



## Mesa Chapter

# Families Supporting Adoption Newsletter

## Tried and Tested

October 2008

### Inside this issue:

*This is a very small excerpt from an article found on [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) from the 2006 FSA Conference. It is taken from a talk given by Ardith G. Kapp. It is a very touching talk and I suggest that you read it in it's entirety at: <http://www.providentliving.org/fs/content/list/1,18803,6964-1,00.html>*

### Tried and Tested

Of all the insights gained from years of experience that I would hope to share with you, it would be to impress upon your minds and your hearts the importance of protecting, preserving and cherishing you relationship, your marriage covenant, your love for each other.

- One you must face reality-how far do we go seeking medical help
- What about adoption? A maybe decision

A relationship is tried and tested in times of disappointment, discouragement, and maybe even despair. But when we link arms and tread the way to God, hand in hand, the valleys that we traverse together can bring us to the mountain peaks. Marriage relationships are tempered and welded in times of adversity. Volumes have been written on the process of building strong relationships, but experience tells us that success depends not so much on a formula that we follow as on a commitment to each other that we feel. With that commitment, we work through the barriers that could be destructive and use them as bonds to strengthen, stabilize, and weld heart to heart, and soul to soul. Then privately we go about our secret ways to bring joy to each other.

I have two younger sisters, both of who are mothers. My youngest sister, Shirley, has eleven children. Sharon, another sister, has a daughter Shelly, who was born to her after six years of waiting. Ten years later, through the fervent prayers of the extended family for the wonderful blessing of adoption, a little boy came into their family and was sealed to them in the temple for time and eternity. What a blessing he and the other children have been to all of us!

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the  
date:

The upcoming Adoption Academy (required for certification) will be held Saturday, October 11th. 3344 E. McDowell Road, Mesa, AZ 85213 (8am-5pm)

Our National Adoption Month Celebration will take place November 8th.

If you would like to have an article included in a Newsletter please email me at [shannon.watkins@cox.net](mailto:shannon.watkins@cox.net).



## Tried and Tested (Continued)

Over the years, my sisters and I, with our husbands, have prayed for each other and with each other and about each other. We have come to know that the Lord has answered our prayers differently and not always in the affirmative and not always according to our time line. But we have all felt the warm assurance of His approval and love.

There will be times when we may feel that our desires are righteous, but the answer is still no. At that point, the only way to peace is to say, “Not my will but thine be done.” The Lord doesn’t have to explain His decisions to us. If He did, how would we learn faith? I have learned that we must make our choices—even the hard ones—and then accept responsibility for the consequences. It is in facing the awesome responsibility of using our agency and, in faith, making decisions of great eternal consequence that we are drawn close to God, and we learn to listen and to follow the prompting of the spirit.

Someday, maybe years after the trial of our faith, we will receive a witness that our decisions were right. (See Ether 12:6) But until then, those who try to live in tune with the promptings of the Spirit must exercise no small degree of faith and courage in following that Spirit.

What, then, are some of the decisions couples can make to lead fulfilled lives when the answer is that they will not have children in this life? One night, as my husband and I were reaching for that kindly light to lead us amid the encircling gloom, we read a statement from President David O. McKay: “The noblest aim in life is to strive...to make other lives...happier.” (*Conference Report*, April 1961, p.131.)

speaking, I think, by inspiration from the Lord, the patriarch of our family said to me, “You need not possess children to love them. Loving is not synonymous with possessing, and possessing is not necessarily loving. The world is filled with people to be loved, guided, taught, lifted, and inspired.” You are some of those people.

My husband and I knew that parents are constantly placed in situations that help them develop unselfishness and sacrifice. We began to realize that if we were to learn the important lessons that our friends with children were learning, we needed to place ourselves in situations where we could serve and sacrifice. So we began to say yes to everything and to everyone.

