



# Foster Care & Adoption News

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## Meet the Wimsatt family

Carman Wimsatt and her husband, Omar, are proud adoptive parents that have been a part of Children's Bureau's family for several years. Carman has graciously shared the adoption of their daughter, Destine, at several Children's Bureau events and meetings, inspiring all who are fortunate to hear her speak. We asked Carman to share a few thoughts about her journey and working alongside the Children's Bureau team.

**CB: How did you find Children's Bureau and why did you choose to foster/adopt through this agency?**

*Many years ago, I was working for Five Acres as a Foster Care Therapist and was assigned to provide transportation for a monitored visit at Children's Bureau. I was impressed with the facility and the staff. I made a decision that day that if I ever*

*decided to adopt a child through the foster care system, I would work with Children's Bureau.*

**CB: Tell me about your experience with Children's Bureau. How has the organization helped you on this journey?**

*Children's Bureau provided a level of professionalism that fostered trust. That trust put my family and I at ease with the process of adoption. Through the Foster Care Social Workers and Cynthia Elliott; who carefully considered my family and the child in determining the best match, the journey to parenthood was successful.*

*Continued on page 2*



## Meet Jodie and Tristan

**CB: What inspired you to foster and adopt?**

*I began this journey knowing it was my purpose to make a difference in a child's life, and share all the love I possibly have to give. I have worked in philanthropy for over a decade, with a focus on underserved and at-risk youth. Through my work, I learned a lot about the broken system and the devastating need for resource parents. I have always wanted to foster and adopt, so once I felt ready and responsible enough, I went for it. It was not an easy road, but everyone that knows me knows I don't take the easy route.*

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

*I actually started the foster care and adoption process in San Francisco, but when I moved down to Los Angeles I had to start the process all over again. I asked for a recommendation from a friend in Los Angeles, and they steered me to Children's Bureau.*

*At Children's Bureau, I completed PRIDE training, and a social*

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# Wimsatt Adoption Story continued from

## **CB: Tell me about the child you have adopted.**

*My daughter.... Like any child she is my world. Like any mother I have loved her from the day I met her. She is funny, an understatement truly, smart beyond her own comprehension and lovable! She loves to swing in the backyard and if I come along, just to sit near her, she will gather my magazines and a cold glass of water to "Make my world comfortable" while I watch her play. She is anxious and nervous at times. I foolishly ask why and work to remember her journey! She needs lots of reassurance that she is loved but who doesn't? She is artistic and crafty, moody and pre-teen. Beautiful and curious. She is my daughter and well, I am biased in my opinion so...she is amazing!*

## **CB: How has becoming an adoptive parent changed your life?**

*I fight my feelings of superiority over the rest of the world. I am proud to know I can love a child I did not bring into this world. I am screaming inside for others who talk about love to act on it in this manner. I am humbled as well by knowing that my "magical" parenting skills used on my biological son are challenged every day! Adoption has forced me to see the uniqueness of children. They are different! It is the job of every parent to discover what is good and redeeming about our children.*

## **CB: What advice would you give other parents who are considering to foster/adopt?**

*Just do it! Be patient, kind and slow to anger. Use soft tones and forgiveness. Hug often. It is not a sign of weakness*



*Cynthia Elliott, Matching Team Coordinator with the Wimsatt family.*



*to use love, to look for ways to see the best of intentions in the worst of actions. Remember being a kid and wanting the adults around you to know that regardless of your poor choices, you are still a good person. Offering acceptance is the greatest of human interactions. I tell my child, in the effort to make her feel whole, that her biological family is her bloodline, but we are her "loveline". This phrase healed my spirit as well as hers.*

*John Romero,  
CB Social  
Worker and  
Destine*



## Jodie and Tristan continued from page 1

worker by the name of Sloane Harris was assigned to me. I give her all credit where credit is due. I couldn't have ever gotten through this process without her. She is amazing.

### **CB: How long did you foster Tristan before you adopted him?**

About a year and a half. I remember when I got the call. It was an emergency placement, the week of Mother's Day 2013. The doorbell rang, and he was handed to me holding a garbage bag of his things. In an instant he was my everything.

### **CB: Tell me about Tristan.**

I am blessed to say Tristan is a very happy, bright, funny, and kind boy. He's a first grader. He's so smart, the way his mind works is incredible. It's all about creating and building. He's an inventor, and I'd be surprised if he didn't become an engineer, or something of that sort.

### **CB: Do you think there is a stigma associated with fostering?**

Yes, absolutely. Foster kids are looked at as disposable. You know... "that kid." Most people don't understand the circumstances they come from, and the fact that these kids are put in these situations is completely out of their control. They tell me "I could never do that."

