johnny is making progress in counseling, and will flourish in a consistent and loving home. Johnny would do best as an only child, in a home with experienced parents.”

“Marissa (12) and her sister Margo (9) are girly girls who love to play dress-up and have their nails painted. Both girls have been diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and receive special services in school. These girls are looking forward to being part of a family, and would do best with a single mother. These sisters have a sibling who will be adopted separately, and would like to have contact with him.”

Sparkling eyes and smiles concealed hurt and healing souls. We have never considered adopting, but the faces I saw that day planted a seed in my heart that would not sprout into action for several more years.

Scrolling through the pages of waiting children became a habit for me. I celebrated when a child’s photo would disappear, assuming they have been adopted, but was startled the first time I saw a picture reappear a few months later. Did an adoptive placement fail? Had this child endured more broken promises? One day a teenage boy’s photo caught my eye. Daniel was 14, had a mop of red hair and freckles and a brief profile praising a child who was helpful and kind and played trumpet in the band. The last sentence revealed he was in treatment for leukemia. I knew that these children were living and growing while “on hold” and waiting for adoption but the realization that a child could be facing the fight of their life in foster care was a shock to me. I didn’t feel “sorry” for Daniel, but pouring over his photo I thought “this child needs a mother.”

I introduced my husband to Daniel’s profile the next day, and he felt a connection to him as well. We began praying for his healing and safety, and two weeks later we contacted CPS about adopting him. I wondered how many people would consider adopting a child who was not only older but suffering from a severe medical condition. When we shared our interest in adopting a teen with our family and friends, their reactions varied but were overwhelmingly concerned. They were worried that this child would bring too much “baggage” into our home. That the peaceful life we had built with our biological children would be wrecked by a destructive or violent teen. These thoughts had crossed my mind as well... but a small and persistent voice deep inside reminded me “this child needs a mother”. Two months later we were notified that Daniel had been adopted by an out-of-state relative. It was bittersweet news that felt like disappointment and relief at the same time.

I began to wonder how many families shared our same heart for these teens, and why so few stepped up to adopt them. Did they worry, like our friends and family, that an older child might put their biological children at risk? Were they worried a child who had endured so much could not assimilate into a family? The next week, after much prayer, we set our concerns aside and contacted our foster agency.

“We would like to adopt a boy between 10 and 15 years old”. Our caseworker piped in that we were a wonderful family, and she wished more people would consider older children. We spent the next 30 minutes discussing our motivations to adopt and defining more clearly the parameters the agency would use to match us with a child. We talked about the special needs an older child would face, and how to prepare him and our family for adoption.

Our agency knew our family well, and we trusted that they would match us with the right child. We knew their goal was for this to be a safe and successful placement for everyone involved.

The call came two days later. We had been matched with a 15 year old boy named Brandon. Our worker shared that Brandon had spent many years in foster care after being abandoned by his birthmother. He had been a failed adoptive placement, and was currently living in a group home. He loved sports and music (to which my husband elbowed me in the ribs... these are two things he is also passionate about). He was tall and had dark hair and brown eyes. We took a deep breath and told them we would like to meet him. After the call, we realized even with all the information the agency had shared, this child was a stranger to us. But it didn't matter; he was already becoming our son in our hearts.

I would like to tell you that after a few weekend visits and Brandon's moving in with our family, that we all lived happily ever after. We quickly found out that Brandon was not just 15... he was weeks away from his 16th birthday. He was a charming and playful young man who was helpful around the house. He had rugged good looks and began to shed his extra pounds with a more active lifestyle and home-cooked meals. He quickly settled into the routines of our home. But Brandon also struggled with a variety of learning and attachment issues and a psychiatric diagnosis. He did not know how to nurture friendships with his peers or interact appropriately with adults. Brandon could not control his temper and went into rages that, although not directed at people, were hard on furniture.

Happily ever after is not something that comes easily for children like Brandon. There are no easy fixes, no guarantees. But choosing a teen has brought so much to our lives. We are teaching a young man that he is loveable and worth loving. He is a wonderful big brother to his younger sisters and brothers. He calls us mom and dad, and occasionally wakes up early on a Sunday morning to make the family French toast. When I think back to the first days after he moved into our home I marvel at how much he felt like "company"... and how much he fits in now. He still has much to overcome, but now he has a family supporting him along the way. He has his own cheering section at JV football games (complete with little sisters with cheerleading uniforms and pompoms). Brandon is finding joy in the little things these days, like a dad who knows how he likes his burger cooked, and a mom who packs his lunch. The clock is ticking toward Brandon's eventual independence, a time that for teens who are never adopted brings great hardship and for many, grim outcomes. But Brandon is a teen who was chosen. A teen who carried the last name of his family and the confidence this safety-net awards him.

Denise Kendrick

TIME IS RUNNING OUT...

Youth who exit foster care are more likely to have an unplanned pregnancy. more likely to be unemployed. more likely to not have access to medical and dental care. more likely to spend time in prison. more likely to be homeless.

Research tells us that 68% of youth who age out of foster care will be homeless. dead or in prison within one year. Consider Choosing a Teen.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE TEENS FEATURED ON PAGE 8.
CONTACT THE ADOPTION EXCHANGE AT 801-265-0444.