It wasn’t long before we had many opportunities to serve and sacrifice. Often at the end of a long week we would plan for a moment together—just the two of us—and the telephone would ring. We’d postpone our moment together and carry on with joyful, grateful hearts for our opportunities, hoping to qualify even in some small measure for the quality spoken of by Elder Neal A. Maxwell: “So often our sisters [and I would add brothers] comfort others when their own needs are greater than those being comforted. That quality is like the generosity of Jesus on the cross. Empathy during agony is a portion of divinity! ... They do not withhold their blessings simply because some blessings are [for now, at least] withheld from them.” (*Ensign*, May 1978, pp.10-11)





## Placement Posts

### Stoten Family

Masie Lynne arrived July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008, tipping the scales at 5 lbs 14.5 oz, and stretching 17 inches long. It was only one month prior, on June 9<sup>th</sup> (our seven year wedding anniversary), that we were told she would soon be joining our family. Many of



our family and friends were curious to know how we could prepare for a baby in just one month. The truth is that we had been searching, planning, and preparing for our baby girl for over a year. We adopted our two-and-a-half year old son, Miles, through LDSFS, so our journey to Masie started there also. We had our online profile posted on [www.itsaboutlove.org](http://www.itsaboutlove.org) and made sure the profile also linked to our blog. Six months and no hits; we knew we needed to start getting more creative. In our Christmas letters we included adoption profile cards and asked that our contacts talk about our family and our desire to have another baby with everyone they knew. This got us a couple of hits, but nothing concrete. After advice from a very informative FSA workshop; we created an adoption website and posted our profile on [www.parentprofiles.com](http://www.parentprofiles.com). Again, a few more hits, and tons of traffic on our website, but still nothing promising. We became friendly with a very outspoken adoption advocate who passed our profile, adoption profile cards, and website information out to several doctor and lawyer offices. Yet again, we had a few inquiries from these, but still nothing that would pan out. We were fasting and praying about what more we could do when we received an email from our FSA contacts about babies needing quick placement from an agency in Utah, called A Guard-

ian Angel Adoptions. The idea to search through another agency had never occurred to us, so we were excited about a new avenue to pursue. The day we read that email we called the agency only to find out that the birthmoms of the baby boys listed in the email had many potential families to choose for placement, but simply hadn't chosen one yet. We were bummed! But after talking more with the staff at A Guardian, we felt really, really good and actually felt hopeful again. They had several more babies soon needing placement, so we decided to go for it. The first birthmom to view our profile after we completed our paperwork decided that she wanted to place her baby girl with us. We could not believe it! Masie's birthmom, Corina, received our profile on Monday morning, and we were talking with her Monday night after she had decided to place Masie with us! Talk about an amazing journey. We love adoption and feel so blessed that Masie made a smooth transition into our home. We love her so much. We are grateful for our membership in FSA and contribute finding our baby girl to our association with all of you.

Many thanks,

Luke, Emrie, Miles & Masie Stoten





## Placement Posts

### The Mead Family

We are Tom and Gayla Mead. We have been married for eight years. We have been ready to start our family for a long time without success. We had considered adoption for the last few years. In Au-



gust of 2007 we felt really strongly it was time to pursue our course of adoption through LDS Family Services. We are the type of people that when we make a decision, we like to act on it right away. Since we received confirmation that this was the right path for us, we worked with LDS Family Services to get certified in about six weeks. Our online profile was up by Thanksgiving last year. In February of 2008 we attended the all day certification seminar. We weren't sure what to expect in the seminar but loved it tremendously and didn't want the day to end. We took with us a lot of insight and tips on what we could do to help us find our children. We added active pictures of us to our profile and received an email from our birth mother the following Tuesday. Our birth mother later told us that she was attracted to our profile because of the picture of us by a waterfall and loved that we went outdoors for fun. It was a slow process at first. Once we exchanged our personal email addresses, it picked up a little bit and allowed each side to know each other better since it didn't need to be filtered through Salt Lake City. Once we started this process, we attended every FSA activity. We met great people who had experi-

enced success with adoption and always asked a lot of questions that helped us to feel prepared for the whole process. We believe being involved with FSA prepared us for each step along the way. Each activity seemed to be prepared spe-

