

Subject: Matching Assistance Program May 2014
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CC:



A Family For Every Child
Matching Assistance



*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,
but who belongs to this child."*

May 2014



Adopting As a LGBT Family

The following is a story written by one of our Agency MAP families about their experiences adopting a teenager as a same-sex family.

Matching Assistance Program

If you are a home study approved family seeking to adopt from foster care, consider signing up for our FREE Matching Assistance Program! Some of our site features include suggested matches, the ability to mark children as a favorite, add notes, and see recruitment updates for children as we receive them, to name a few!

Our goal is to work alongside families, providing them with one-on-one communication, assurance, and support during the submission and waiting process. As a member of Matching Assistance you will have the ability to submit your home study and family profile for over 2,000 waiting children and sibling groups listed on our site, with the assurance that your submission is going directly to a child's caseworker.

Your adoption worker will be receive a copy of your submission with information on where to follow up, so they will be kept in the loop. In addition, you will have the opportunity to partake in our very successful recruitment services; receive weekly how to emails containing valuable information and resources about foster care adoption; receive weekly emails featuring recently listed children; have access to knowledgeable and helpful staff, and more!

This year so far, we have seen 13 families matched with children

When Kim and I decided to adopt after being together for 3 years, we did encounter frustration before finding AFFEC. We had agencies that worked with same-sex couples but all the paperwork read for heterosexual parents (mother, father). We had international agencies tell us that some countries would not adopt to same-sex couples or single women. It was crazy. Then we were referred to AFFEC, and Chris D. became our caseworker. You all made this a wonderful process, and you stood by us on a very long journey to get Mike.

Kim and I decided that we would look at children 7-years or older because we heard that older kids had a harder time finding placement. I do not think we originally ever thought we would adopt a teen, and then we got Mike's profile. I think it was instant for both Kim and I that we knew he was meant to be with us. Mike was removed at age 5 from his mom, placed in foster care, then placed with his dad, where he was severely abused and then removed at age 10. He had been in placement 6-years when we met him and had 8 placements all together in his life. He had depression issues, anger issues and PTSD, coupled with some learning disabilities. However, our son has a spirit in him that was never broken and what we saw was a kid just waiting to blossom.

When you adopt a teen you have to be prepared for stupid comments and questions, and being a lesbian couple you get even more, no matter what age your child. When people heard we were adopting it was "Oh, what age?" And when we said 16, we got "A teen, good luck with that". Ok, well thanks, I guess that is a messed up way of saying congratulations. Mike actually had a staff member tell him only someone crazy would want to adopt a 16-year-old with his issues. We found out months after he came home his foster parents had put in some negative opinions to him about what would happen being raised by two women. One of my favorites was, "Won't he want/need a guy around, you know a dad?" Mike had a dad, who abused him. So male does not mean role model 100% of the time.

Our son also has identified as gay since he was about 13-years-old. We actually did not know

families matched with children through our program out of 59 matches/placements so far.

[Sign up](#) today to take full advantage of our free program!

Additional Resources

[Books on LGBT Adoption](#) - A list of books compiled by Lifelong Adoptions for LGBT families.

[Family Builders](#) - Connects families with waiting children in foster care, some of whom identify as a LGBT youth.

[Family Equality Council](#) - Connects, supports, and represents LGBT families and their children.

[FAQs From LGBT Prospective Foster and Adoptive Parents](#) - A list of FAQs courtesy of Child Welfare Information Gateway on fostering/adopting as a LGBT family.

[Human Rights Campaign](#) - Civil rights organization working to achieve equality for LGBT families. Provides information on how to get involved and resources for same-sex families.

[LGBT Adoption Laws](#) - A map courtesy of Lifelong Adoptions that provides LGBT families with the laws surrounding same-sex parent adoption in all 50 states.

[Our Family Coalition](#) - Provides LGBT families and their children with support, resources and advocacy.

[Working With LGBT Families in Adoption](#) - Resources for adoption professionals working with LGBT families courtesy of Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Recent Matches!

Congratulations to the following families who were matched in April and May!

