

Network News

Quarterly Edition

Helping Build Families... One Miracle at a Time

Issue 24

www.adoptionnetwork.com

Welcome to....

Adoptionland

Disneyland is called the happiest place on earth. Well, move over Walt... the happiest place on earth is "Adoptionland" where you can realize your hopes and dreams of parenting without the fears, red tape, and years of waiting.

So much information that is given to couples in the outside world is slighted and non-insightful. Much information does not deal with the real fears, anxieties, and short sightedness that we all have had regarding adoption and its process.

We enthusiastically celebrate the birth moms who have courageously come forth to place a child for adoption and make our parenting dreams come true. We applaud their unselfishness, their contentment with their decision, and the satisfaction they display in knowing that they have chosen a wonderful couple to provide their baby with a stable and gifted life. This gift began with the birthmother's unselfishness and deep-rooted desire to see to it that their babies be given the best...US!!!

The First Steps

You have taken a critical step to parenting. You have chosen Adoption Network Law Center to actively market you to birthmothers nationally and assist you in securing an ideal match. Now, you must try to relax and allow the knowledgeable staff to do its job. We care about you, your dreams and your fears. Our goal is the same as yours; to build your family in the fastest, safest, most caring and professional manner.

While you are patiently waiting to be matched, we have a few suggestions:

- Read about the lives of adopted children and adoptive parents. There are unique issues you will want to be prepared for in advance.

- Enjoy those special moments together as a couple. Have fun doing those things you never seem to have time to do.

- Start planning your nursery and layette.

- Join an adoption support group, or you can call some Adoption Network Law Center adoptive parents who are happily parenting. They will be happy to provide you with emotional support.

We have compiled a list of suggested reading material on our website and in your handbooks to help you understand a birthmother's experience in the adoption process. We never know when your birthmother will arrive, so be prepared. Every family will ultimately find the birth mom who is destined to give them their child. If you are committed to pursue adoption, you will become parents!

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There are many reasons why you should bank your baby's precious cord blood stem cells and listed below are the top 5 most important reasons why you should bank your baby's cord blood:

- Cord blood has lifesaving potential for your baby and family in treating over 75 diseases, so saving it is like having "biological insurance."
- Survival rates double when using cord blood from a relative, so if needed, your child or family member has the best treatment available.
- In clinical trials, cord blood has had proven success in treating heart disease, so your baby may benefit from this and many other emerging therapies in the future.
- Saving your baby's cord blood will give you sense of security over your family's future health.
- You only have one chance to collect and save these genetically unique cells. If you don't save your baby's cord blood today, you may be passing up the best medical treatment option for tomorrow.



Lefty or Righty?

Don't expect your baby to prefer one hand over the other anytime soon. At 12 months, most are still using both about equally, says Daniel Kessler, M.D. Even if your child favors one hand for eating or throwing, that preference can change during the second or even third year. And because your baby is born with a tendency toward left- or right-handedness (it often runs in families), there's no need to help him "choose" his dominant hand; some experts think that interfering might, in fact, be detrimental.

Though uncommon, a baby's consistently favoring one hand during the first year can indicate a neuromuscular problem; talk to your pediatrician if you notice that your baby uses only one hand or one side of his body.

Baby's First Manicure

After giving your baby a bath, check their nails to see whether they need a trim. An infant's nails grow very quickly, don't be surprised if you're cutting them once or twice a week.

It's never easy to get your baby to sit still for a mini-manicure, but the following tips can make it go more smoothly. (Some parents prefer to do this while their baby is dozing, but why risk waking a sleeping a baby)?

1. Use blunt baby nail clippers or scissors to keep their fingernails as short as possible so they can't scratch themselves or anyone else.
2. Cut nails straight across. (Don't round corners).
3. Gently buff rough edges with a soft emery board, moving the file in one direction. Resist the temptation to bite or pick at your baby's nails; doing so transmits germs. If a cut causes bleeding, hold a piece of gauze

over it until the bleeding stops. Applying antiseptic usually isn't necessary unless you notice inflammation or the beginnings of an infection.

Your baby is bound to squirm, but clipping their nails will soon become routine and continue to be an easier process.