cifically for us and the step we were in at the time. We met our birth mother in April and her mother was with her which was key to a successful placement. That first visit was really nerve-racking for all sides. At the very end of May, our birth mother let us know she officially had chosen us. Through that process we got to know her as a person and her struggle in making the decision. We had no idea that we would love her so much in this process. We had always wanted a baby and also gained her as a close friend through the process. We exchanged cell phone numbers and got to visit with her three times before the baby was born. She called us directly the morning she was going into labor and told us to pack up the car and start driving to Utah. It was an emotional experience and we continue to support our birth mother. Austin Thomas Mead was born on August 2, 2008 at 10 pounds and 6 ounces! He was 21.75 inches long. He almost came out big enough to walk! The process was very spiritual and emotional for both sides. The strong relationship we formed with our birth mother and her parents, allowed the placement to be smooth and beautiful.



## Placement Posts

### The Littlest Moncur

We are pleased to announce the arrival of Scotlyn Gracemarie Moncur, a beautiful, happy baby girl, on July 25. Sent to us from Heaven through two, very special, loving Birth Parents.



Our adoption journey began nearly two and a half years ago, while living in Utah. Not long after being approved through LDS FS in Utah, we decided to move to Arizona, where we had to nearly start over. We were certified to adopt ten months before we received an email from Scotlyn's birth parents.

After attending the LDS FS fireside in January, where the birth parent caseworker spoke about being prepared, we decided to finally start preparing the nursery. Fearing the pain that a nursery sitting empty would cause us, we had never done anything to the extra bedroom in our house. After much thought, we finally decided to "prepare our fields" and show a little more faith. On a Monday evening in February, we started painting the nursery. The very next morning, we received an email forwarded from "Eve" at LDS FS. We had been contacted by a young couple who were expecting, and had seen our profile on the website. (Yes, the email was from both the birth mother and birth father.)

Between February and July, we got to know Scotlyn's birth families quite well. We flew to California to meet them in April, and even stayed at her Birth Mom's family's home for the weekend. In May, our Birth Mom and her mother flew to Arizona to visit our home to see where Scotlyn would be raised. We had left a spot on the ceiling in the nursery for her Birth Mom to paint a special "cloud" in the sky over the crib so that Scotlyn would always know there is a special person looking over her.

In July, we had the wonderful experience of driving to California two weeks prior to the due date. Our birth mom wanted to make sure we were definitely there for the birth. We stayed at our Birth Mom's grandparents' barn, which had been converted to a one-bedroom apartment. During this two-week period, Scot had to return to Arizona for work while Beqi stayed in California. For two weeks, Beqi worked during the day, and spent evenings and weekends with Birth Mom, Birth Dad, and their families. It was an amazing opportunity to get to know them and grow very close with them.

Scot flew back to California the day that Birth Mom went into the hospital. It was a long, difficult labor for her. Beqi had the wonderful opportunity to be in the room for the birth. Our Birth Mom wanted to make sure Beqi was the first to hold little Scotlyn. Our angel was finally placed in Beqi's arms weighing in at 8lbs 6oz and 20 ½ inches long. (Which is the exact weight and length that Beqi was when she was born.) Later that day, when both Birth Mom and Scotlyn were ready, Beqi and Scot presented Scotlyn to her and the Birth Father to have some personal time with this little angel. It was one of the most touching moments we have ever experienced.

Our adoption journey was nothing like what we had originally thought it would be. We had originally thought that we would want a "semi-closed" adoption. We were looking at minimal post-placement contact (occasional pictures and emails, etc.). However, once we met the birth families, we felt as if we knew them all of our lives. We realized that our family did not only grow by one tiny little addition. Our family grew tenfold with a large extended family. Not only did we "adopt" Scotlyn, they "adopted" us into their special family as well. We look forward to years of friendship and love that our new extended family has to offer. We have so much love and admiration for not just our Birth Parents, but also for their whole family for the support and love they have given to us. We are very blessed because of all of them. Of course our little Scotlyn will be doubly blessed knowing how many people love and care for her. She truly is an Angel sent from Heaven.