- T. B.
- A & R
- K. B. [with an out-of-state child!]
- A & S [with an out-of-state child!]
- C & G [with an out-of-state sibling group!]
- G & M [with an out-of-state child!]
- D & M [with child on our site!]
- C & R [with an out-of-state sibling group!]
- S & M [with an out-of-state child!]

this until we were halfway through the process, but we still hear "Oh did you pick him because he was gay?" No, we bonded to him because he was an awesome kid, gay or straight. This is not a pound situation. You don't go pick the cutest kid, your child finds you if you are open to that belief. As a lesbian couple whether you adopt or give birth you have to prepare for the time that someone at some point will be nasty to your child because they have an issue with you. Mike knows we have zero tolerance, and being up front with our concerns to the school has been great. Our son is not the only kid with same-sex parents, nor is he the only out teen. The school now has a GSA, they dealt with the football coach when at practice some homophobic jokes kept going around, and this mom had a talk with some folks.

The biggest question we get is "What does he call you both?" We let that happen organically; we are both Mom. Or in many cases you hear him say "Mom?" "Yes?" "No, other mom." It's our running joke. We confused the folks when he got his piercing when we were asked, "Who is the mom?" "Well, we both are." "No, who had him?" "Neither one of us." "Ok, just one of you sign then." There is a natural assumption that one of us birthed him and the other adopted our partner's child. We get many folks who ask if he is "ok" with two moms. They ask us if he identifies as gay because of us, or that we "made him gay." We do not even try to dignify that one with a response.

There were some hard parts; I know we wondered if some caseworkers would pass us by because we were a same-sex couple. I know in Mike's joy of being adopted, his rural foster placement in North Dakota had some small-minded folks who tried to kill his joy about being adopted, and made fun of him having two moms. Our biggest hurt was when it came down to the sign off to begin the adoption, when we learned that the agency he was from would not sign off on same-sex couples. The plan B was to have another social service agency sign off, and we were told it was no big deal. But it was for us; that we could take our son, show him love, see amazing growth in him, and create a family. We loved our son that no straight family had expressed interest in, and yet we were still somehow less. His caseworker who was amazing though, and I think she got the bishop or someone to sign off. They did what it took to help us adopt our son; however, no one really understood how insulting demeaning it was for us. Also, we had thought we both could adopt our son together in his state of origin, which ended up not being the case. One month before the adoption we were asked, "Who is adopting him first?" We had to make that call, as same-sex couples could not adopt together and transferring his case could take up to two years. We would see pictures of families, leaving the courthouse as a legal family, and we felt we were denied that. Our adoption is instead two series of very dry, very convoluted paper work. He has been our son since day one, so the paper in reality does not matter; however, we would have loved that victory as a unit, and not two separate events.

Mike has been a gift and we could not imagine our lives without him. Two years ago he was a depressed teen getting prepped to age out of foster care. Now he is a 3.6 GPA average, leader of his GSA at school, prepping for college, adored by grandmas and all family. He is being interviewed for a book on the failure of

- M & S
- K & N [with an out-of-state sibling group!]
- L. S. [with an out-of-state sibling group!]

Recent Placements!

Congratulations to the following families who were placed in April and May:

- B & J
- C. P.
- T. V. [with an out-of-state child!]

Volunteer Needs

Family Adoption Specialist: The Matching Assistance Program is looking for a Family Adoption Specialist to work alongside our Matching Assistance Families. It is the responsibility of the Family Adoption Specialist to read over a family's biography and provide suggestions for improvements, assist families with offsite submissions, provide support, and resources. This position can be done remotely anywhere in the country.

Desired qualifications include:

- Computer proficiency
- The ability to work with minimal supervision while completing work in a timely manner
- Excellent verbal and written skills with the ability to communicate across diverse populations
- The ability to provide support, empathy and resources to adoptive families
- A strong sense of customer service

Please contact the Matching Assistance Coordinator at nora.sharp@afamilyforeverychild.org to learn more about the position. Training will be provided. A commitment of at least 5 hours a week is preferred.

Thank You, Dutch Bros.!



Local Dutch Bros. teamed up to do a fundraiser for A Family for Every Child on Mother's Day. They donated a mini boat

the foster care system for teens, he is a youth counselor at a summer camp for gay and lesbian youth and children of gay and lesbian families, and is prepping to go to Europe in summer 2015. He holds our hands in public, and he has no issue with explaining yes he has two moms. He knows the people that really matter are the folks we love, and that the rest is just noise.

I want to say AFFEC helped make this happen and kept us sane during some huge paperwork glitches. They communicate honestly and help find you answers. That has been the biggest help. Mike's adoption was successful, so we began the process again to only not be given full disclosure by the child's team. AFFEC helped us get the correct information and deal with our grief that the match would not have been successful. AFFEC loves the strength of the family, not the gender composition.

