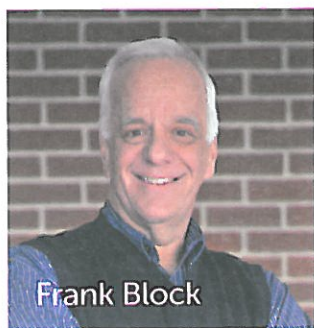


FAMILY journal



Building Families. Changing Lives.

Spring 2015 • Volume 9, Issue 2



Frank Block

Season of Transition and Growth

With tremendous admiration and some sadness, we announce the retirement of Frank Block, one of the founders of Love Basket and its Executive Director for the past 33 years. Frank is planning to retire within the next twelve months. The Board is actively planning for this season of transition, and has been for many months. We welcome your prayers as we guide Love Basket through this change in leadership.

This transition marks the end of one very good chapter for Love Basket and, we're blessed to say, the beginning of another:

- As many of you have experienced first-hand, Frank has led Love Basket with integrity, steadiness, and deep compassion.
- Please join the Board in thanking Frank for his leadership and in praying for Frank and Kitty as they begin their retirement years together.

Frank, the Board of Directors, and the entire Love Basket Team are hard at work to ensure these changes are seamless for all Love Basket clients. Love Basket's heartbeat—placing children in families—continues beating strong. We're not winding down in any way. In fact, we're ramping up for greater involvement in the adoption community, especially here in the US. We continue to respond to the Scripture that encouraged Love Basket's founding in 1981, from Psalm 68:6, "God sets the lonely in families".

We'll have more details in an upcoming issue of the LB Family Journal on the ways you can join us in honoring Frank's 30 years of service. On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I invite you to join us as we pray for wisdom in guiding Love Basket into this next exciting chapter.

Frank continues to love and enjoy the work of adoption. He's not done yet, and continues to work energetically to unite children with families!

Bill Bayer, President, Board of Directors
Love Basket

For more information on the position of Executive Director, visit www.lovebasket.org/careers



Ways You Can Support Love Basket

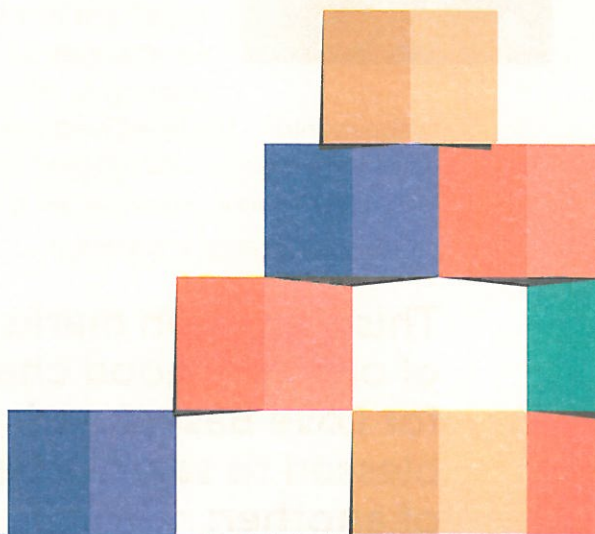
○ PRAY

You can partner with us by praying that the Holy Spirit would lead women/couples in need of Christ's loving care during an unexpected pregnancy to walk through the doors of Love Basket. Pray for the families whose hearts have been led to adoption, that they would have comfort and peace in knowing God is orchestrating the building of their family.

○ LOVE BASKET ADOPTION ASSISTANCE FUND

Have you ever heard a family say, "I would love to adopt but just don't have the money to do so."? We don't want finances to limit families in answering the call to adopt, which is why we help families pursue low-cost loans, grant opportunities, and fundraising ideas. In addition, our Adoption Assistance Fund exists to offer financial assistance to those families who may still need a bit of support in raising the money for an adoption. Our fund is getting low and we would love for you to consider a donation that would help another family to fulfill their lifelong dream of adopting by using the enclosed envelope or giving online at

www.lovebasket.org/donate/.