## Placement Post

### The Eagleson Family

John and I had always talked about the possibility of adopting once we were done having all of our biological children, but in November of 2007 we soon came to understand that the Lord had a different plan for our family. Completely out of the blue, we each had some strong im-



pressions that we needed to adopt, and that we were not to delay the process. After spending some time on our knees consulting the matter with the Lord, he confirmed to us, once again, His will concerning our next child. We knew that this baby was going to come to us through the avenue of adoption. We immediately contacted LDS family services, and got started on the paperwork. As soon as we were certified, we sent an email out to everyone in our contact lists (probably somewhere around 400 people). It was important to us to get the word out so that our family and friends could help us in the search for our baby. We also made a commitment to each other, and to our Heavenly Father that we would attend the temple every week until we got our baby. A few months later, my dad (back in Utah) was talking with one of his really good friends whose 19 year old daughter (who had only been married for four months) was going through a divorce. When all was said and done, she found out that she was pregnant. After counseling with the Lord concerning her future, and more particularly the future of her unborn child, the spirit whispered to her what she was to do. She knew in that moment that she was to place her child for adoption. Her main concern, however, was with whom to place this baby. As my dad's friend was relaying to him the story, my dad said, "Well, did you know that Nicole and John are actually in the process of adopting now? They have just

become certified". Our good family friend then quickly ran home to tell his daughter what he had just found out. As soon as she heard that we were adopting, she felt like her prayers had been answered. I had known this beautiful girl since she was a baby. In fact, while she was growing up, I was their family's main babysitter.

We flew out for our face to face meeting with her and her parents, and the Spirit witnessed to all of us that the Lord's will was unfolding. Just days prior to our meeting, John and I both had a beautiful confirmation while in the celestial room of the Jordan River Temple, that this special little spirit, was indeed *our* baby.

We were both able to be at the Hospital while our birth mom was in labor and I was blessed to witness the miraculous birth of our beautiful baby boy. Asher Jordan Eagleson was born on August 20, 2008 (which interestingly enough, was exactly 9 months after we received our initial promptings to adopt). He weighed in at 10 lb 10 oz, and was 22 inches long! It was amazing to us that such a tiny girl gave birth to such a HUGE baby. She is our personal hero in more ways than one, that's for sure.

Our Asher is just over a month old, and we marvel everyday at what a blessing he is in our lives. We know and that he is our baby, and we feel so thankful to our Heavenly Father for allowing him to come to us through the miraculous blessing of adoption.





## Placement Post

### The Wells Family

Though the time seemed to drag on at a snail pace, Jason and I now realize how quickly things happened and how blessed we were to start the adoption process and bring our precious Gavin home inside of 7 months. We decided to adopt after Thanksgiving. We had learned from talking with another couple



in our ward who had adopted their son that word-of-mouth is just as important as the profile you place on the web. So at Christmas time, before we even met with Larry, we spread the word to all our family and friends that we were hoping to adopt. We finished the paperwork and were certified at the end of February and got our profile online by the second week of March. For some reason I didn't feel we could be as casual and intimate as I wanted through the LDSFS profile website so I started a family blog devoted solely to our adoption efforts. On the blog we posted a more in-depth and playful account of our courtship and marriage to date. Jason and I each wrote a post about ourselves illustrating the nuances of our personalities in a more casual, playful tone. I really wanted the birth mothers to get a sense of who we were without coming across as lighthearted and flippant. We also included several slideshows with pictures of us individually, corresponding to our individual posts, and as a couple. We included our birthparent letter as well. To get the word out, I sent an email to all our friends and family indicating our hope to adopt with an attachment of our birthparent letter and direct links to our blog and LDS profile asking them, if they felt comfortable, to forward it to all of their family and friends and so on.

On April 14th, our birth mother contacted us through the LDS profile email system stating that she wanted us to be the parents of her baby. A week later we flew to Utah to meet her and the birth father. At the meeting our birth mother indicated that she was drawn to how genuine we were on our profile

and that many couples seem to try to hard to be clever or cute. Over the next three months we stayed in contact with our birth mother and birth father through email, texting and phone conversations. On August 2nd, we brought our baby boy home. I know without a doubt that Gavin is in our lives now due to the prayers we offered as we worded our birthparent letter, which stood out to our birth mother and convinced her we were the right couple, and by staying true to who we are as individuals and as a couple.





