



I couldn't do it alone: A single parent's adoption story.

By Diane Wavrik

In 2004, I was single and about to turn 40 in a few years. I had a demanding and rewarding career that took a lot of my focus and time, and actually did not miss not being married. However, I knew that I would not want to go through life without being a mom. So I started to look into all kinds of adoption. After a lot of research and talking to people, I decided that a county (foster care) adoption would be the best fit for me.



I went to an orientation and started the process. It took about a year to complete all of the classes, home studies and to be approved to be a foster parent (with plans to adopt). I had said that I would be willing to take a child age 8 and under, so I was always expecting to be matched with an older child. I waited a full year before I heard anything, so I figured that I had not "been picked" to be a parent. Then one day I got a call that they wanted me to meet a 3 month old girl who needed a foster home and would eventually be placed for adoption. They wanted me to pick her up the next day!! Being single

with a full time job, there was a lot that had to happen very fast in order to bring an infant into my home. From that moment, I was lucky enough to have a community of amazing people to support and help me! The YMCA let me borrow a crib and baby seat from one of their programs until I could buy one. People delivered diapers, clothes and all kinds of other stuff. They asked me what I needed and I told them. This has been an essential element into my success as a single parent. People want to help if you let them.

Everyone is different as far as how open they want to be about adoption, but for us, it is who we are. Bailey has always known that she did not grow in my tummy, but her heart needed a mommy and my heart needed a baby and that is how we came together. I surround her with others who are her race as well as male role models (since she does not have a dad). Our community is very mixed with all kinds of different families. So for us, it is not uncommon or weird to have a mixed race and single parent family.

We are also lucky to have an incredibly supportive network of people at Bailey's school, on her basketball team and at my work. I do my best to volunteer at her school and also to help other families with their kids when I am off. Likewise, they are always willing to take Bailey when I have to work. I always ask when I need help and always show my appreciation. Bailey is an amazing kid who is growing into an incredible young woman. She is able to get along with everyone and adapt to all situations. So much of her personality comes not only from me, but from all of the wonderful people in our community that have helped to raise her. We are both so blessed!

Building a Community by PARC staff

Having a community to share your frustrations, challenges, joys and responsibilities with can be extremely helpful while raising children. Building community requires intentionality, effort, patience, and time. It takes courage to trust others, as well as fortitude and forgiveness to not run away if/when they let you down. Community is the hard work of sharing our real life and weaknesses with others. Everyone needs a community to call their own, especially those who feel unloved, alone and uncertain of their future. Giving a child more than a family, but a community, in which he/she has a sense of belonging and the opportunity to find themselves is a gift that can change their entire future.

Adoptive parents sometimes find it difficult to find a good support system. Some people might not understand your uniquely beautiful family. So, how do you find what you need?

Take a moment and think about what your ideal support system would look like. What is it?

- Is it friends and family who support your decision to adopt?
- Is it family or friends who are willing to provide respite care at any time, should the need arise?
- Is it family or friends who are the same race as your child, especially if different from you?
- Is it be a role model for your child who is willing to spend time with your child and give them regular breaks, because being in a family can be hard?
- Is it family, friends, or a support group of other parents who can empathize with your struggles and provide advice and emotional support?
- Is it something as simple as being around people who understand what you are going through?

Don't be afraid to reach out to others!



Finding support and building a community can be difficult. Support from family and friends is not always forthcoming. Sometimes others will offer to help. When this happens... Say Yes! Do not feel you and your family need to do things on your own.

If you are finding that you need to build a supportive community around you, here are some tips.

- Ask. Sometimes this might feel very hard to do but it doesn't hurt to ask.
- Look for others who show interest in your child(ren). They often want to help but feel like they shouldn't.
- Talk to your child's school or pediatrician's office about parenting groups or educational seminars.
- Connect with other parents in your child's class, sports team or other areas of similar interest.
- Check out faith organizations and community centers near you.
- Join an adoption support groups to meet other parent on your same parenting journey to discuss personal matters in a safe environment and an opportunity to exchange information.

