



COVER STORY

The Beach Family of Kansas

a.k.a. The New American Family



SCAN4MORE

- May is National Foster Care Month – Inside: Adoption & Foster Care Resource Directory
- Foster Care and Adoption Family Stories

A LEADER IN LGBTQ PARENTING RESOURCES SINCE 1998

LOVE

brought you together

Now, let us grow the family of your dreams...
we're proud to help.



IUI | IVF | EGG DONORS | SURROGACY



Gay Parents To Be is proud to excel in family building for members of the LGBT community who, now more than ever, can more easily exercise their reproductive rights. Matching a renowned network of service providers with our own first-class clinicians, caring staff, and state-of-the-art laboratory facilities, we have a proven track record of successfully building families in the shortest time possible. As a nationally recognized leader in LGBT Healthcare equality, we take great pride in years of helping same-sex couples and individuals become parents. Located in Connecticut and New York, supporting national and international journeys.

203.956.2266 | GayParentsToBe.com

Considering Adoption?



Building Healthy Families
for Over 100 Years

www.chsofnj.org/adoption/domestic-adoption
635 S. Clinton Ave, Trenton, NJ 08611

609-695-6274

WHY CHOOSE CHSofNJ

Choose The Children's Home Society of New Jersey for Domestic Adoption services in NJ and Bucks County, PA. Since 1894, our licensed professionals have provided quality adoption services to both birth parents and adoptive families. We offer a sliding scale placement fee to make adoption affordable and accessible to families, our supportive services are designed to support our families throughout this lifelong process.

ADOPTION SERVICES INCLUDE

- Domestic Adoption home studies
- Second Parent adoptions in NJ
- Identified adoption services
- Adoption Complaint Investigations as ordered by the court
- Post placement supervision services





MARY McDOWELL FRIENDS SCHOOL

Revealing Brilliance in Every Student

A K-12 college preparatory Quaker school dedicated to the success of students with learning disabilities



- Small class size with low student to teacher ratio
- Rigorous yet supportive curriculum
- Specialized instruction including *Orton Gillingham* reading and *Judith Hochman Basic Writing Skills* programs
- Rich performing and visual arts programs and full extracurricular and athletic programs
- Guided by the Quaker values of community, integrity, equality, and service

www.marymcdowell.org

20 Bergen Street • Brooklyn, NY 11201 • 718.625.3939

TURN THE WORLD AROUND



See Montclair's
progressive education
in action.

Summer session & group tour
info now online.

Learn more at

WWW.MONTCLAIRCOOP.ORG

65 Chestnut Street, Montclair

FEATURES

EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA - Family photos from our audience. - page 6

Annual GPM LGBTQ Friendly Foster Care and Adoption Resource Listing - May is National Foster Care Awareness Month. This list can assist in building your family through foster care and adoption. - page 10

ADVERTISER SPOTLIGHT: Child and Family Service Agency - Terrence Calhoun didn't start off wanting to raise his own children. But then he became a foster parent which eventually led to becoming a single dad to a little boy. - page 12

RaiseAChild "Let Love Define Family" Series: Guerra-Luna Family - Gay Parent Magazine is partnering with RaiseAChild to feature their "Let Love Define Family" series. In this issue, Raquel and Crissel Guerra-Luna adopt an adorable 5-year old named Andrew. - page 16

How I Became Jon's Father - Tom Bauer's friends urged him to take a Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) training. He decided to shut them up by attending. This is Tom's story of how becoming a CASA volunteer led him to becoming the coolest dad ever. - page 20

Prides Nationwide - Celebrate LGBTQ pride. - page 21

California Couple Opens Their Home to Foster Care and Adoption - Not long after they met and moved in together, Pedro Virgen and Victor Pulido decided that fostering to adopt would be their method of becoming parents. However, they never planned on becoming foster parents to a challenging teenager. - page 24

Gay Parent Magazine Featured Family Revisited: The Galvez Family of New York - Gay Parent Magazine will reach it's milestone 20th anniversary at the end of this year. To kick off our anniversary we're revisiting some of the families that we've featured in our previous issues. Since we last featured them in 2015, the Galvez family has a new addition. - page 26

A Tribute to Kristi Parker - For nearly 25 years Kristi Parker published Liberty Press, a LGBTQ publication in Kansas. She was featured in Gay Parent Magazine and is survived by her son Jack. - page 28

The New American Family - The Beach family of Kansas are interracial and headed by a lesbian couple. The moms have self titled their blog and Facebook page The New American Family. - page 30

Ad Index - page 31

Unclassified Ad - page 31

Cover photo by Kym Rodda. Photos this page, top to bottom courtesy of Joshua Lee Erindish, Daniella Burton, Jessy HerWife Jones, Jason Galvez, and Tom Bauer.