Denise and Bruce Kendrick are proud parents to Brandon (18), Macy (8), Kate (6), Shepherd (4). (They are currently fostering 3 siblings ages 1,2 and 3), who they hope to adopt early next year. The Kendricks serve as Directors for Embrace, a Mom-profit ministry encouraging foster care and adoption in Texas www.EmbraceTexas.org.

ADHD Training for Parents and Teachers

(Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

Fact vs. Myth on ADHD

A free, single session class on ADHD that addresses many of the issues that concern people when they find that they, or their child, has ADHD. It is held in the Education Center at the McKay Dee Hospital (South end of the first floor) Room 1 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. The classes are taught by Edward Williams, MEd. **Pre-registration with Kathy Chatelain 387-3740 is mandatory.**

November 18
May 26

January 27

March 24



Parent to Parent: Family Training on ADHD

A seven session classes that goes into detail on the many facets of ADHD. Classes are taught by experienced professionals with a background in ADHD. Classes run from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, except the first which starts 15 minutes earlier, and they run the same day of the week for seven consecutive weeks. The \$60 (\$50 for members of CHADD) charge for the series covers the cost of the materials you get. Limited scholarships are available based on financial need. Educators can earn 1 credit towards lane change and recertification, and other professionals may earn hours towards their continuing education.



1-2-3 Magic

A four session class introducing the concepts on handling misbehavior presented in Thomas Phelan's book *1-2-3 Magic*. This course is not specific to ADHD, but provides some excellent tools for working with ADHD children, particularly at the elementary school level. Classes run Wednesday for four weeks from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. There is a \$20 charge for the series, to cover the cost of the materials and the book. Teachers can earn recertification hours. **Preregister with Talana at 801-452-4370.**

Farr West Elementary, Media Center
2190 W. 2700 North, Farr West



Weber High School, Room 31
3650 N. 500 West, Pleasant View
Preregister with Renae at 801-452-4256

Davis School District Kendall Building,
Professional Development Center
75 E 100 North, Farmington
Preregister with Carolee 801-296-1549

Valley Mental Health
Children's Outpatient Services Building
1141 E 3900 S Suite A170, SLC
Pre register with Susan 801-801-467-8553

**For Classes taught in Spanish
Call Julie 801-272-1051 or 801-867-2375**

CELEBRATE NATIONAL
ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH
WITH



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2010
11:00AM — 2:00 PM

Boondocks Fun Center

75 South Fork Drive
Draper, Utah

525 South Deseret Drive
Kaysville, Utah

We've added a
new location

Cost: \$5.00 per family
Any Size Family - Cash Only Please

Chili provided by
Wendy's

ENJOY UNLIMITED MINIATURE GOLF
10 ARCADE TOKENS AND
1 PASS VALID TO CHOOSE FROM THE
FOLLOWING ATTRACTIONS
GO KARTS, SLICK TRACK, ROOKIE
GO-KARTS, ROCK WALL, LASER TAG OR MAX-
FLIGHT ROLLER COASTER SIMULATOR.



JOINING FORCES

Prevention Investigation Prosecution Treatment

23rd Annual Conference on Child Abuse and Family Violence

November 1-3, 2010
Davis Conference Center
Layton, Utah

Scholarships are available for JOINING FORCES. Parents, foster parents, peer parents, volunteers and/or students who are parents are invited to apply. Paid professionals are not eligible. Space is limited so please call to register as soon as possible. The scholarship includes registration fee to the conference, continental breakfast and breaks. Transportation, lodging and childcare are NOT included. To request a scholarship please call Carrie Jensen at (801) 393-3366.

Sponsored by:

Prevent Child Abuse Utah
www.preventchildabuseutah.org

and

OVC Office for Victims of Crime



ADOPTION CHANGES THINGS

BY BRENDA HORROCKS

When Brad and I got married 16 years ago we never even dreamed the journey we would take to bring children to our family. We thought we would do what everyone does.....get pregnant and give birth. When our expectations weren't what we wanted them to be we started to question life. I especially had a hard time with the diagnosis of infertility....it felt like a death sentence. At some point during treatments we came to the realization that being parents was more important than being pregnant. It was during this time our hearts turned to adoption and we started to realize we weren't like "everyone".

We had a special journey to make to become parents. Our oldest daughter, Brenley, was born July 14, 2000. Thirty six hours after her birth her Birth Grandmother placed her in our arms. It was an incredible feeling to hold her for the first time. We already loved her and from that moment forward the love just grew. On October 31, 2002 our second daughter, Haley, was born and then two days later placed in our arms by her incredible Birth Parents. Just when we thought we couldn't love more.... the love multiplied again and we wondered how we lived without these two sweet daughters.

