



pact's

point of view

The newsletter for adoptive families with children of color

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Considering Placing a Child for Adoption

Thank You for Listening

By Susan Ledesma

Approximately eight and a half years ago I came into the Pact office to inquire about your services. I was pregnant and the father of the child did not want anything to do with us. I already had one child and at that time I could not fathom trying to raise another alone. I had looked at a number of different agencies online and one of my main concerns was that my unborn child's dual heritage be honored. Pact seemed like the answer. As I met with one of your counselors and told her my situation, I cried. The counselor saw that I was not ready to seriously consider adoption. She advised me to go home and think about it more and then call or come back in a few weeks.

I never called. Today my daughter, Olivia Marisol, is an eight year old third grader who loves reading, playing on her Nintendo DS, and feeding her "babies" (all with brown skin like her). I cannot imagine my life without her. Last month, I became engaged to a wonderful man who loves my girls as though he was in the delivery room when they were born. About the upcoming wedding, Olivia says, "I finally get a Dad!" Although her biological father is not in her life, she does have other people who help her explore and learn about both sides of her heritage. We are fortunate to have Olivia in a Montessori program which encourages exploring, embracing, and honoring different cultures.

I'm writing to say thank you for the services you provide. When I went into your office all those years ago I was so scared and felt like I had no one to talk to who would understand. Your counselor listened and helped me with her kind understanding. My fiancé and I may have our own child some day but we also plan to foster and possibly adopt children. Maybe someday, we'll come into your office and be on "the other side," ready and able to help that young woman I once was. Thanks again!

Thoughts on Birth Motherhood

By Joy Retzlaff

It is strange to be someone's birthmother. What does that mean anyway? Yes, I gave birth to a boy almost sixteen years ago and that boy has recently contacted me. But where do I stand exactly? Feels like I am walking on a tight rope and my only safety net is my own restraint. How often do I contact him? Does he even need to hear from me or should I wait until he initiates contact?

So much has changed in sixteen years. I am an adult now, a mother to a one-year-old boy, and I wonder where does the 16-year-old boy fit in and do I even have a right to have him in my life and does he even want that? I have no idea what the future holds. I know that I love him. I know that I would love to have some sort of relationship with him. I know that he is a little bit like me, not just in looks but also in personality. I know I will love him no matter what he decides.

It is still a strange situation, not one that I would share with too many people. I don't think most people would really understand why I did what I did—how I could calmly walk right on out of that hospital, how I never regretted my decision. But the kid I was back then did not realize how deep the love was going to be and that it would actually grow with each passing year. If he decides he does not want or need me in his life that love will continue to grow—it has a life of its own now. From the moment he was conceived that love has blossomed and will continue to bloom.

After all, I am a mother, and a mother's love knows no bounds. A mother's love is pure. It is intense and scary, beautiful and awe-inspiring.