Gay Parent Magazine Inc, PO Box 750852, Forest Hills, NY 11375-0852 718-380-1780

gayparentmag@gmail.com ▼ www.gayparentmag.com

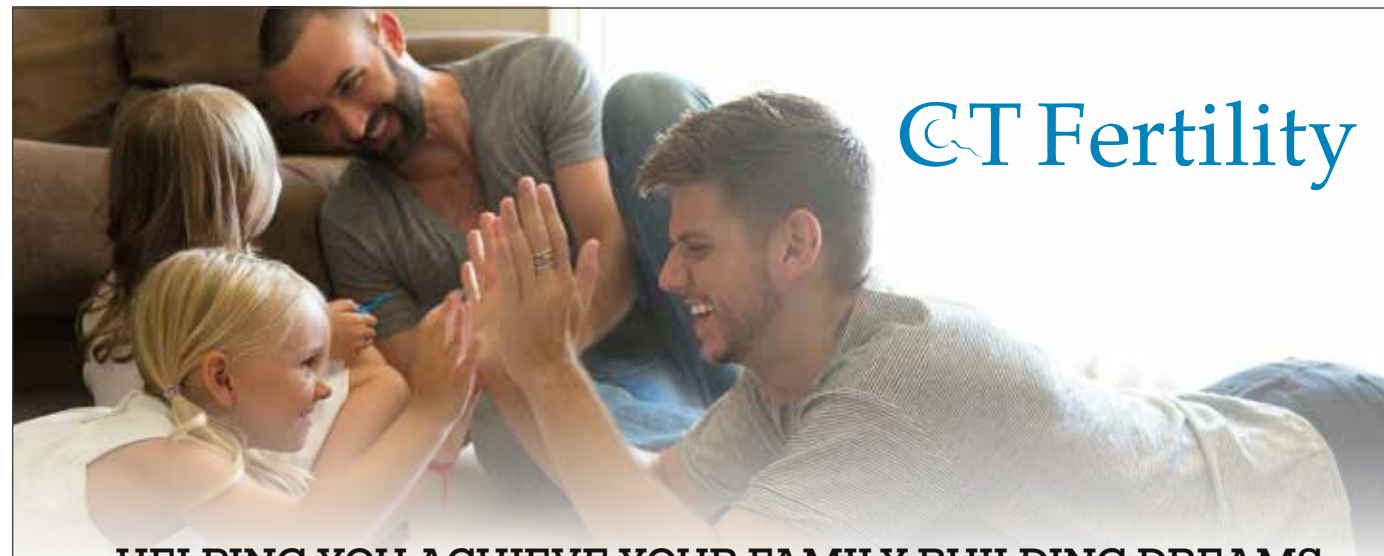
May-June 2018, Vol. 20, No. 118, ISSN 1545-6714

Also publisher of **Gay Parent Magazine - New York**

Publisher/Editor: Angeline R. Acain **Ad Sales Manager:** Vivian Schepis **Ad Sales Reps:** David Kenney, Charlotte Murray, Linda Rizzo **Webmaster/Graphic Designer:** Brett Cohen **Marketing, Administrative, Distribution Assistants:** Jiana Eisenberg, Ben Suazo **Editorial Contributors:** Tom Bauer, Terrence Calhoun, Michael Coleman, Danielle Lescure, Gary Hurtubise. **SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:** print-\$22 1 yr, \$37 2 yrs, foreign print- \$84 1 yr, \$168 2 yrs, digital download-\$17 1 yr or \$27 2 yrs. Make check payable to Gay Parent magazine. Visit our web site www.gayparentmag.com to order a subscription online, a single digital or print issue, for a listing of parent support groups, and for more information. Gay Parent magazine is not responsible for the claims of its advertisers. Copyright © 1998 - 2018 Gay Parent magazine ▼



CT Fertility



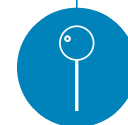
HELPING YOU ACHIEVE YOUR FAMILY BUILDING DREAMS

Since 1991, Our Team Has Helped Create Over 5,000 Babies
For Families Around The World



OUR MISSION

CT Fertility strives to provide all patients every available option for building their family. Since 1991, we have been a leader in fertility, and have been widely recognized throughout Europe and the U.S. as a preeminent fertility center for advanced reproductive care of infertile couples, singles and same-sex couples. We take great pride in partnering with, guiding and empowering our patients to achieve their unique family building goals.



