

OCTOBER 25, 2016

## THE CHILD I DIDN'T ADOPT



By Liz Curtis Faria

*"Nobody loves me. Not even my mother who gave birth to me."*

It is an odd turn of phrase, isn't it? Not even my mother who gave birth to me.

He was buckled into the backseat of my Toyota, still too little to sit up front. At seven he had already moved more times than the total number of years he had been on the earth. And this time, like the times before it, he moved with his belongings in a trash bag. A suitcase, at least, would have added a small degree of dignity to the whole affair – to being "placed" in another and another and yet another foster home before reaching the 3rd grade. Trash bags break, you know. Trash bags can't possibly support the contents of any life, and certainly not a life as fragile as this. They break from the strain, eventually.

This move was harder for Stephen than most. It was a home he thought he would stay in, at least for awhile. He had felt affection there. When I went to pick him up, after his foster mother gave notice that he could no longer stay, he came easily with me; head down, no reaction on the surface of it. It was only when he got into my car that he began to sob the kind of aching sound that leaves you limp in its wake.

He could barely get out the words. Nobody loves me. Not even my mother who gave birth to me. Months later, in a repeat scene (another foster mother, another removal), he would put up a fight. He would run around the living room, ducking behind furniture, refusing to leave. But on this night he had

no fight in him. That was Stephen at seven. Nine-year old Stephen grips his report card in sweaty hands. We're headed to an adoption event, where we will meet families who

want to adopt an older child; families who do not automatically rule out a boy like Stephen with all of his long "history." And he wants to impress them, these strangers. He wants to win them over, and so he brings his good report card along as tangible proof that he is a child worth loving. A child should never have to prove they are worth loving.

Twelve-year-old Stephen tells me that I'm his best friend. I'm his social worker, and he should have a real best friend, but I don't say this to him. We're at a taping for Wednesday's Child, the news spot featuring children who are up for adoption. Stephen is engaging on camera. Maybe somebody will pick him this time. Maybe he is offering just enough evidence, at twelve, that he's a boy worth loving. And he is lovable, truly. But it is not enough. A family never comes.

### CONTINUE READING

**INTERESTED IN ADOPTING  
A WAITING CHILD**

[VIEW CHILDREN WAITING TO BE ADOPTED](#)

**NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL  
ADOPTION MONTH**

[UNION COUNTY ADOPTION EVENT](#)

Tuesday, Nov. 1 - Creston

[GINGERBREAD RUN FOR ADOPTION](#)

Saturday, Nov. 5 - DMACC in Ankeny

[VIEW ALL UPCOMING EVENTS](#)



Eastern Service Area Peer Liaisons (from left to right):  
Jessica Leal & Kelli Vermeer

## PEER LIAISONS NAVIGATE THE WORLD OF FOSTER PARENTING BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY

Peer Liaisons are living the life of fostering just like you! So what can you really expect from your Peer Liaison? IFAPA Peer Liaisons will be in touch with foster parents via phone, mail, e-mail or in person at least once each fiscal quarter (Jan-Mar, April-June, July-Sept, Oct-Dec), they can help you navigate the world of confidentiality, provide information and resources on trainings, support groups, foster home licensing regulations, offer contacts for DHS chain of command and offer assistance with communication needs. Connect with your Peer Liaison, you will probably be correct in assuming they've dealt with whatever it may be! School needs-guess what? Some of our Peer Liaisons are educators and have backgrounds in childhood development. Many Peer Liaisons care for older youth and have a vast knowledge of needs a child has when aging out of foster care. If they do not know the answer to a question, they will help find the needed information. IFAPA Peer Liaisons will maintain confidentiality at all times.

The Eastern Service Area (SA #3) Peer Liaisons are Jessica Leal and Kelli Vermeer:

- Kelli has been a foster/adoptive parent for eight years. She has been an IFAPA Peer Liaison for just under one year and serves Cedar, Des Moines, Henry, Jefferson, Jones, Keokuk, Lee, Louisa, Muscatine, Scott, Van Buren & Washington counties.
- Jessica has been a foster/adoptive parent for five years. She has been an IFAPA Peer Liaison for just under one year and serves Allamakee, Buchanan, Clayton, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Howard, Jackson & Winneshiek counties.

[CONTACT MY PEER LIAISON](#)

# WHEN I REALIZED WHY MY SON MELTS DOWN AT HOME BUT NOT AT SCHOOL

By Michelle Myers

Tonight my son walked through the door from school, and immediately I knew. He didn't have to say or do anything. I just knew.

Call it mother's intuition, or call it years and years of practice, but I knew something was wrong. It was the delayed effect. My son has had a tricky day at school. He has held it together for nearly seven hours. Then he walks through the front door, and bam!

He's somewhere safe and familiar, and he can't contain the pressure anymore.

It creeps out of every fiber of his being. His face is tense, and he has red cheeks. His body is stiff and awkward. His words are fast and loud, and he's agitated. He's hungry, he's not hungry. He wants a snack but not what's in the cupboard. So he gets angry and swears because he's not in control of his body anymore. He wants to say hello to the dogs, but their overexcitement is too much for him, so he's too rough with them and he gets cross with himself. I ask him how he's feeling, and it's like there is a red fog surrounding him. He can't process what I'm saying. His sisters walk in chatting and laughing. They sound like a crowd of people to him, and he shouts to them to be quiet. They snap back at him as only sisters do, and wham — the volcano explodes. We have liftoff.

Meltdown. There's no turning back now. It all has to come out.  
[CONTINUE READING](#)

## The Grieving Process How to Help You & Your Kids Heal

Not grieving is equivalent to not allowing your body to heal after major physical trauma or injury. Similar to other emotional difficulties in life, though, we tend to minimize the importance of the grieving process and this can result in anger, bitterness, resentment, depression, and anxiety that can negatively impact one's life. The purpose of this workshop is to help participants understand the grieving process and how to help children, adolescents, and adults heal emotionally from loss in a healthy manner.

DAVENPORT - NOVEMBER 12 (9AM-4:30PM)

TO REGISTER - CALL 800-277-8145 ET. 1 OR [REGISTER HERE](#)

[VIEW FULL TRAINING SCHEDULE](#)