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LSM
ADOPTION
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 A Program of Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey

Dear MaryAnn Sager,

My name is AnnMarie, and my husband Brian and I are parents to four beautiful boys thanks to Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey. When I was diagnosed with infertility, my husband and I really had to take a step back and decide if we wanted to pursue artificial means or adoption in order to become parents. We both realized that a couple does not need to have a biological child to become a Mom and Dad. You simply need love and perseverance. We are so glad that we chose adoption as a means to pursue becoming a family.

A friend of the family recommended LSM/NJ to us and right from my first contact I knew my husband and I had the right agency. The social worker we spoke to couldn't have been more kind and personable. She started us on the path by signing us up for a free informational meeting. In the following months after the meeting, we met with her for our interviews, paperwork completion, a tour of our home and our home study. We are so fortunate that we found your agency to pursue the adoption of our sons. LSM/NJ provided us with a step-by-step process that expedited the adoption of our boys. Your agency was very supportive and encouraging each step of the way. At the informational meeting in January 2010, we were told that we would be matched within the year, and boy were you true to your word! On December 1, 2010, we received the call that we were waiting, hoping and praying for; that we were matched with our sons!

I will always remember the day we brought our sons home. They were 2, 3, 5 and 8. For the past two years prior to finding a forever family, our sons were separated in the foster care system. The two oldest were together and an hour's drive away from the two youngest, who were together. For that very reason their coming home day was so special; they were finally all together and we had the privilege of being with them. I can still recall the pure joy I felt as I was preparing a bath for my five year old and his two younger brothers on his first night home. The bath water was running and the two little guys were already in the tub. I called downstairs to my five year old requesting him to come up and get in the tub. As he ran up the stairs (while peeling his clothes off), he said, "Hurry, there's no time to waste!" and he couldn't have been more excited. It was at that moment I realized it had been a very long time, if ever, that he had taken a bath with his brothers.

The ensuing three to four months after the boy's arrival home was an exciting yet stressful time, but things slowly improved in terms of the boys' behavior as they adjusted to the boundaries we set for them. I think our biggest strength as a family was that Brian and I were "on the same page" with our expectations and discipline for the boys. We established a routine for everyone and we realized very quickly how important consistency was in helping the boys' anxiety levels decrease and adjust to their new home. My husband and I were also committed to being the sole caretakers for our children - at least their first year home. We felt it would only add stress by expecting them to adjust to other caregivers in addition to their new parents, new home, being reunited with their brothers, etc... Fortunately, my schedule enabled me to work nights so we could fulfill this commitment.

Now, ten months later, it is all pure joy and it feels like the boys have been here forever. We feel so tremendously blessed. From my nine year old's smile that lights up his whole face; to my six year old's Evel Knievel bicycle stunts; to my four year old's adorable habit of grabbing my hand and kissing it when he walks past me; to my three year old's hugs that will make you feel as if everything is right in the world; well, life is great! My sons have fulfilled my wish, ache and desire to become a mother and for that I will always be grateful. I think that my four year old summed up our feelings best one evening, while we were eating dinner, when he said, "It's really nice having a family."

Thank you LSM/NJ, for helping us build our forever family!!

Sincerely, AnnMarie & Brian

