



Foster Care & Adoption News

Spring 2015

Issue 22

Meet the Georgeson Family

CB: What prompted you and your husband to adopt?

A couple of years ago my husband lost his job and it gave us an opportunity to stop and reflect on the direction we were going in life. We want to live our lives purposefully and through talking with Bob Levy at Child Share and attending classes at Children's Bureau we really felt like God was leading us into fostering/adopting. We love having little ones around and so this was a great fit for us.

CB: How did you find Children's Bureau and why did you choose to adopt through Children's Bureau?

We had several friends who had gone through Children's Bureau and had nothing but good to say about their experience. We also contacted a couple of agencies, including Children's Bureau, to get additional information, and Lucy Jones got back to us within just a couple of hours, while some of the other agencies took weeks to get back to us. We were very impressed.

CB: Tell me about your experience with Children's Bureau.

We are still impressed. Everyone we have met has been professional, friendly and encouraging from the ladies at the front desk to the energetic trainers to my wonderful social worker. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with such a great agency, and would not hesitate to recommend them to anyone.

CB: Tell me about the child you adopted.

We have so loved taking care of Lizzie over the months. She was a quiet and thoughtful little one, hardly making a peep, yet keeping us all captivated by her shy smiles and charming preferences.

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The Macias Family - Fostering & Growing Their Family

Liz and Luis Macias have opened their home to 21 foster children since joining the Children's Bureau family in 2009. The couple, who has three grown children and three grandchildren, had a desire to help children in need. Liz and Luis have fostered several sibling sets. A set of young brothers came for 6 months. One sibling set of four stayed over 2 1/2 years, another sibling set of 3 for about a year. The foster children who come into their home are ages five to 10 years old. Liz and Luis also offer respite care to other foster parents needing a break. We talked with Liz about their experience with Children's Bureau.

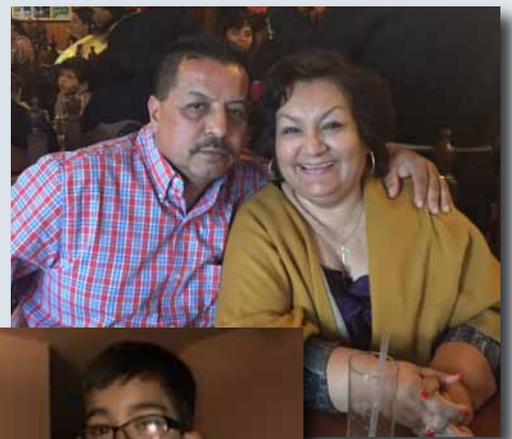
CB: How did you find Children's Bureau and why did you choose to foster through Children's Bureau?

My sister was taking a childcare class at Children's Bureau and let me know about the foster care program. We learned more and liked what Children's Bureau had to offer.

CB: Tell me about your experience with Children's Bureau.

The staff at Children's Bureau is always available to help me when needed and I take the classes offered. My social worker, Laura, is very attentive and is genuinely concerned for the well-being of the children.

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Orlando has permanently joined the Macias Family

An Adoption Story continued from page 1

yet preferring to stay close to the people she knows well. Even at 20 months old she loves to take care of those around her especially her little sister who she really watches out for. She is a joy. We have been so blessed to have her as an addition to our family.

CB: Share your thoughts/experience with the birth family.

We did not know what it would look like to build a relationship with the birth family, but we did know that we wanted our hearts to be for their success. We were nervous about this side of fostering because we had heard all kinds of stories that were not positive. We were pleasantly surprised by how lovely Lizzie's parents were. Both Lizzie's mother and father were always gracious and kind, thanking us often for caring for Lizzie. It was easy to love them. Through many hardships and disappointments they continued to be positive and loving. At one point, after we had Lizzie for about 6 months, it looked as if both her mom and dad would not be able to care for her. Her mother asked if we would adopt her. It was a bittersweet moment. What a tremendous loss for her mother, but also what courage to recognize her limitations. I hope to be more like her someday. She really is an amazing woman. I am thankful for both her mother and father in her life. I am glad that we can continue to have contact and a relationship with them.

CB: How has becoming an adoptive parent changed your lives?

One of the things that we have realized is that it has opened the door to some really great conversations with people. We had no idea before how many people have been impacted by fostering/adoption in some form. Either they were adopted or in the foster care system, had foster children in their home at some point, know someone who lost a child or are seriously considering adopting/fostering. We are excited to talk to others about our experience. We feel that it has been one of the best decisions our family has made and we know that there still is a tremendous need for loving homes for these precious children.