### **CB: What do you tell people when they ask you why you fostered?**

I tell them my story. What I've seen firsthand. It's simple for me. I give them the opportunity to understand how much



these children really need someone to love them, and for them to love someone else, no matter how long.

### **CB: What had you wished you known before fostering/adopting?**

How important it is to ask for help.

Based on what I knew from my work and everything I learned in foster training, his extreme behaviors made perfect sense. He had been in three disrupted homes before coming to me. It is not a circumstance any little person should have to go through. When in doubt, I did call upon a few of my closest friends and family to help guide, listen and most of all, believe in both of us. I would have asked for more.

It is really important to have a strong support system and to talk to as many people as you can who have gone through the process to really understand first-hand about what the experience is, the good and bad, and be prepared for it.

I still probably do too much on my own. People need to

have a community that supports them, people to lean on.

### **CB: What is some advice you would give to future resource parents?**

Stay the course as some say, slow and steady.... There are ups and downs, but my son and I are a team unlike any other I know.

These kids are innocent



little beings. They didn't ask to be born or be put in these situations. They need love and stability more than anything. They need people that will put them first.

### **CB: What is the most rewarding part about your experience?**

The most rewarding part is my son. He's my purpose.

## Support Groups Offered

Children's Bureau provides parent socials each month for families throughout the Southland! These groups provide a great opportunity for you to meet, learn and share your experiences with other resource families. The ultimate goal is for families to build lasting friendships that flourish outside of the group. Certified parents receive two training hours for attending a meeting. We are currently offering support groups in Palmdale, North Hollywood and Los Angeles.

# Preparing for Transracial Adoption

by Sean L. Sparks

Becoming a foster and/or adoptive family is a multi-layered journey. It brings our ideas about parenting to the forefront, while requiring us to shift our focus to what the child joining our family will need. Most likely, we are aware of generic issues such as education, health care, and how the child will mesh with our existing family structure as well as practical concerns like child care and extra-curricular activities. Through the various training courses offered by the adoption organizations with whom we are working, we may also take courses exploring theories about attachment and discipline, learn about preparation of our homes, and resources to support our family.

Families open to fostering or adopting children of a different race/culture than themselves must also learn about and prepare for additional aspects of supporting the healthy development of children of color. Research studies and families' childrearing experiences teach us that the racial identity development of children of color encompass components that are different than that of white children. Accordingly, it is vital to specifically learn about, consider, and plan for a range of practical supports for your child of color. We must shift our thinking to integrate understanding about our child of color's developmental and safety needs into all aspects of our parenting.

One basic concept of child development is that "invisibility erases identity and experience; visibility affirms reality". How will you create visibility for your child? What already exists

in your daily life and what will you have to add? At home, do you have pictures on the walls that represent the child's birth race and culture? What books line your shelves? Do you listen to an array of inclusive music? What holidays do you celebrate? Whom you surround yourself with on a daily basis, e.g., your friends, neighborhood, doctor and dentist, your place of worship? Do the schools you are considering reflect diversity? Will your child see other children and families like theirs? Will your child be the only child of their racial background at family gatherings, play dates, or on their athletic team?

We also have to prepare ourselves to help our child deal with the messages and actions of racial biases she/he will experience from media and people beyond our home. What are your own feelings about racism? How much do you know about its various forms, and how will you respond to the questions and possibly racist responses to your child/family? Are you engaged in taking actions against racism as a model for your child?

These questions can feel overwhelming and yet, many families have met the challenges successfully. Remain open to learning how to ensure that you communicate to your children that who they are, including their racial identity, matters. Connect with organizations devoted to supporting transracial families find solutions to their parenting questions. These groups also provide invaluable opportunities to connect to families similar to yours.

Derman-Sparks, L. & Edwards, J. (2010). *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*. Washington, DC: NAEYC. P.32

## CELEBRATE NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH!

Children's Bureau celebrates 1673 Adoptions since 2002!

The nation will celebrate National Adoption Month in November! In Los Angeles, on Friday, November 18th, Children's Court will host a special day that includes the adoption of many children in a festive courtroom filled with balloons, teddy bears, crafts and other activities for families. This is not only a happy time for the families but also for the social workers, attorneys and judges who work hard year-round to find safe, permanent homes for children in need. Congratulations to all of the families who will finalize their adoptions on this wonderful and inspirational day!

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

Children's Bureau is proud of our 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.

**Interested in learning more about Children's Bureau's foster care and foster-adoption programs?**  
**Please give us a call at (800) 730-3933 or (661) 272-9996 or visit us at**  
**<https://www.all4kids.org/program/foster-care/>**