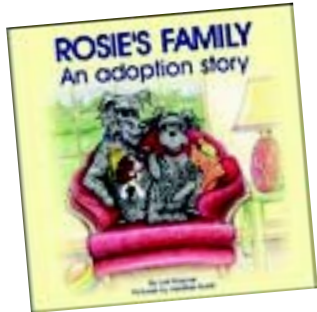
Build Your Baby's Brain

When then Georgia Governor Zell Miller announced that every baby born in the Peach State in 1998 would receive a cassette or CD of classical music it made national headlines. Miller had chaired a state education commission that concluded that music had a direct connection to brain development. Research suggests a strong correlation between exposure to classical music and intelligence, specifically the part to as the "Mozart effect" named after the famous composer.

At birth, a baby's brain has 100 billion neurons - about the same number as the stars in the Milky Way. While a baby's brain contains all the nerve cells it will ever have, the connections between the cells haven't been established. It's during the first critical years of life that the brain's blueprint is established. Sensory experiences such as sound, taste, sight, and touch, encourage creation of pathways that carry impulses from cell to cell, creating a neuron network.

Here are some ways to incorporate music into your baby's life:

- Turn off the television and turn on the stereo. Choose soft, quiet music, such as classical or acoustic music.
- Play music at bedtime.
- Sing to your baby even if your voice sounds like a barking seal. Your child won't care.
- Teach your child to play music when he or she grows up. University researches have found that children as young as three years old who had private piano or singing lessons scored higher on reasoning tests than children with no musical training.



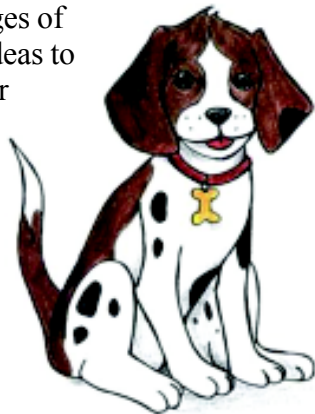
Rosie's Family - An Adoption Story

A book by Lori Rosove; pictures by Heather Burrill.

Reviewed by Brenlea Finkelstein, a mother of two girls, who lives in Vancouver, Canada.

Rosie's Family is a terrific book that addresses the complexities of adoption in a story that reflects the diversity in families today. It is about her belonging in a family regardless of those differences. Rosie is a beagle who was adopted by schnauzers. She looks different from her parents and younger brother and expresses feelings and concerns, which set forth many questions that children who were adopted may have. As a result, she gets reassuring answers to questions such as "What was I like when you first brought me home?" and "Are you my real parents?"

The Book is about belonging to a real family regardless of differences and underlying similarities. *Rosie's Family* is a comprehensive children's picture book that helps adoptive parents and their children discuss the many issues surrounding adoption. The colorful illustrations of Rosie and her family, neighborhood and friends and all who live with different types of families will keep children entertained and riveted. At the end of the book, the author provides two pages of "Notes for Parents" with ideas to discuss adoption with their children.



Answer to Prayers

We ask for strength.

God gives us Difficulties that make us strong.

We pray for wisdom.

God sends us Problems,

The solution of which develops Wisdom.

We plead for prosperity.

God gives Us brain and brawn to work.

We plead for courage.

God gives Us dangers to overcome.

We ask for favors.

God gives us opportunities.

This is the answer.

Author Unknown



As offices go and ours is no different, we often get e-mails passed on to us and we share them among ourselves. This is one such e-mail that we'd like to share with you as well. The author is unknown and the numbers may not be correct or accurate, but it gave us all a chuckle and something to think about.

The Price of Children

The Government recently calculated the cost of raising a child from birth to 18 and came up with \$160,140.00 for a middle-income family. Talk about sticker shock! That doesn't even touch college tuition, but \$160,140.00 isn't bad if you break it down. It translates into \$8.896.66 a year, \$741.38 a month, or \$171.08 a week. That's a mere \$24.24 a day! Just over a dollar an hour.

Still, you might think the best financial advice is don't have children if you want to be "rich." Actually, it is just the opposite.

What do you get for your \$160,140.00?

Naming rights. First, middle, and last!

Glimpses of God everyday.

Giggles... under the covers everynight.

More love than your heart can hold.

Butterfly kisses and velcro hugs.