OUR LOCATIONS

Based in a brand-new facility in beautiful Trumbull, CT, just 90 minutes north of New York City, CT Fertility also has offices in Manhattan. And we are thrilled to announce our expansion into Europe with a new office in Barcelona, Spain. By expanding our capacity and presence, we hope to bring new family building options to patients around the world.



OUR PHYSICIANS

To accommodate our growing patient demand, we are pleased to welcome two leaders in the field of Reproductive Medicine to our team.

DR. MELVIN THORNTON II MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Dr. Thornton specializes in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility. His experience includes 15 years as the Medical Director of the Columbia University IVF program and 9 years as Director of their donor egg program.

DR. JOAO DE PINHO PHYSICIAN

Dr. De Pinho's expertise is in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility. He has participated in multiple research projects, authored numerous publications and is fluent in four languages.

Please visit www.ctfertility.com/physicians for full bios.

CT Fertility - Connecticut

100 Technology Drive, Suite 210
Trumbull, CT 06611
+ 1 203-373-1200 (Telephone)
+ 1 203-880-5730 (Fax)
WWW.CTFERTILITY.COM

CT Fertility - Manhattan

425 Fifth Avenue, 3rd Floor
(5th Ave. & 38th St.)
New York, NY 10016
+ 1 203-373-1200 (Telephone)
+ 1 203-880-5730 (Fax)
WWW.CTFERTILITY.COM

CT Fertility - Europe

Ronda de la Universitat, 9 - 6
08007 Barcelona, Spain
+34 931-591-113
WWW.CTFERTILITY.COM



Just wanted to share our beautiful family with you guys!! Thanks for all that you do!!
Kacey Maxwell



Here's another photo of my big happy family. Thank you we love to share and support.

Daniella Bunton

continued on page 8

CUMMINGTON, MA
SHIRE VILLAGE
NON-PROFIT • INTER-RACIAL **Camp**

The non-sexist, non-competitive camp that encourages individual creativity and humanistic values. 2, 3, 4 and 7 week sessions. Ages 7-13. Our 47th year.

Private lake in a magnificent setting.
Riding • All Sports • Hiking • Theater
Arts & Crafts • Film & Photography
Canoeing

For brochure, write to
175 Eastern Pkwy, #6J, Brooklyn, NY 11238
Call (718) 622-8204 or visit www.shirevillage.org

"Not only did the DSR connect us, we became a family. Val and I were married in June!"
—DSR Mom Laurie

Val and Laurie with Jordan, Michael, Lena and dog Macy

THE DONOR SIBLING REGISTRY®
EDUCATING, CONNECTING AND SUPPORTING DONOR FAMILIES

- 1/3 of the DSR's 55,000 members are in LGBTQ families
- Help your children build their extended half-sibling family
- Share photos and medical info
- Network with other families

www.DonorSiblingRegistry.com

CREATE YOUR
forever family.

Adopt a child today...
give them a home through
NYAP's ACTION Adoption.

NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM
www.nyap.org
937-227-6101

Fairfax Cryobank

The Trusted Choice for Donor Sperm

**Confidence
Delivered**

NO SPERM BANK DOES MORE TESTING

With the highest standards for semen quality, donor health and testing; less than 1% of applicants become Fairfax Cryobank sperm donors.

FACEMATCH™

Fairfax Cryobank's exclusive free online service where you upload a photo and we list the donors that most resemble that photo. Used nearly 200,000 times since its inception, it is one of the most popular services provided.

INSEMINATION SERVICES AVAILABLE

Insemination services are available on-site in San Francisco and Pasadena, California through our affiliate, Pacific Reproductive Services (PRS), and in Fairfax, Virginia through our affiliate, Genetics & IVF Institute (GIVF). For information and to schedule an appointment, please contact PRS at 888-469-5800 or GIVF at 800-552-4363.

