

FAMILY FOCUS ADOPTION SERVICES



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Recipient - 2003 Congressional
"Angels in Adoption" Award

UNGUIDED

My mother was scheduled for major surgery to be followed with a stay in a rehab facility. My older brother was to stay with a friend of his from school and his family. I, on the other hand, was more of a problem as she didn't know who I should stay with. Her choice still makes no sense to me almost 30 years later and yet I have never forgotten even one second of that seven and a half weeks.

The Friday prior to her surgery my mother picked me up from school and took me and most of my belongings to a total stranger's home. This family was very "nice" with three overachieving kids close to my age. From the moment the car stopped in their driveway I remember feeling fear, anxiety and the overwhelming total TERROR of the unknown while approaching the front door. My hands sweating, heart beating so fast I swear you could see it through my sweater. My mouth went dry and my hands turned as cold as ice. My mother met this family through her church group but never thought to introduce me prior to just leaving me there for weeks on end. After making small talk with them she gave me a quick kiss and left. I didn't see my mother again for seven and a half weeks -when she was discharged from the rehab unit to home.

The food this family ate was different than I was used too, the smells in the home were different and the sounds in house at night would scare me into a fetal position under my covers. I cried most nights until I fell asleep and was terrified that if something happened to my mother [I didn't know] what would happen to me. I never got used to being there, never felt at home or settled in. I yearned for the day when I could go home again and sleep in my own bed, feel safe in my skin again.

That day did come for me, but for these children bounced from one foster home to another it is not guaranteed and the feeling I described above they feel over and over and over again. Can you imagine not knowing who you really are, if you will ever be accepted or loved? Asking yourself every time you are moved to another stranger's home - is this where I belong? Will these people accept me for who I am? Am I going to be safe here? I can imagine in a very small way and it is that memory/scar that drives me to adoption of a child or children to free them someday of those fears.

Julie Cross - April 2009

FOR EVERY CHILD A PERMANENT FAMILY