Save the Date --- Children's Bureau to Host Appreciation Luncheon for Certified Resource Parents on April 25th!

Children's Bureau will host its annual Foster and Resource Family Appreciation Luncheon and Training on Saturday, April 25th at our showcase facility, Magnolia Place Family Center in Los Angeles. The day will include a continental breakfast, inspirational and educational speakers and luncheon - plus giveaways! Training credit will be given for six hours (9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.).

Resource parents are expected to attend from all of the areas served by Children's Bureau including Los Angeles, Santa Clarita, Ontario, Antelope Valley, Lake Los Angeles, Anaheim, Thousand Oaks and Carson.

We look forward to spending time with the foster and resource parents who give so much of themselves to children in need. Our staff will be present to personally thank each of you for a job well done! You all are truly valued and cherished by Children's Bureau.

Reservations are required and can be placed by calling Helen Flores at (213) 342-0165. Children's Bureau at Magnolia Place Family Center is located at 1910 Magnolia Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007. Unfortunately, no childcare will be provided.

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CB: How have your grown children and family members feel about your work as foster parents?

My children, my mom and sister help me a lot and are always asking if I need anything. They too feel like these kids are a part of our family. We couldn't do this without their support.

CB: How do you support the relationship between the child and their birth parents?

I believe in communicating with the birth parents, sharing what I know works best in raising a child. Many parents are receptive and we have great communication and there are a few that are more challenging. I continue to work hard to share and help in whatever way I can.

CB: Have you maintained contact with the children and their family after they have reunified?

Yes, I have stayed in contact with a few of the children. They call or come to visit. I enjoy hearing from them and want them to

know that I am always here for them.

CB: Tell me about the children currently in your home.

I have a sibling set in my home of which one I have legal guardianship. They fit in nicely with our family and everyone loves them. The children often tell me that they want to stay forever. They have a third sibling that I would like to have in our home but I don't have enough room.

CB: How has becoming a foster parent changed your lives?

It has been a great experience knowing to love someone as my own. When a child goes back with their birth family, I feel very satisfied and good about the time they spent in our home. We also miss them.

CB: Anything else you'd like to share about your experience as foster parents?

I would like to recommend that people read and learn about the foster care process, and, if possible, take in consideration to adopt.

Helping Children with Loss and Grief

The Pathway Through the Grieving Process

Being a Loss Manager

By Eileen Mayers Pasztor and Marcia Morris

The “The Pathway Through the Grieving Process” diagram describes one of the most important “best practices tools” used at Children’s Bureau in our *PRIDE Model of Practice* to develop and support resource (foster and adoptive) parents as team members in child protection. “Resource Parent” recognizes that foster and adoptive families make a 24-hour a day contribution to the well-being of the children who join their families. (**PRIDE** is an acronym for **P**arent **R**esources for **I**nformation, **D**evelopment, and **E**ducation, published by the Child Welfare League of America – www.cwla.org). A model of practice means that, by bringing the *PRIDE* program into Children’s Bureau, resource parents and staff work together to achieve the same vision, mission, goal, objectives, and outcomes. We do this with “best practices tools” such as this “Pathway Through the Grieving Process.” Here is how it works:

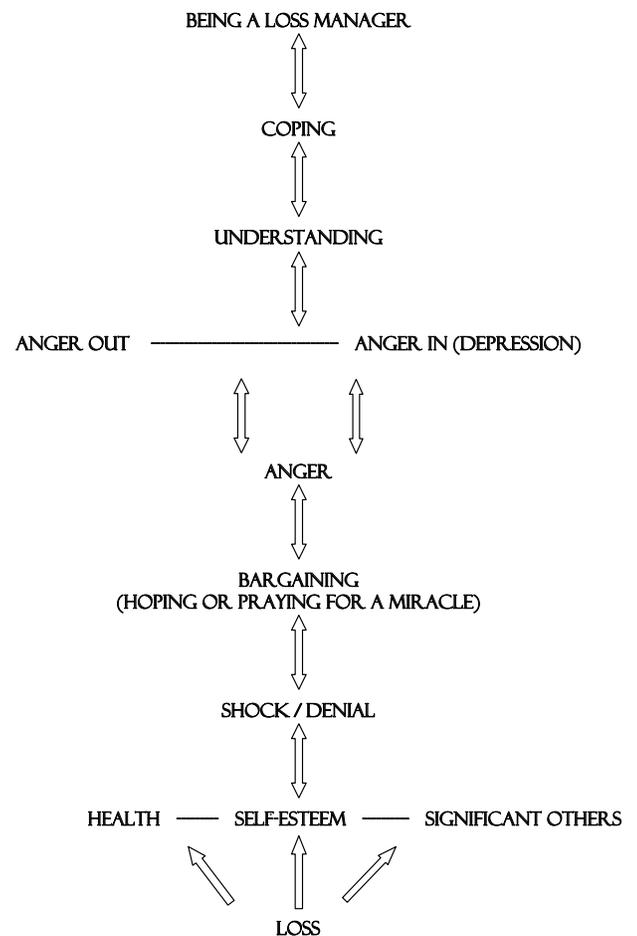
The H Resource/Foster Family was contacted by CB staff to have 5 year old Amanda (not her real name) join their family. First they looked at their “Family Map and Clock” (another *PRIDE* tool) to be certain Amanda could be protected and nurtured in their family. Then they discussed what was known about Amanda from the “Jigsaw Puzzle” perspective (another *PRIDE* tool). Based on these initial assessments, it was decided by the H family and the CB staff that the H family would be an excellent resource for Amanda. And, in turn, the H family would benefit from the experience of bringing her into their family.