**YOUR SEARCH FOR THE
PERFECT SPERM DONOR
JUST GOT EASIER:**

Use coupon code **GP50** for
\$50 off any of our online
products including donor
semen.

www.fairfaxcryobank.com



800-338-8407 | www.fairfaxcryobank.com

Fairfax, VA • Austin, TX • Houston, TX • Philadelphia, PA • St. Paul, MN • Pasadena, CA • San Francisco, CA



TODAY IS THE DAY. TAKE ACTION.
One courageous family can change the course of a child's life.

Lilliput Families (previously Lilliput Children's Services)

Lilliput FAMILIES
CHANGE the FUTURE.

Adopted With Love™

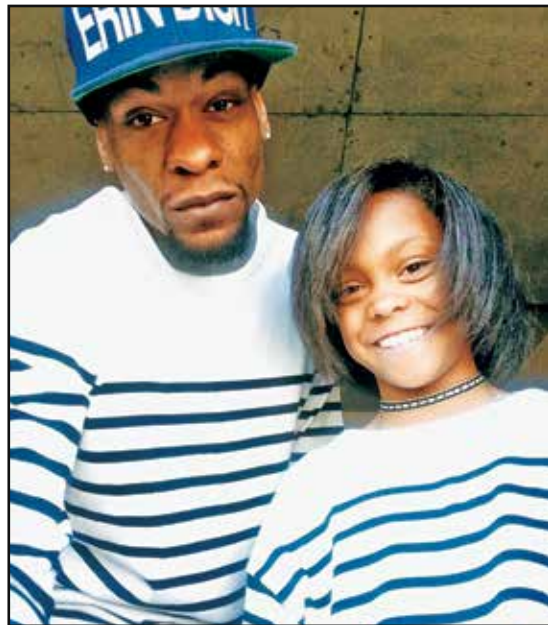
Charms, blankets, journals, ornaments, picture frames to celebrate families joined through adoption

Adoption gift boutique

www.adoptedwithlove.com

ONLINE COUPON: GPM15

EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA continued from page 6



Wanted to share a photo. Greetings from Denver.
Joshua and Jazz.
Joshua Lee Erindish



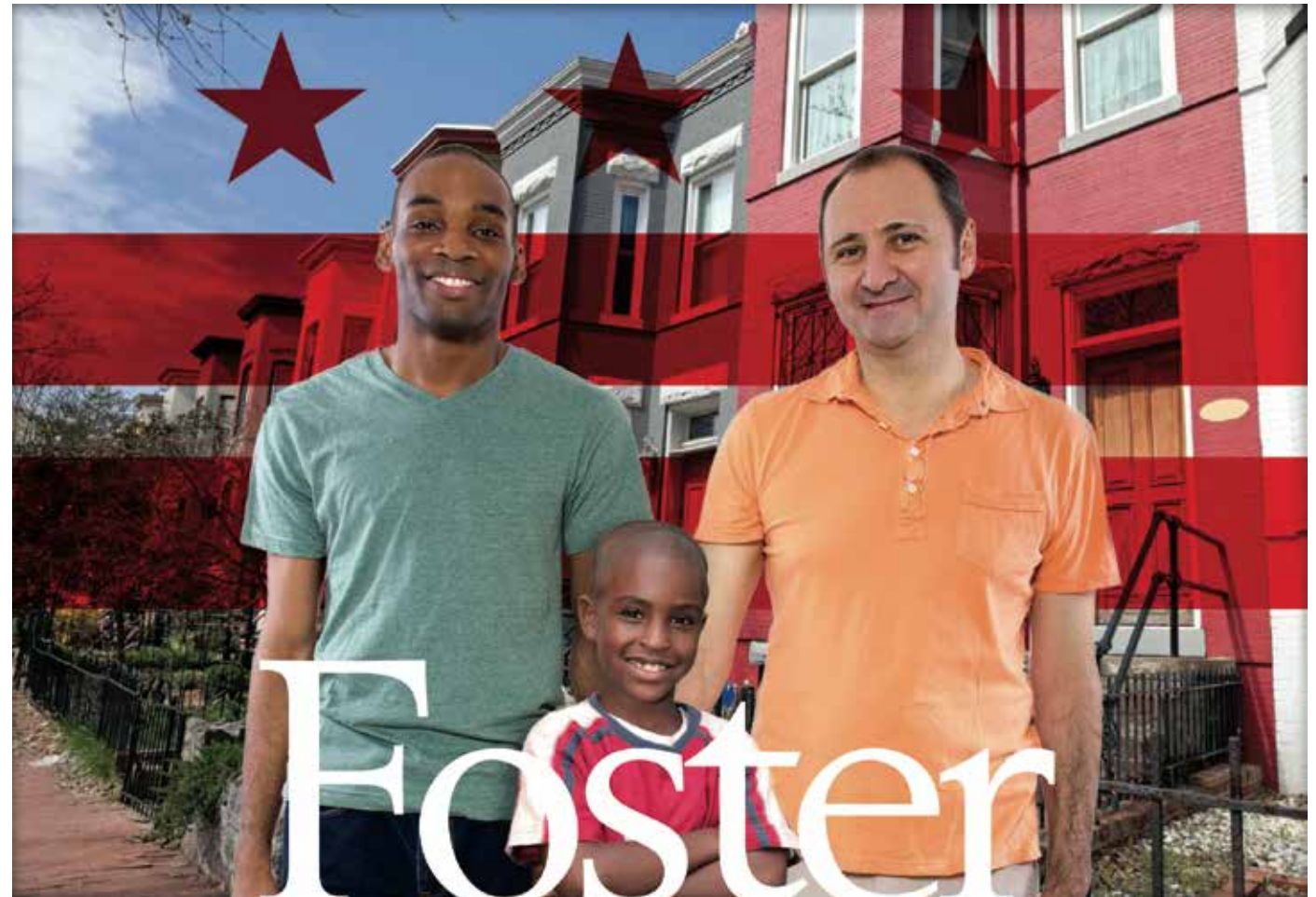
Lesbian love is great. I just want to embrace it and let others see how beautiful it can be. Plus this woman here is my heartbeat, no two souls were meant to be like ours. Our connection is unreal and our love will last forever. Blessed to have her...our son... and two babies on my way.
Jessy HerWife Jones