Waiting Agency Family

Meet Karleen!



I would like to adopt a child between the ages of 6 and 13 inclusive. I am open to boys or girls and I feel I can accommodate a sibling group of up to 2 kids. I am open to adopting Caucasian, East Indian, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, Black, or Biracial children who may have a variety of special needs. I do not mind having contact with the child/ren's biological parents (by email or by mail), provided it is in the child/ren's best interest and the situation is safe. I am also open to continuing contact with the child's former foster parents, by email, mail, phone or in-person. In general, I am willing to adopt either gender or a sibling pair ages 6-11. Younger is better, and the child/ren must be school-aged, as I am a working single parent.

Day: Snowcasing a mini heart gallery and donating all the proceeds from drinks bought by mothers, it was a huge success. With the help of the Eugene/Springfield community \$10,000 was raised to help children in foster care. These proceeds will help support our local programs and we cannot thank Dutch Bros. enough for their support!

My hobbies and interests are many and varied-including listening to music, playing the piano, walking, reading, traveling, creating with arts/crafts, getting together with friends/family, cultural activities, anything 'Apple', theatrical performances, camping, hiking, water sports, swimming, playing at the beach, picnicking at the lake and playing at the river, etc.

There are so many things to do in Portland! Simple things such as reading and library story time visits, taking fun day trips, vacationing to interesting places, playing games, beachcombing, canoeing, swimming, scrapbooking, taking pictures, attending plays and concerts, visiting museums, attending school sporting events and maybe a few Portland Trail Blazer games, writing poetry, riding horses, taking music and/or voice lessons, possibly getting a pet or volunteering to take pets out for walks at the local humane society, camping with weenie roasts and s'mores, weekends at the beach, so much more...the sky's the limit.

I have lots of love and patience to give and I have longed to share the challenges and victories of life with a child and to finally have my own family. I look forward to offering my child/ren many of the same opportunities I had, as a result of growing up in a loving family with stable parents. I want to share responsibilities, privileges and opportunities with my child/ren that will build stability and trust, as well as, help them grow into self-confident, happy and fulfilled adult/s with their own interests and successes, to the extent they are physically and emotionally able. [Learn more about Karleen!](#)

**[Waiting Matching Assistance
Family](#)**

Meet Armand and Anthony!



We would like to adopt children between the ages of 6 and 17 inclusive. We are open to boys and girls. We feel we can accommodate a sibling group of up to 4 kids. We prefer to adopt a child(ren) of Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Pacific islander, Biracial or Mixed ethnic background. We are open to children with mild special needs. We do not mind having contact with the child's biological parents (by email) provided the parent was/is not abusive to the child. We do not mind having continuing contact with the child's former foster parents, by phone.

We have 3 kids. Our children's names are Teko, Tyrone and Antonio and they are 15, 18 and 18 years old, respectively. I like fishing, camping, biking and to go to parks in the area Disney, etc. I also enjoy arts and crafts shows and the beaches east and west coast of Florida. Anthony likes camping, biking, beaches and the parks as well.

We currently have 3 boys that had a lot of problems when they came to us. It took about a year to work through some of the issues. We hung in there and happy we did. One child has seizures and severe ADHD, another was diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome. We have both had our share of difficult times on and off with our boys. But looking back we would not change a thing. I am a very patient person and try to work out even the most difficult problems without everyone getting all upset. I feel like I have a lot to offer a child(ren) in my life as we are financially stable. This allows us to do more with the children. I am very big on education. Anthony is a very nurturing, kind of the motherly type. He is always there for every little

bump and bruise. He is also very big on education. We are both engaged on the kids doing homework and doing well in school. Two of the children have IEP's, which we are very engaged in making sure they get what ever they need. We are very excited to be doing this again with an adoption.

[Learn more about Armand and Anthony!](#)

Register for Matching Events

A Family for Every Child offers two different matching events that families and caseworkers may partake in and benefit from. The first are **Child Matching Events**. During Child Matching Events, caseworkers may present the biographies of the waiting children on their caseload to home study approved families. In turn, families may ask the caseworker questions about the child, and then submit their home study at the end of the event if they are interested.

The second are **Family Matching Events**. During Family Matching Events, families may present their biographies to caseworkers, allowing caseworkers to ask questions and connect families with children on their caseload that they feel would be a good match for the family. Keep checking the matching event pages to see additional children who will be participating in the event!

You may register for upcoming matching events and view past events all from our [Matching Events home page](#).

A Family For Every Child

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