Endless wonder over rocks, ants, clouds, and warm cookies.

A hand to hold, usually covered with jelly or chocolate.

A partner for blowing bubbles, flying kites, building sandcastles, and skipping down the sidewalk in the pouring rain.

Someone to laugh yourself silly with, no matter what the boss said or how your stocks performed that day.

For \$160,140.00, you never have to grow up.

You get to finger-paint, carve pumpkins, play hide-and-peek, catch lightning bugs, and never stop believing in Santa Claus. You have an excuse to keep reading the adventures of Piglet and Pooh, watching Saturday morning cartoons, going to Disney movies, and wishing on stars.

You get to frame rainbows, hearts, and flowers under refrigerator magnets and collect spray painted noodle wreaths for Christmas, hand prints set in clay for Mother's Day, and cards with backward letters for Father's Day.

For \$160,140.00, there is no greater bang for your buck. You get to be a hero just for retrieving a Frisbee

off the garage roof, taking the training wheels off a bike, removing a splinter, filling a wading pool, coaxing a wad of gum out of bangs, and coaching a baseball team that never wins but always gets treated to ice cream regardless. You get a front row seat to history to witness the first step, first word, first bra, first date, and first time behind the wheel. You get to be immortal.

You get another branch added to your family tree, and if you're lucky, a long list of limbs in your obituary called grandchildren and great grandchildren.

You get an education in psychology, nursing, criminal justice, communications, and human sexuality that no college can match.

In the eyes of a child, you rank right up there under God. You have all the power to heal a boo-boo, scare away the monsters under the bed, patch a broken heart, police a slumber party, ground them forever, and love them without limits, so... one day they will, like you, love without counting the cost.

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but the moments that take our breath away..."





To My Baby

by Karen Ledbetter

I knew of you before your birth,

I loved you before we ever met.

I prayed for you day and night,

Thankful your birth mother had chosen life.

The waiting was so anxious and hard,

You already held a place in my heart.

Weeks went by, and sometimes I cried.

Finally one day came a call with good news.

Tears of joy fell on my cheek

The first time I held you,

Precious Baby, so tiny and sweet.

I'm thankful your birth mother had chosen life.

Rocking and singing sweet lullabies,

You've brought much joy to so many lives.

I'll love you forever, sweet little one.

Memories to treasure, a new life begun.

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ANLC has moved, and we love our new home!



Our phone number remains the same, but we are now

located at:

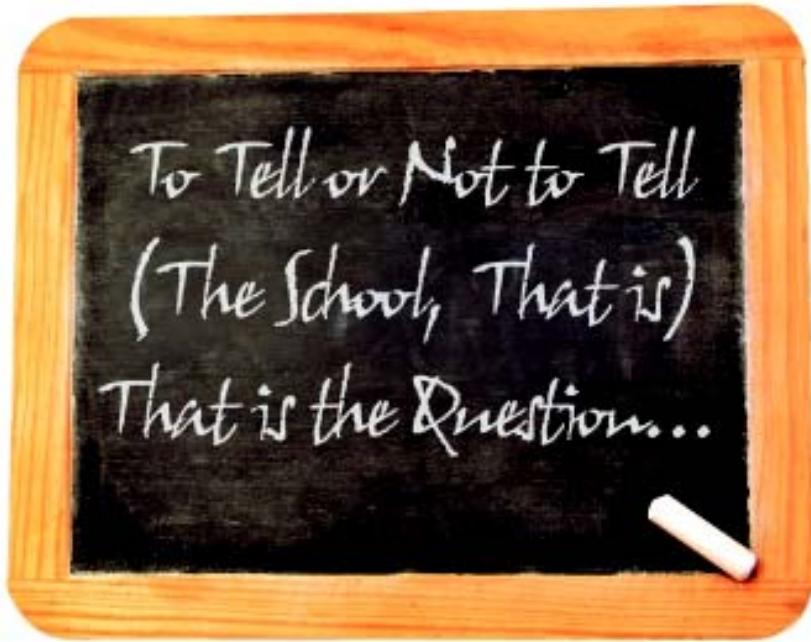
23161 Lake Center Drive, Suite 210

Lake Forest, CA 92630

Located adjacent to the most traveled highway in California with freeway signage visible to those considering adoption, we've already seen an increase in birth mom activity.