We love hearing from you. Send us your photos and comments by email at gayparentmag@gmail.com or through [Facebook/gay.parent.magazine.com](https://www.facebook.com/gay.parent.magazine.com). ▼

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Child and Family Services Agency

DC Families for DC Kids



Our community AND our children need us to step forward as foster parents.
Do it to keep our kids safe and our neighborhoods strong.



Register for an orientation today by calling

202.671.LOVE
5 6 8 3

Nurture a Child. Support your Community. Strengthen our City.

To learn more about becoming a foster parent call 202.671.LOVE (5683) or visit fosterdckids.org.

May is National Foster Care Month

♥♥♥ Visit www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth ♥♥♥

Below are LGBTQ friendly foster care and adoption resources for family building and nurturing.

Adopted With Love
Adoption gift boutique
www.adoptedwithlove.com
see ad on page 8

Camp Clio
212-472-5207
www.campclio.org
see ad on page 13

Child and Family Services Agency
202-671-LOVE (5683)
www.fosterdckids.org
see ad on page 9

Children's Home Society of Florida
954-453-6408
www.chsfl.org/fostering
see ad on page 22

The Children's Home Society of New Jersey
609-695-6274
www.chsofnj.org/adoption/domestic-adoption
see ad on page 3

Connecticut Department of Children and Families
888-KID-HERO
www.ctfosteradopt.com
see ad on page 21

Robyn Harrod, MSW, LCSW
213-590-8498
www.robynharrod.com
see ad on page 12



Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services
888-24-FAMILY (888-243-2645)
www.hscfs.org
see ad on page 26

Holy Family Services
800-464-2367
www.hfs.org
see ad on page 25

Jewish Child & Family Services
312-673-2755
www.jcfs.org
see ad on page 11

Klingberg Family Centers
860-832-5536
www.klingberg.com



see ad on page 20

Lilliput Families
855-912-2622
916-238-3503
www.lilliput.org
see ad on page 8

NAFI CT
860-284-1177
www.nafict.org
see ad on page 24

The National Center for Children and Families
240-375-6407
www.nccf-cares.org
see ad on page 25

National Youth Advocate Program
937-227-6101
www.nyap.org
see ad on page 6

New Jersey Department of Children and Families
877-NJFOSTER
www.njfooster.org
800-99 ADOPT
www.njadopt.org
see ad on page 13

Samaritas
616-260-3441
www.samaritas.org/foster-care
see ad on page 24




*May i have
12 to 18 months
of your time?*

I have emotional and developmental challenges stemming from trauma.

We won't be alone...my dedicated 24/7 Care Team of therapists, case managers, nurses and legal advocates will train you and provide us with wraparound support.