While it takes time and effort to build a supportive community, the results are well worth the effort. Your ideal support system can be built. Don't delay, the benefits could be right outside your front door.

Breaks are Important but can be Triggering by PARC staff

Parenting is a difficult job under the best circumstances and every parent can benefit from some time away from the responsibilities of care giving. Taking time to care for oneself and getting some rest and relaxation helps all parents to be the best parent they can be. Caring for a child with extra challenges will create an even greater need for time away. A break can be an hour, a day, or a weekend. However, if you are an adoptive parent, take into consideration that your child may have a fear of abandonment that may be triggered if you try to take break for yourself. It is common for many adoptees to fear abandonment. There are ways to address this prior to leaving them in the care of others.

- Be cautious in how you talk about you leaving. Focus on your child and how your child might perceive the situation. Be Positive. Try not to talk about your departure as you needing a break but rather an opportunity for your child to spend time with this other person.
- Make sure your child is comfortable with the person they will be staying with and take time to build a relationship between that person and your child.
- Start with short visits before long ones.
- Stay with the child the first few times they are with the person.
- Keep their schedule as consistent as possible.
- Plan meals with the kids in mind. Ask the care taker to make their favorite recipe or send food with them.
- Create a way for your child to be able to reach you at all times.
- Bring things that make them feel connected.
- Keep a connection while you are gone (text or call). Assure your child you love them.
- Send notes, photos or other special items.
- Have a clear plan that the child is aware of and stick to it. “I will be back tomorrow at 3:00pm” and make sure you are on time.

Here are some ideas for where to look for someone to give you a break:

- Family
- Friends
- Babysitters – even for older youth
- Neighbors
- Teachers
- Day care centers
- Camps
- College students
- Support groups- connect with other foster care and adoptive parents to build friendships and possible respite opportunities for each of you.

Summer Camp: Did You Know About the Adoption Medical Subsidy Camp Benefit?



The medical subsidy program may cover up to \$500 per calendar year for the cost of summer camp. The camp program must be a specialized treatment camp that provides services related to a condition certified by the Adoption and Guardian Assistance Office. Overnight and day camps must be licensed in the state where they are located. Adoption medical assistance will not cover the costs of transportation to or from the camp. Pre-approval must be obtained through the Adoption Assistance Office. You can find information on how to contact the adoption assistance office on the web here: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AdoptionSubsidy-Contacts_253834_7.pdf



Region 5 Meetings, Support groups and Trainings

Resource Family Support meeting in Richland Childcare is provided

When: Second Tuesday of the Month

Time: 9 – 11 a.m.

Location: Radiant Church 8157 East DE Ave.
Richland, MI 49083

RSVP to: Jennifer_Patrick@JudsonCenter.org or by
calling 269-993-9671

Lunch at the PARC in Battle Creek Bring your own brown bag lunch

When: Second Thursday of each month

Time: Noon -1:00 p.m.

Location: Family Enrichment Center
415 28th Street South, Battle Creek, MI 49015

RSVP to Jennifer_Patrick@JudsonCenter.org
or by calling 269- 993-9671

Fabulous Foster and Adoptive Families Group PARC Youth Group and Childcare is provided

When: First Monday of each month

Time: 6 - 8 p.m.

Location: 2/42 Community center 648 S. Wagner
Rd. Ann Arbor MI 48103

Group starts with a potluck; please bring a dish to
pass if you are able.

RSVP to Lynne_Havlik@judsoncenter.org or call
734-757-5086.



Online Calendar:

www.parc-judson.org/calendar

★ Contact Us ★

Please feel welcome to contact the PARC office in
your region, visit our website for information, or
connect with us via social media!



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Parents at the PARC

Building community in your neighborhood.

PARC is working with families throughout the region
in coordinating a Parent's Night Meetup in your local
area. The Parent's Night Meetup is open to adoptive
families to build a support network with other adoptive
families. PARC would love to hear from you if you are
interested in getting a Parent's Night Meetup started in
your area!

Take
care of
your
self!