Some of our California clients recently helped us celebrate our new home with an open house. It was absolutely wonderful to meet so many of our families and their babies. Thanks to all of you who were able to join us.





By Karen Ledbetter

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I asked for feedback about whether or not to tell the school, daycare, or preschool of your child's adopted status. I received several interesting and thought-provoking responses:

"Telling people that our children were adopted was always something that came very naturally. Of course we didn't go into long explanations for every stranger in the supermarket who made a comment about the babies, but to those people with whom we were likely to have an ongoing relationship, it was something that we never made any secret of. It was how our family was formed, and something that made us all very happy. Most people who knew us knew that the kids were adopted anyway.

"When it came time to fill out the first form when signing our daughter up for preschool, the question was right there in black and white. Was this child adopted, and if so, did the child know he or she was adopted? It really didn't occur to me to not answer the question honestly. Being adopted is part of my children's life experience, and I didn't see any reason to withhold the information. I figured that the school must have a reason for asking, although I can't remember any situation ever coming up - with either child - where it would have made any difference if the teachers knew or not. I certainly don't feel that either my son or daughter, who attended the same preschool, were ever treated in a negative way because they were adopted.

"I don't remember the question being on the applications for the private elementary school that they now attend, but I know

I eventually mentioned it to the kindergarten teacher (they both had the same teacher) possibly at the first parent-teacher conference. Again, there were no negative effects, no labeling as possible problem children, etc. When each child was in first grade, and had a week of being the class VIP (again, they had the same teacher) I made it a point to go in and visit the class and read an adoption story to the children, who were very interested. Some of them already knew that my children were adopted. The teacher also made it a very positive experience.

"I guess the decision about whether or not to tell the school is a very personal one that each family must come to after careful thought. I don't think there is any right or wrong answer. What's right for one family isn't necessarily right for another, and with these types of situations there are usually a number of different factors to consider before making this decision." Miriam, NY

"My husband didn't feel one way or the other about it, but I know he's a private person who likes to keep his business just that - in the family. While I'm quite open about adoption, in the past few years I've become open only with those I know share my interests. I also didn't want My son to be known as 'the adopted kid,' nor did I want any problems that might arise to immediately be labeled 'adoption issues'. I came to this conclusion after witnessing this type of thing happen to friends with adopted kids.

"I only told the school after He had been there for 9 months, when we went to adopt Our daughter - and I only told them then because I had to explain things. I now regret that decision. Sure, I had to tell that Our daughter is adopted, but once his adoption became known, the questions started. Did I meet his 'real mom'? (ARGH!!!!) What was wrong with her that she had babies and then gave them up? Is He like his 'real mom?' and so on and so forth.

"Then, when he started to act up and out from boredom, and from problems in having a new sister, it was immediately labeled an adoption issue. Boredom was never considered, not even when I brought it up - no, the 'expert' teacher concluded that he knew he was adopted and was angry about it. Sibling rivalry?

Nah....the fact that My son had undiagnosed pneumonia (we thought it was asthma) wasn't considered, either. Nope, everything was 'adoption'. One teacher went so far as to suggest that My son's 'real mother' did drugs and/or alcohol, and therefore, My son had FAS - right before she admitted she knew nothing about FAS!



“When I enrolled him in his new school, one of the questions on the application is ‘If your child is adopted, does he know?’ I left that blank. I don’t think it’s their business. In time, perhaps I’ll tell them...but most likely, I won’t. If he chooses to tell, and I’m asked, I will not lie, of course. I’ll even offer to come in and talk about it to the kids, just to see how progressive and open minded they are. But volunteer the information? Absolutely not.” Barbara, NJ

“My husband and I have decided not to share our daughter’s adoption information with the school, at least for now. We feel that her conception, birth, and how she joined our family are private matters (not secret) that have absolutely nothing to do with how she’ll perform academically, so the school really doesn’t need to know this right now. We feel that her teacher and classmates need to get to know her for the unique little person that she is, without any stereotypical misconceptions regarding her birth history. Plus, we feel that it’s HER story to share, not ours. If she chooses to share this info with her teacher or some of her classmates, that’s okay. She knows it’s okay for her to tell others she’s adopted, but so far I’ve only heard her mention it twice—once to my mom and dad, and again to the nurse at her doctor’s office. She also has been told that once she shares this info with someone, it cannot be ‘taken back.’



