

I need a family.  
Can you  
help?



NATIONAL  
**adoption  
month**

**NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2010, 6AM-6PM  
WEST STEPS OF THE STATE CAPITOL

ADOPTION AGENCY FAIR **8AM**  
FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES **9AM**  
CANDLELIGHT VIGIL **6PM**

*Join us for a meaningful day to honor adoption.*

There are over 3,400 children and youth living in foster care in the greater Sacramento region. Over a thousand of them need families today!

# DEAR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS IN THE COMMUNITY,

Do you believe that every child deserves a lifelong family? We do!

November is National Adoption Month. On November 20th, the country will celebrate National Adoption Day. In recognition of this day, AspiraNet Foster and Adoption Services, EMQ FamiliesFirst, Lilliput Children's Services and Sierra Forever Families are joining forces to highlight our community's successes as well as the continued need for all of our children to live in a safe and loving home.

Collectively, our agencies worked with the community and found permanent families for over 300 Sacramento area children and youth last year. Max was one of these children. He was adopted at age 12 by a single father, after living for many years in a group home. Max now has a father to support and nurture him as he grows up.

While we honor our successful adoptive families, we will not rest until every child in our community has a secure family. Right now, there are over 1,000 children living in foster care in the greater Sacramento area who are available for adoption and urgently need a permanent family connection. Too many children, like 6-year-old Isaiah (who has been living in foster care for nearly three years) are waiting for a lifelong family to adopt them.

Youth are far more likely to succeed with family ties. Every year, more children enter foster care than leave the system. Tragically, within California, thousands of children available for adoption turn 18 and leave the system without families. In the Sacramento area, 316 youth aged out of foster care in 2009. The odds are stacked against those who emancipate with no permanent family. Facing adulthood on their own, it is likely that within two to four years over 50% of these young adults will be homeless, addicted to drugs, in prison or dead. Our children deserve more!

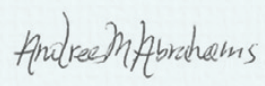

There are many ways that you can help, including mentoring, volunteering or making a financial contribution. What we need first and foremost, however, are adoptive families! We are hoping you will come forward and make a lifetime impact on a child through adoption. Every child deserves a family to call their own.

We urge you to help us strengthen our community, one family at a time!

Thankfully,

  
Nancy Born  
**ASPIRAnet**  
*Raising Hope, Empowering Community.*

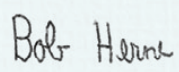
916-366-1656  
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Andree M. Abrahams  
 **EMQ FamiliesFirst**

1-877-488-5437  
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Bob Herne  
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**FOREVERFAMILIES**

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“DO YOU BELIEVE EVERY CHILD DESERVES A LIFELONG FAMILY? WE DO!”



# Dispelling the myths of Adoption through Foster Care

**MYTH:** Adoption through foster care is expensive.

**REALITY:** Foster adoption is virtually free.

**MYTH:** The birth parents can take the children back.

**REALITY:** Once parental rights are terminated, the parents have no further recourse for gaining custody of the children.

**MYTH:** Children enter foster care because of juvenile delinquency.

**REALITY:** Children enter foster care through no fault of their own, usually as victims of neglect, abandonment or abuse.

**MYTH:** Information about the child's history is withheld in order to get the child placed with a family.

**REALITY:** All agencies are legally required to provide known information about the children to potential parents.

**MYTH:** Only the stereotypical "traditional" family can adopt.

**REALITY:** Adoptive families can include: same-sex couples, single parents, senior or disabled individuals, and multi-cultural families.

**MYTH:** Only infants are in need of being adopted, not teens.

**REALITY:** Nearly 70% of Sacramento County's foster children are 6 years and older. Many of these children are in need of adoption.

**MYTH:** Adoptive families are "on their own" after adoption is finalized.

**REALITY:** Post-adoption services, including clinical services, support groups and financial assistance (Adoption Assistance Program) are available to families.

**MYTH:** Only people with a "perfect" history can adopt.

**REALITY:** Sometimes, a parents' previous life experience can be their best gift to a child. Perfection is not an expectation.