The next step was to think about how to gain Amanda’s trust and help her attach to the H family (another *PRIDE* tool), because attachment is so important. Here is where the “Pathway through the Grieving Process” comes in and how it works. You read it from the bottom up. Look for the word **LOSS** at the bottom of the diagram and then, above it, **HEALTH, SELF-ESTEEM, SIGNIFICANT OTHERS**. This shows that Amanda suffered three kinds of losses. On the left, she had **health** losses because of neglect (not enough food, no medical or dental care, and physical pain from that as well as cigarette burns from her mother’s boyfriend.) On the right, she had **significant others** losses because she was separated from her mother to whom she is attached, even though her mother was not able to protect her and keep her safe. The middle word, **self-esteem**, is another typical loss: Amanda feels bad about herself because she thinks she did something wrong when she was separated from her mother.

When she came to the H family, Amanda was quiet and withdrawn. She was in the **SHOCK/DENIAL** stage; little children are confused by what is happening and all the changes. Next they move to **BARGAINING**, or **HOPING/PRAYING FOR A MIRACLE**. She may believe that if she is on her best behavior her mother will come for her. It is not that Amanda doesn’t like the H family, but she doesn’t know them. Even though the H family tries hard to reassure Amanda that she is safe there, no one will hurt her, and they want to take care of her, she may not believe them. When Amanda’s mother does not come for her, she may begin to express her anger. Also, she may begin to “test” the H family to see if they will keep her even when she misbehaves.

Amanda has now traveled to the **ANGER** stage, and this can go to the outward expression of feelings or the inward expression. Outward might be that Amanda has temper tantrums, refuses to follow directions, perhaps she stops getting along with other children. Or Amanda may withdraw, turning her angry feelings on her-

THE PATHWAY THROUGH THE GRIEVING PROCESS *



* Pasztor, E.M. (2009). Pathway through the Grieving Process/Being a Loss Manager. In *PRIDE Model of Practice to Develop and Support Foster and Adoptive Parents as Team Members in Child Protection. Foster PRIDE/ Adopt PRIDE, PRIDEbook, Session 4, Meeting Developmental Needs: Loss*. Washington, DC: CWLA.

self; she may be depressed, cry, whine, act fearful, have trouble sleeping and eating. Fortunately, the H family learned “The Pathway Through the Grieving Process” in their *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE* pre-service training program. The H family knows their parenting task with Amanda is to help her, first, feel protected and nurtured. Then they must help Amanda by talking gently with her and being consistent. They will let her know it is okay to feel mad, bad, and sad because she misses her mother and it is okay to feel angry with her, too. Amanda may get therapy to understand that Amanda’s mother needs to learn how to keep her safe and when she does, Amanda may be able to return to her. Meanwhile, she is safe and welcomed with the H family. With support from the CB social worker, the H family will show Amanda some “okay ways” to express sad, bad, mad feelings. The next step on the Pathway is to help Amanda **COPE** with the losses in her young life. This is different for each child and requires teamwork between the Resource Family and the CB social worker, along with the county worker and perhaps a therapist. They will show her some okay ways to express those feelings. Eventually, hopefully, Amanda may become what is known as a **LOSS MANAGER**. She becomes a survivor from abuse and neglect.

