

# **Unconditional Love**

**by Maria Felipa**

I grew up in a very close family. My father is Hispanic and my mother is English/Dutch. My family is my rock, my endless supply of strength and support. Because of the deep sense of family that we feel, the decision I made last year to place my baby for adoption was heart-wrenching. The course of events that led to the placement of my birth son, Jacob, with his parents, Nancy and Scott, really shows the strength of my family and the real meaning of unconditional love.

When I learned of my pregnancy at age 22, my first reaction was that I would raise my child myself. I think it is very natural for a woman to feel that way. When I told my mother of my intentions, she was extremely angry. She thought a woman in my position could offer a child nothing besides love. Because of my cultural background, it was very important to me to have the support of my family. Their views are and have always been a great influence on me.

My mother did everything she could to dissuade me from making the decision to parent my child. She pointed out all of the practical problems such as financial responsibilities and insurance (at the time, I was not covered). She showed me a vast array of information about adoption. I thought that there was absolutely no way that I could "give my child up." Then, one day, she showed me a brochure where there was a brief paragraph that was entitled "Open Adoption." I had never heard of it before. When I read about how I could choose the parents for my child and actually meet them and get to know them, I realized that this was something I could do.

Deep down I knew that I wanted my child to have a family a rock just as I have had. I know what having a strong family has meant to me in my life and not being able to provide that for my baby would kill me. I wanted my son to have a mother

and a father who love each other very much. My parents have provided me with love and support as well as opportunities to reach my potential. My love for knowledge and education came from them by their example. I wanted my son to have everything that I have had and more. The only way that I could ensure this was to find a couple who have the same ideals and values that I have and who are in the position to care for a child.

I met Nancy one day at my brother's work. Later, he told me that she and her husband, Scott, were unable to conceive and that they were trying to adopt. I did not even consider them for several months for a couple of reasons which, in retrospect, seem very trivial: One reason was that she is blond and fair-skinned and I wanted parents who were darker - closer to my own hispanic heritage. The other reason was that she worked with my brother and I thought that maybe that was too much contact. After going through several months of not being able to find the "perfect" couple, I finally decided to call Nancy and Scott. From our first phone conversation I knew that they were the parents that I wanted for my son. I cannot describe the wonderful feeling I got after I found them. My reservations just disappeared.

I have done the best thing that I could for my son. I have given him a chance to reach his potential. I have given him Nancy and Scott, who are the most wonderful people I have ever met. I love them all dearly and feel strongly that their union was meant to be. I do not feel the stigma of shame that is very often associated with adoption. I have taken a potentially bad situation and turned it into a wonderful sense of joy and pride. I have not only given Jacob all of my love, I have given him my unconditional love. My feelings are not as important as his future.