Check Out Our New Website

Visit www.lovebasket.org to see the all new redesigned Love Basket website! Our new site features a blog, new stories from adoptive families and more.

follow us on facebook

For adoptive families:

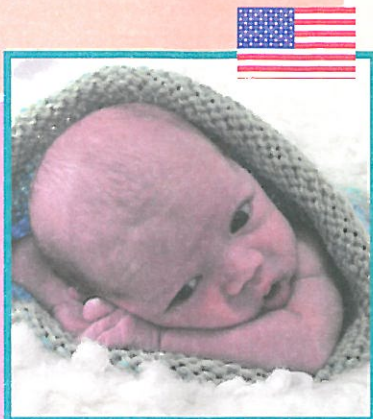
[Facebook.com/lovebasketadoptions](https://www.facebook.com/lovebasketadoptions)

For birth parents:

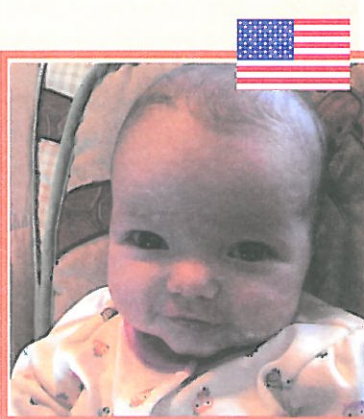
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WELCOME HOME



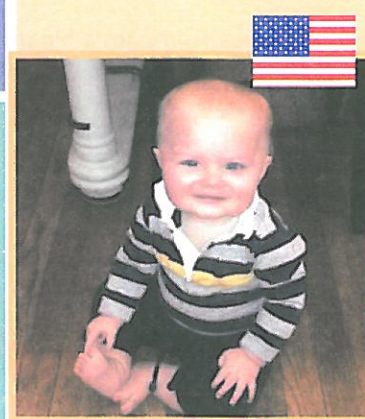
Preston Aiden



Natalie Autumn



Arianna Marie



John Raymond

Search and Reunion Tips Part 1:

As Love Basket has had a domestic adoption program for nearly thirty years, we regularly get requests from adoptees and birth parents who want to meet once the adoptee has reached adulthood. Most adoptees and birth parents assume that once the adoptee is 18, all they have to do is call the agency and get each other's identifying information – and bam, we have a reunion!

Actually, laws in various states and the legacy of secrecy from the old days of closed adoption can make this scenario a bit more complicated than you might expect. In the state of Missouri, where most of our adoptions are completed, connecting an adopted adult with one of his/her biological parents requires the approval/agreement of both biological parents, even if the intent is to only meet with one of them! There are ways to work with this type of situation, but it can be time-consuming.

However, We Can Do Several Things:

1. Share non-identifying information and communications between the parties;
2. Help the parties register with the Missouri Adoption Registry. If the adoptee and both birth parents register, the Registry can provide identifying information to the parties; and
3. Request permission from the court to release identifying information.

Why, you may ask, is this process so tedious? In the past, birth parents were assured of confidentiality and privacy and many made adoption plans at a time when being pregnant outside of marriage carried a heavy stigma. So, states and courts tend to err on the side of caution in protecting confidentiality in adoptions. While the vast majority of birth parents and adoptees we speak with desire to connect with each other, there are some who would prefer to maintain their privacy.

If you would like to connect with a birth parent or child placed for adoption:

1. Contact the agency that handled the adoption;
2. Find out if there is an Adoption Registry in the state where the adoption occurred;
3. Contact the court which oversaw the adoption; and
4. Research Search and Reunion registries on the internet.

Tune in next issue for Part 2!
Advice for your reunion

parents also. Her mom and I travel to schools to speak on adoption and share our stories together. I couldn't ask for anything more.

LB: Anything you want to say to anyone else facing an unplanned pregnancy or to adoptive parents?

Sarah: Ladies-God's got a big plan for you and nothing worth doing is easy. Some of us are wired to parent and some are wired to give. There is so much support out there so tune out your peer group and seek the Lord.