## Placement Post

### The Dickinson Family



In the first week of January this year, we got the impression and prayed about moving forward with fertility options and adoption at the same time since we have not been able to have children on our own. A few days later, LDS Family Services came to our ward and did a presentation on adoption. A couple of weeks after that, the birth mom, Toni, asked us to adopt her baby. Toni and Faith have been best friends for 20+ years and they know each other very well. Initially, we were hesitant to accept her offer, especially since we didn't even start the adoption process yet! We started the adoption process in the beginning of February. Meanwhile, we kept talking with Toni over the next couple of months and came to a mutual understanding on both sides. In the middle of April, we went to the temple to pray about adopting Toni's baby and we both received a very strong impression that we should adopt Toni's baby. We went with Toni to LDS Family Services a couple of days later so she could get her process started. We didn't have much time to get everything done as the baby was due in the end of August. A couple of weeks before Autumn Joy was born, we met the

birth father and there was a hint of him not allowing the adoption to proceed. He eventually realized the best choice for the baby was adoption. Our baby Autumn Joy was born on 08-27-2008 and we were able to be in the birth room with Toni. This has all happened faster than we were anticipating and the people at LDS Family Services did an awesome job! It has been a wonderful experience with many prayers answered on all sides!

### Stork Report

Congratulations to the following families that were placed with babies this month:

Edward and Belinda Romney adopted a girl.

John and Bonnie Dickenson adopted a girl.

**FSA will be having an Adoption Book Drive for November the National Adoption Month. Please help by donating your favorite adoption books, so that they can be distributed to local libraries. You can make a donation through the following ways:**

**Adoption Academy:** October 11, 2008 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the new church building located at 3344 E. McDowell Road, Mesa, AZ 85213

**Ordering Books Online:** You can have them shipped to Marisa Benson at 1317 North Barkley, Mesa, AZ 85203

**LDS Family Services' Mesa Office:** Please drop off your books to Suzanne Borchers, Adoption Secretary

Thanks so much for your support!!



## Case Worker Spotlight



### Lisa Randall

My name is Lisa Randall and I am currently finishing my last year in the Masters of Social Work program at ASU. I am working at LDS Family Services as a student intern, but

hope to remain on staff after I graduate in May. Last year I worked with troubled youth at the Anasazi wilderness treatment program. I served a mission to Puerto Rico and shortly afterwards married my husband Chris in the Mesa temple. We have been married for twenty two years and have five children. The oldest is serving a mission in Lubbock Texas and will be home in February. I love to spend time in the mountains in Utah and I also love to snow ski!! I am grateful to be associated with LDS Family services and to be working with adoptive couples!!! This is a great work.

### Sharon Cummings Brundage

My name is Sharon Cummings Brundage. I was raised in Torrance, California and I'm the middle of 7 children. I served a mission in Tempe, Arizona in 1995-96 and moved back here after I received my BA from USU. I've been in Arizona for 10 years and love it. I've drawn two of my siblings out here, so I only have 4 to go.

While in Arizona I've worked as a Juvenile Probation Officer and interned with CPS and Mediation/Counseling Services while earning a Masters Degree in Social Work at ASU. I've always enjoyed working with families and have had a great experience here at LDSFS so far.

I've enjoyed very much engaging in the adoption process and feeling the Lords hands in this work. I respect so much the birth mothers we work with and feel grateful to the adoptive couples for being the wonderful people they can trust with their difficult decisions and eventual placements.

I look forward to meeting all of you,  
Sharon Cummings-Brundage



Thanks to everyone who attended the September Meet and Greet and Ice Cream Social. As always it is wonderful to associate with the families of FSA. Here are some pictures of the event.



New Case workers from left to right Audra Owens, Lisa Randall, Nancy Koberstien, and Calli Tidwell



Matt Watson, Mesa Agency Director



Yummy Ice Cream!!