**MYTH:** There is too much "red tape" and bureaucracy involved in adopting a child from foster care.

**REALITY:** Congress has streamlined the foster care adoption process through the Safe Families Act of 1997. Children that are not reunited with their birth parents are matched with permanent adoptive families as efficiently as possible.

## THE DIEFENBACHERS REMODEL THEIR FAMILY HOME

BY JEFF CHINN

If you're looking for a family that is full of love and good humor, then look no further. Here are the Diefenbachers.

Joel and Nadine Diefenbacher are the adoptive parents of Queen, 16; Murphy, 15; and Tonaë, 15. The three children are biological siblings, with Murphy and Tonaë being twins.

Nine years ago, the Diefenbachers were thinking of adding to their family by adopting a child from foster care. "There's a website called California Kids

At the time, Child Protective Services didn't think they could find a family for the three siblings together, so the decision was made to place Queen with one family while another family was found for the twins. That is when Joel and Nadine were identified as a family for the twins and the adoption process began.

The first step involves a screening to make sure the prospective adoptive parents don't have a criminal background. Then a series of meetings between the parents



After a year passed, the Diefenbachers received a phone call from CPS stating that Queen's placement was not working out and asking if they would consider also bringing her into their home. Space was tight at the time, but that wasn't going to stop them from finding a home for Queen.

"In the span of about 15 days, we had a garage conversion done so that my oldest (biological) son could have an apartment there. His bedroom in the house became Queen's room," said Joel.

Queen moved in and the Diefenbachers have been a solid family ever since. With humor and love, Joel and Nadine are providing a nurturing (and fun) environment for all of their children!

### IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A FAMILY THAT IS FULL OF LOVE AND GOOD HUMOR, THEN LOOK NO FURTHER.

Connection that has the pictures and a brief bio of children awaiting placement in California," said Nadine. "Joel went on the site and found the pictures of Murphy and Tonaë and fell in love."

and the children occur. These start with play dates at parks, move on to house visits, and eventually overnight trips.

After going through the process and being selected as the adoptive parents, Joel said, "It's over! They're our kids, now!"



PHOTOS BY DAVID JAYNE



## PATIENCE AND FAITH WITH THE MUIRS

BY JEFF CHINN

Walking into the Muir home, one thing is clear: kids live here. Their front room is filled with toy trains and board games, and coloring books cover their dining-room table.

Robert and Melinda Muir are the proud parents of two biological children, Michael and Michelle. In addition, they are in the process of adding two more children to their family through adoption.

The Muirs became foster parents in hopes of expanding their family. The decision wasn't an easy one, but any hesitations or concerns they had faded away in May. That's when the Muirs were contacted by a county worker and asked to visit a set of twins in the neonatal intensive care unit. These infants were in need of an adoptive family.



PHOTOS BY DAVID JAYNE

Mrs. Muir shared that any doubts about being a foster or adoptive parent melted away, "Immediately I knew I could raise somebody else's child, the minute they put them in my arms, I knew."

The Muirs have been successful at being a "concurrent family." Concurrent families are essentially foster families who are working on two potential permanency plans with the children in their care. The initial plan is reunification of the children with their birth parents. If reunification is not possible, the concurrent family may have the option of adopting the children.

**"THE MINUTE THEY PUT THEM IN MY ARMS, I KNEW."**

- MELINDA MUIR -

The Muirs have worked with several children as a concurrent family and have been successful at lovingly incorporating all of the children into the family, even if the children are in their home only for a short time.

Patience and faith have been instrumental in the Muirs' success as foster-adoptive parents. They were open to working with children with special medical needs and were also open to accepting siblings into their home. The entire family, including Michael and Michelle, are committed to supporting all children that join them, embracing a very broad, accepting definition of "family."

In the end, what the Muirs want most is to give their children the love, nurturing, caring, and permanence that will help guide and develop each of them into healthy adults and contributing members of our community.

That sounds like a dream every parent should have.

# Have you considered adopting through foster care?

You may be a good candidate if:

- You have a strong sense of commitment.
- You believe in the importance of family connection.
- You love children and parenting.
- You have a good sense of humor.
- You are resilient and can "go with the flow."
- You are responsible and mature.

If this sounds like you, please visit [www.cacfs.org/adoptionmonth.html](http://www.cacfs.org/adoptionmonth.html) for more information about foster care and adoption.