Parents- You shouldn't be afraid of the concept of a birth mom. Birthmothers are just another person that gets to love the child however, it's important to set boundaries and be open and honest about what you're comfortable with. Trust has to be there.

RACHEL

Love Basket: What's going on in your life right now?

Rachel: I'm busy! I am currently in my first year of grad school at Purdue University. I'm majoring in Marriage and Family Therapy. I also work part time. As of now, I plan to pursue a PHD in Medical and Family Therapy.

LB: Do you remember finding out that you were adopted?

Rachel: No, there was no "moment" that my parents sat me down to tell me I was adopted. It's just something that I've always known. It's normal to me.

LB: What is your adoptive family like?

Rachel: My mom is very open and willing to answer any questions that I have ever had. She's always been honest in that if she didn't know something, she would tell me to ask Sarah. I also feel like my family did its best to try and protect me from possible rejection by not introducing me to my birth father.

LB: Did you ever go through a phase of feeling upset that you were adopted?

Rachel: Oh no. I thought it was so cool that I was adopted. I wanted to tell everyone, and I did.

LB: When did you decide you wanted to meet your birth parents?

Rachel: My adoption began as a semi open adoption so I've always known my birth mom, Sarah. I did, however, get the desire to meet my birth-father in my early to mid-teen years. I was mainly just curious about that whole other family. Obviously, I don't look just like my adoptive parents and I wanted to see if I looked like him and also find out about the medical history of the family.

LB: Has your brother done the same thing with his biological parents?

Rachel: His adoption began as a fully open adoption so he always knew his birth mom as well. We actually know each

other's birth families. His birth father actually contacted my mom on Facebook and they eventually met.

LB: How did that initial process of "meeting" your biological father go?

Rachel: My mom was very nervous but I was so ready. He had actually emailed back and forth with my mom first and then with me before we met face to face. We met at a restaurant one day and I can remember my mom and I being in the car and seeing him pull up and get out of the car. "I can't do this!" I said to her. She was very encouraging and we met each other and hugged.

LB: Whom do you look like?

Rachel: I look so much like my birth father but I can see a lot of my personality traits that come from my birth mom.

LB: Do you feel that your being adopted helped to shape your career choice?

Rachel: It played a part in it. I've always heard all the adoption stereotypes and I've always tried to educate people when I can.

LB: Describe your current relationship with your birth family... your adopted family.

Rachel: Since my adoption began as semi open, I've always had some sort of a relationship with Sarah. When I was younger I used to stay the weekend with her. She has five children so it was great to hang out with them. I look to her and her husband as an aunt and uncle and her children as my cousins. She gave birth to me but she's not my mom. I respect her. My birth father came into my life about the time I stopped communicating with my adoptive father. He said from the very beginning that he wanted to take it slow so that neither of us would feel freaked out about the new relationship. I can remember him saying, "I want to be in your life as much as you want me to be in your life." That moved me. Someone who doesn't know me will take me. Today, I'm thankful that I took that risk. It was completely God's perfect timing that my biological dad come back into my life when I needed that figure. Sarah was very supportive. My relationship with my adoptive family is great. They raised me and made me who I am today.

LB: Anything to say to a fellow adult adoptee?

Rachel: Don't be scared to take a chance but do your research first. I know that seeing that both my birth parents have moved on and made a successful life for themselves has really helped me. It proves to me that there was a purpose for my adoption.

LB: Last question. Could you imagine either placing a child for adoption or adopting a child?

Rachel: If I was faced with that situation when I was a teenager, yes I would absolutely consider adoption.

Stephanie Miller
International Adoption Coordinator

ADOPTION COMES FULL CIRCLE

The Story of Sarah and Rachel

There are three sides to the adoption triad-the birth-parents, the adoptive parents, and the adoptee. It seems that the most is heard from the adoptive parents on everything from their reason to pursue adoption, their struggle during the process and their life afterward. What about the birth-parents? Who do YOU think a birth mom is? Why do you think she chose to place? Does she regret it? And the adoptee, do they ever struggle with wondering if their birth mother loved them? I had the pleasure of interviewing two members of this triad-an amazing birth mom, Sarah and her daughter, Rachel, whom she placed for adoption 23 years ago.