“By not sharing this info right now, we don’t feel that we’re being dishonest or secretive. We’re just not sharing info that we feel is private. We realize that at some point in the future we may have to share this info with a teacher and will take that opportunity to educate others about adoption; but for now, it’s our private family business. I also realize that if a child is a different race or nationality from his/her parents, or if a child was adopted at an older age, these issues are entirely different. Also, I feel that there are no right or wrong answers here. Each family has to do what they feel is best for them and their child(ren).” Karen, NC

“When My daughter entered pre-school the school application had this entire section on whether your child was adopted or not. When were they adopted? Do they know they are adopted? Do they have a sibling that was also adopted? When did they find out they were adopted?

“My mind was truly boggled the first time I read this, which was over 2 years ago. Why would they want to know? What difference could it possibly make? I have read numerous books and magazines on the issue. Some said tell, others said do not tell.

“My husband and I made a joint decision not to tell. Quite simply, our children’s adoptions are not secrets, but (the information) is private. We crossed out the section on the application. We did not want our child to stand out for any reason in these people’s minds, whether it be positive or negative to them.

“The one question that stood out the most to us was the one that said ‘Do they know they are adopted?’ For the life of me, I can’t understand that one! I would tell the school that they (my children) were adopted and not tell my own kid? It makes you kinda wonder what is going on in their minds to ask such a question in the first place!

“Our hope has always been that if either child feels like sharing their adoption stories as they hear them and can tell them, that it would be a wonderful thing! So far so good, as our daughter has shared some of her adoption regarding her b/mom and b/father with others!

“Again, there is nothing that we are more proud of than having these two beautiful children. And truly I will talk to anyone about adoption anytime until I am blue in the face on how it is the best thing that could have ever happened to us. As far as my husband and I sharing our children’s birth histories with

others, we do not do that. These are our children’s own stories and theirs to tell, not ours.

“I would have to say that our experience has been a positive one in not telling. I really hate to even use the words ‘not telling’ because that denotes a secret, which of course, it is not and never will be. In not answering their questions regarding adoption and even if they ‘find out’, so what? Again, why are they asking in the first place? That is the million-dollar question!

“We will continue to make the same choice in ‘not telling’.” Michelle, IL

Real Moms is a newsletter by and for adoptive mothers. Support, information, encouragement, and networking for domestic adoption are offered to adoptive and prospective adoptive mothers.

Calendar Kids Winners 2005



Our kids are the greatest testament and legacy of the incredible work and achievements at Adoption Network Law Center.

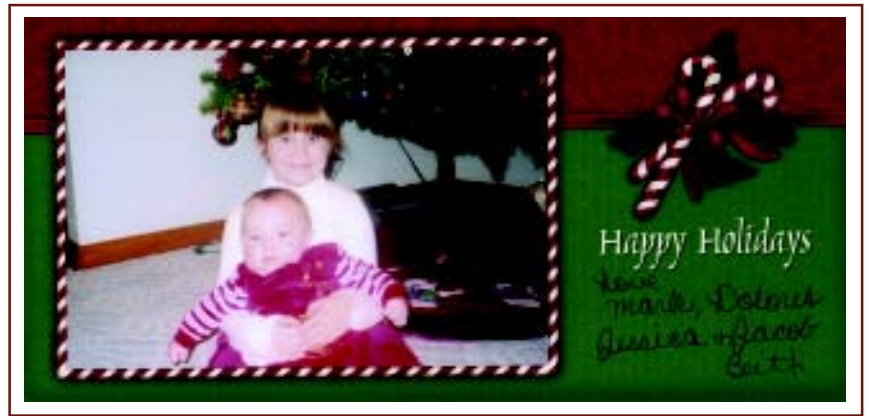
In the beautiful and expressive faces of our children we can see the difference we have in this world. We have impacted the lives of babies, their troubled biological mothers, infertile couples and we have made a huge contribution to the world of adoption. As you look into the faces of our children, you can see a society filled with hope, salvation, and with a nurturing future.