Here are a couple of important additional points about the Pathway: (1) Note how the arrows go up and down. This is because none of us travel the Pathway just once. We can go back and forth from understanding to anger to bargaining to denial and start back up again. This can be caused by another loss of health,

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Find More Families Like Your Family for \$500 Per Referral!

Children's Bureau is proud of the hundreds of excellent foster and foster-adopt families who are certified with us. And we want more families like you, who are caring, compassionate, committed, child-focused, concerned, and comforting. Join us in developing and supporting more resource families to help children of all ages and their families in our communities by referring them to foster or foster-adopt with Children's Bureau. When your friends, neighbors, and families apply, tell them to write **Your Name** for the **Referral Source**. When the family becomes certified you will receive \$250.00. And when the first child joins their family, you will receive an additional \$250.00! Referrals are our best resource for finding quality families, so please tell all about the value of fostering and foster-adopting with Children's Bureau. For more information, please contact your Children's Bureau worker.

May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month!

Foster Parent Appreciation Month in May provides a wonderful opportunity to honor and recognize the work of people making a difference in the lives of children in foster care. It is also a time to bring awareness to the great need for families to open their hearts and homes to these vulnerable children.

Children's Bureau greatly appreciates and applauds the foster and foster-adopt families in our program. Your dedication, patience and willingness to do whatever it takes for a child you don't know is truly admirable. We look forward to honoring you at our annual appreciation luncheon in April!

Foster children are placed in Children's Bureau homes on a daily basis. Did you know, there are over 20,000 children in Los Angeles County alone, who are in the foster care system? Approximately 50% of these children find comfort with extended family members. But where will the other children go? Now, more than ever, we are in need of finding more special individuals and families who are willing to help these precious children heal from the trauma experienced. We offer individuals and families a comprehensive, quality program that includes training, services, support groups and valuable resources needed to successfully care for the children in their home.

Independent Domestic Family Assessments Now Available

Children's Bureau now offers the service of completing independent domestic family assessments (adoption home studies) for families adopting outside of Children's Bureau. For more information or to refer a family, please contact Cindy Stogel at (213) 342-0117.



Helping Children with Loss and Grief

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significant other, or self-esteem. (2) Resource Parents and CB social workers must talk together about **LOSS**; it is an equal opportunity offender, no one is immune from it. But, as a team, we can travel the "Pathway Through the Grieving Process" together.

Marcia Morris is the resource parent recruiter at Children's Bureau and responsible for Community education and outreach; **Eileen Mayers Pasztor** is a consultant from CWLA who also is a foster and adoptive parent and social work professor at California State University, Long Beach

Foster Care Counts Mother's Day Event - Save the Date!

The annual Mother's Day event sponsored by Foster Counts will be on May 10th. More information to come. You can R.S.V.P. to Helen Flores, (213) 342-0165. Participants will meet at Magnolia Place and be transported by bus to the event.

April 15th Deadline to Apply for Adoption Tax Credit

April 15th is the deadline to apply for the Adoption Tax Credit or \$13,190 per child. When a family adopts a child determined to have special needs (receives adoption assistance or adoption subsidy benefits), they can claim the maximum credit as their qualified adoption expenses, even if they had few or no expenses. For special needs adoptions finalized in 2014, families claim \$13,190 per child as their expenses. But that does not mean that they will receive any or all of that money.

The adoption credit is currently a non-refundable credit, which means it only offsets a person's federal income tax liability. (The credit was refundable only in 2010 and 2011.) The credit can be used in the year it is first claimed and then can be carried forward for up to five more years to offset any of those years' tax liability.

Families with adjusted gross incomes of less than \$30,000 are likely to not benefit at all. Those making \$30,000 to \$50,000 will probably be able to use only a portion of the credit (maybe a few thousand), with the benefit spread over six years. The credit also starts to phase out for families making more than about \$200,000.

Federal tax liability is the amount you are responsible for in federal income taxes. It is very important to know that claiming the credit is very different from being able to use the credit, and many people will not benefit at all.

Claiming non-final adoptions, taxpayers must wait to file for the credit for one year after expenses are paid. Claiming for failed adoptions is possible, but a later completed adoption will be considered the same adoption.

The Adoption Tax Credit must be filed by April 15 as there is no benefit after that date. Visit <http://www.nacac.org/taxcredit/taxcredit.html> for more information and consult with your tax professional.

Interested in learning more about Children's Bureau's foster care, adoptions or mentoring programs?
Please give us a call at (800) 730-3933 or (661) 272-9996 or visit us at www.all4kids.org.