SARAH

Love Basket: What's going on in your life right now?

Sarah: Well, I'm very busy. I am married, a stay at home mom and homeschool my five children. My oldest daughter is getting married this spring so it's a very exciting time in our lives.

LB: When did you start thinking about adoption as an option for your unplanned pregnancy?

Sarah: Very soon after I became pregnant. I had just finished my first year of nursing school and I knew that I needed to grow up a lot more before I could take care of a child. I, along with my twin sister, am adopted and my mother is also adopted so our family was always familiar with the concept of adoption and what it looked like.

LB: What made you decide on Love Basket?

Sarah: Honestly, it was my Birth Parent Counselor, Lee. She made me feel so calm and have such peace about my situation and decision. She asked the hard questions that made me think that decision through. I really valued the fact that I had control. She would say that God has a plan for every child and that families are put together in different ways. I still love her! Those counselors love their job and the people they work with. I was not just another case.

LB: How did the birth-father feel about the pregnancy? How did he feel about the adoption?

Sarah: We kind of went our separate ways shortly before I found out I was pregnant. He went back to Springfield for college and I stayed in St. Louis for college. When he found out

about Rachel, he wanted me to get an abortion. I didn't hear from him much after that but his father did keep in contact with my parents throughout my pregnancy. When Rachel was born, he signed all the necessary paperwork involved in the adoption but denied paternity. This was proven by lab testing.

LB: Why did you choose the adoptive parents that you chose for Rachel?

Sarah: Well I had a list, as I'm sure a lot of other birth moms do. A list of what I was looking for and what I wanted my daughter to have in a family. I was given profiles to view but I just didn't feel that I clicked with anyone. I also had a fear that Rachel would be born sick or with something wrong with her. I was actually placed on bed rest and ended up giving birth five weeks early. During this time Lee handed me the profile of the adoptive family I ultimately selected. They already had one adopted child who was born severely premature and they took this child without reservation and cared for him in the hospital for 2 months. I knew that if this wasn't a perfect baby, they could handle it. I felt an instant sister type connection when I met the adoptive mother. I had a great peace that this was her mom.

LB: What were you feeling afterward?

Sarah: Throughout my pregnancy I felt really great about my decision to place my baby with another family. God gave me tremendous peace about that and I really loved the family. However, about six weeks after I had Rachel, it hurt... a lot. I knelt down and said, "God, I know this is what you want for me but it's hard. Take away any maternal feelings I have." A switch sort of flipped after that. Now, the relationship that I have with Rachel is nice but it's not necessary. God filled that space.

LB: When did your other children know about the child you placed for adoption?

Sarah: They have always known. As I said, the rest of my family was well versed in adoption so we felt that it was very important to incorporate that language from the very start with them. They have always known about Rachel and she has always known about them. They have a great relationship.

LB: Describe your relationship today with Rachel and her adoptive parents.

Sarah: It was originally a semi open adoption so all of our contact went through the staff at Love Basket, we only exchanged first names. I would receive pictures and updates and I remember meeting at their office to celebrate Rachel's first birthday. As the years passed we would all meet at places like the zoo, restaurants, and parks so I could see Rachel and spend some time with her. Then we decided to start communicating directly to set up our meetings and Rachel began coming to my home for visits with our family. When Rachel was in eighth grade, she began to spend the night every once in a while. I have a great relationship with her.



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We're moving to an electronic format for newsletters, to save both money and trees. In the future, the Family Journal will be delivered to you via email! Please take a moment to email us at: update@lovebasket.org, so that you're kept abreast of the latest and greatest news at Love Basket. Be sure to include your first and last name(s) and your email address(es) in the body of the email. As always, give us a call if you have any questions.
Thanks!