Each year we ask all of our parents to participate in our Calendar Kids contest. This year's contest is already underway and our thirteen winners will soon be announced. If you want to participate but haven't already submitted your pictures, we have extended the deadline to **July 15th**.



** A few 2005 Calendars are still available... call us today for your copy!*

Our Family Scrapbook





Sally-

You, who do so good? You are an incredible contributor to the success of the Morris Family as a you are! Thank you for everything that you do every day... for every birthday... for every cupcake... for every birthday... for every dream! You are an angel! We thank you all the time. We have included so many love!

We really do want to see your grand daughter (Diana) as you can see from a photo here so please call us with the address & her current size!
MOMMA!

Happy Holidays

Love Love Love Love!!!

Diana

For

Stamps (see... information) additional address... Thank you!!!



Sharon,
Kings from
Malibu Bay We
hope you have a great
holiday season
The Champagne



Dear Friends,

We wanted to share this with you-

Hope you enjoy it

and your holidays, too!

God Bless You!

The DeLuca Family

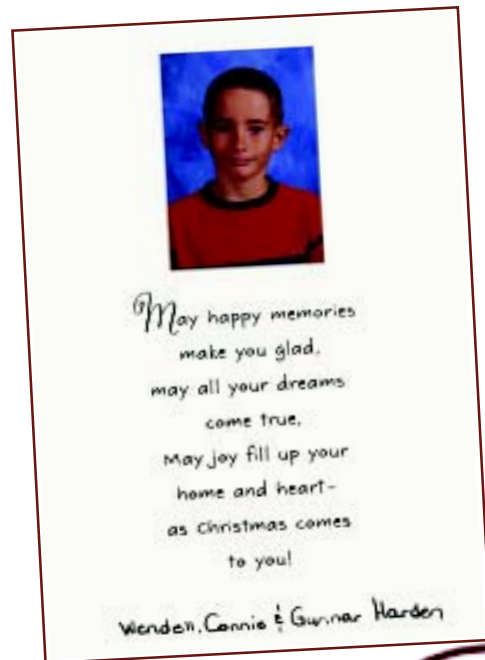
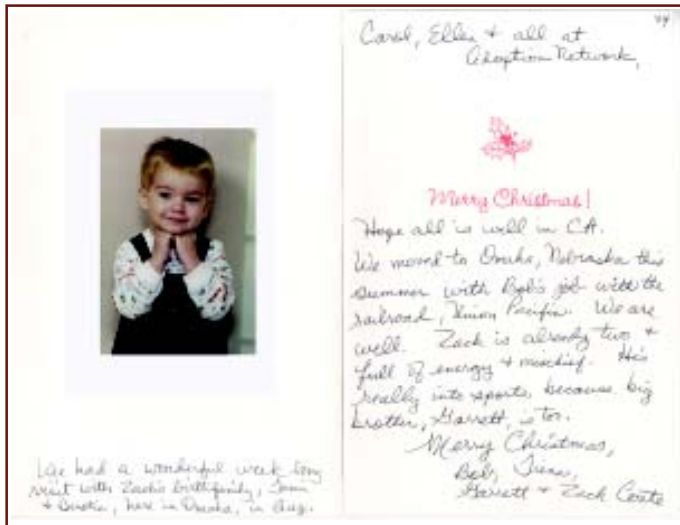
Susan, Andy and Dana