After returning to fertility treatments again and develop-

ing a life threatening complication we were happy to say goodbye to treatment forever and felt incredible peace as we tried to adopt a 3rd time. After an internet scam and a failed placement Camden was placed in our arms by his sweet Birth Mother...not as a newborn...rather an 8 month old baby boy. Camden's Birth Mother searched for a family to place her baby with while pregnant. She contacted us and we felt an instant connection and developed a friendship.... but after considering and reconsidering her decision she decided to parent. We continued our friendship and to our surprise she called us and told us she felt Camden belonged with us. A few days later on December 17, 2006 Camden joined our family and was welcomed by two big sisters who couldn't have been happier. After his Birth Mother placed him in our arms she followed us home where we celebrated Camden together in a special placement dinner in her honor. We love having openness with her and our other Birth Mothers and we can see how we all benefit from these friendships.

It was during our journey to a third child that our eyes were opened to being foster parents. After taking classes and getting approved we became licensed and in 2007 we had our first placement. After a couple of weeks these

children left our home. A few months later we welcomed a newborn named Ashanti. Ashanti changed our lives forever. She was a special gift to our family for 8 months. Saying goodbye to her was the hardest thing we have ever done but the memory of caring for her and having her part of our family is something we will always treasure. We ended up saying goodbye to 8 children...all were incredible and we still feel love for each of them. We miss them....especially the 2 babies we had for a longer period of time.

We were still hoping there would come a day we would get to adopt again but we had developed a love for fostering so we were moving forward. Early in August of 2009 we received the call of our dreams. A young woman who had been in foster care herself wanted to give her baby a Mom and a Dad and a happy life. Something she stated that she never had. In August of 2009 our youngest child was placed with us at the hospital while he was in the NICU. Our joy was full....our entire family rejoiced as we welcomed this little tiny boy into our family. Here we are a year later enjoying the blessing of being together and enjoying our little 13 month old as he learns new things! After seeing children come into our home and hearts and then feeling sad as they leave, we feel like the luckiest family in the world to have our little guy with us to stay!

Once we became foster parents I started browsing the internet to learn about children who were waiting to be adopted. I was heartsick by what I saw.....so many children who needed a home. I looked through sites from every state and the realization of the need that is out there touched me deeply. As I tried to sleep at night the faces of these beautiful children haunted me and I wondered what I could do. Out of desperation to try and help even in the smallest way I put links to a few children on my blog. Over time this turned into what I have named "Matching Mondays". Each Monday I feature a few waiting children on my blog hoping someone's heart will be touched and changed and people's eyes will be opened to these children and the need that exists. I thought only broken teens were the ones available for adoption but what I found was incredible children of all ages who were hoping for a family of their own and for people who will help them become what they dream. I quickly saw that while some of these children have been through a great deal there are no broken children.....only broken promises.

Adoption has changed our lives forever. It has brought us a beautiful family. Adoption opened the door to becoming foster parents. Fostering children has also changed us...we are no longer blind to the needs of children around us. We have witnessed families struggling, drug abuse and neglect.

But we have also witnessed the miracle of a fresh start and hard work that brings lasting change and touches a family in a way that leaves them better than before. We have also come to realize that just as we dreamed of a family all our own we know there are children with the same dream. We realize had we been able to build our family "like everyone else" then we would have missed out on so much learning and so much joy! Our journey to parenthood has been a rollercoaster with huge ups and downs but we are better people because of the ride!

TO FOLLOW ALONG ON BRENDA'S JOURNEY OF ADOPTION VISIT HER BLOG AT:
WWW.ANOTHERSMALLADVENTURE.BLOGSPOT.COM

5th Annual
Adoption Walk 5K
with Me
Nov. 6th 2010
Liberty Park
9:30 am Registration
10:00 am Start
in Salt Lake City

Free Event!
PRIZES FOR MOST ORANGE

For more info email: adoptionwalk@hotmail.com
Sponsored by Families Supporting Adoption.
Help spread Adoption Awareness during November National Adoption Month



PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
P A I D
SLC UTAH
PERMIT 4621

975 E Woodoak Lane, Suite 220
Salt Lake City, UT 84117

Visit us online at www.utdcfsadopt.org

CALL YOUR POST-ADOPTION SPECIALIST

Northern Region:
Aubrey Myers (801) 395-5973

Salt Lake Region:
Linda Vrabel (801) 832-9744

Western Region:
Am. Fork/Eagle Mtn.
Rachel Jones (801) 434-7181

Provo/Heber
Dan Wheatley (801) 368-5123

Spanish Fork/Nephi
John Worthington (801) 362-9388

Southwest Region:
Rick Clements (435) 867-2271
Angie Morrill (435) 896-1263
Ben Ashcroft (435) 705-4694

Eastern Region:
Blanding /Moab Al Young (435) 678-1490
Price/Castledale Greg Daniels (435) 636-2367
Vernal/Roosevelt Fred Butterfield (435) 722-6561

LOOK FOR **HEART GALLERY 2011** IN YOUR AREA.

HEART GALLERY 2011 FEATURES 46 PROFESSIONAL
PORTRAITS OF 51 WAITING CHILDREN.

November 3rd
Opening at Utah State Capitol

November-December
Utah Cultural Celebration Center-
West Valley City

January
Union Station-Ogden

February-March
Rosenbruch Wildlife Museum -
St. George

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE ADOPTION
EXCHANGE AT 801-265-0444