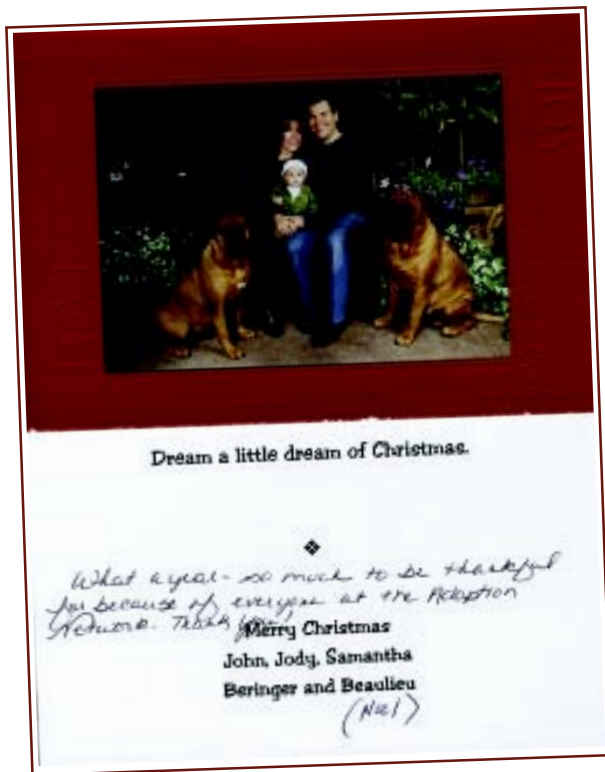
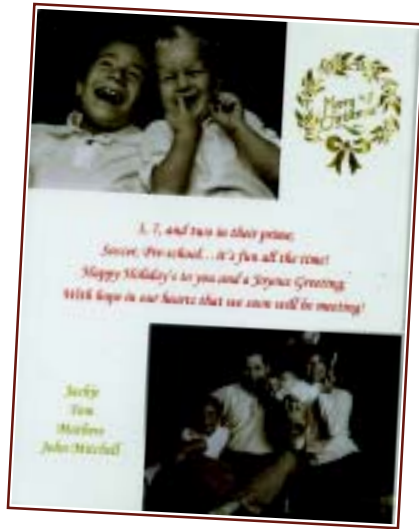
Dana Paige, 15 mos



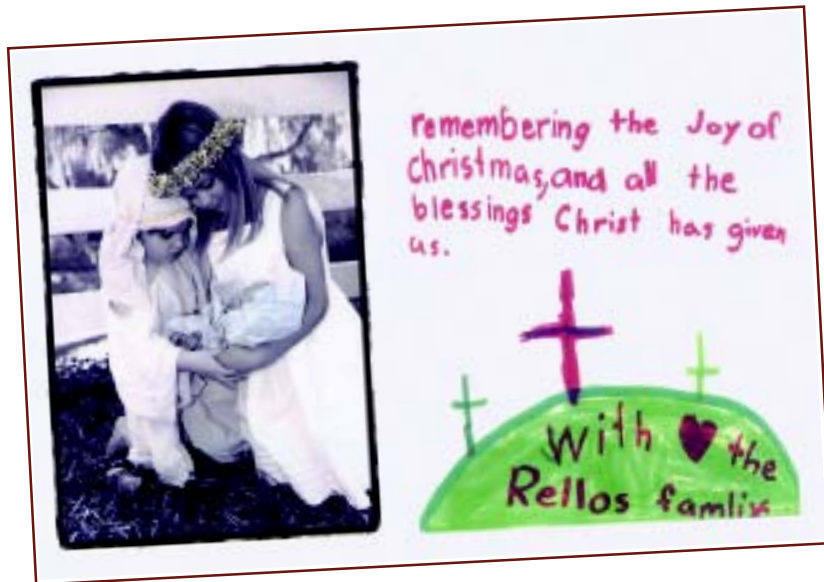
-Christmas is the shortest time of all.

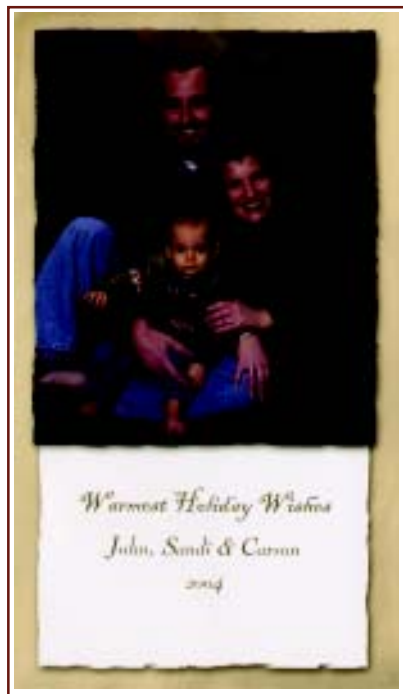
Our Family Scrapbook





Our Family Scrapbook





Check Out What's Inside!!!

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To Tell or Not to Tell...?

If you haven't seen us lately, you haven't seen us...

Visit our updated website today

www.AdoptionNetwork.com

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