I need you to help me transition to independence.


Jewish Child & Family Services
Redefine What's Possible.

Therapeutic
FosterCare

312.673.2755

Jewish Child & Family Services is a partner with the Jewish United Fund in serving our community. We embrace diversity. Our commitment to inclusivity is woven throughout our services, programs and welcoming workplace.



Yale Fertility Center

**YALE FERTILITY CENTER
CAN MAKE YOUR DREAM
OF STARTING OR EXPANDING YOUR FAMILY
— COME TRUE! —**

WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN OFFERING SAFE AND EFFECTIVE THIRD PARTY REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES.

- Donor Egg IVF • Donor Sperm • Artificial Insemination • IVF with Gestational Surrogacy
- Male Infertility - ICSI/PESA/TESA/IVF • Female Infertility - Ovulation Induction; IVF
- Genetic Testing of embryos PGS/PGD • Fertility Preservation of sperm/egg/embryo freezing
- Treatment for recurring pregnancy loss • Advanced robotic Reproductive Surgery

www.medicine.yale.edu/obgyn/yfc/

150 Sargent Drive
New Haven, CT 06511
203-785-4708

5 Durham Road
Guilford, CT 06437
203-785-4708

125 A Kings Highway North
Westport, CT 06880
203-341-8899

190 West Broad Street
Stamford, CT 06912
203-341-8899

How I Built a Family and Made a Difference

By Terrence Calhoun

I've always loved children, but for many years, I didn't have the desire to raise my own. Then, as I got older, I realized I was missing out on something special. I knew if I didn't attempt to become a parent, I would regret it for the rest of my life. A friend encouraged me to look into fostering. That was six years ago. As someone who has strong faith, I knew this was God's work for me to do.

My first foster children were brothers, ages 5 months and 5 years. They stayed with me for only about three months, but I could tell I was having a positive impact on them. The older boy seemed to do better in school. They left to live with their aunt, but the experience made me want to do more.



The author Terrence Calhoun with his son.

Before long, I got another call. A 5-month-old boy needed a safe home because he had 27 broken bones! I agreed to *continued on page 14*

Robyn Harrod, MSW, LCSW
LCSW 20878



Family Formation Services
Education, Support and Counseling
Adoption, Foster Care, Surrogacy,
and Egg, Sperm & Embryo Donation



213-590-8498
8170 Beverly Blvd., Suite 204
Los Angeles, CA 90048

www.robynharrod.com
harrodrobyn@gmail.com

**CHOOSE FROM OVER 130 CLASSES
AND CREATE YOUR OWN SUMMER ADVENTURE**

**CHARLES RIVER
CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAM**
WWW.CRCAP.ORG

**REGISTER
ONLINE TODAY!**
CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL

Visit
Gay Parent magazine's web site
www.gayparentmag.com

- scan the QR code (on right) to subscribe
- digital download or print
- buy back issues
- join our mailing list

and follow us
twitter.com/gayparentmag
facebook.com/gay.parent.magazine

Alta Bates
In Vitro Fertilization Program

We provide all LGBTQ-friendly reproductive services including: Gay Surrogacy, Partner IVF, standard and Donor Egg IVF, and IUIs in a warm and supportive private practice setting. Established in 1984, Alta Bates IVF has an excellent track record, is fully accredited and a member of SART/ASRM.

Alta Bates IVF Program
2999 Regent St., #101A
Berkeley, CA 94705
510-649-0440 www.abivf.com

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

*Open your heart
and your home*

**You Can Make a Difference!
Be a Foster or Adoptive Parent**

There are thousands of New Jersey children who need the warmth and guidance of a family, especially siblings and children with special medical conditions.

For more information contact:
(877) NJ FOSTER, www.njfofoster.org
(800) 99 ADOPT, www.njadopt.org

**Our Seventh
Year and
Expanding
Our Mission**

All-day or Sleep-away

Camp Clio
a seriously fun place
for adopted children
Youths and Teens

Camp Clio (Ages 9-12)
July 1-21, 2018
(1, 2 or 3 weeks)
Held at Camp Claire,
Lyme, CT

**Camp Clio Teen
(Ages 13-16)**
July 1-6 or July 7-13, 2018
(1 or 2 weeks)
Held at Middlesex County Camp
Moodus, CT

For information and registration
visit our website
www.CampClio.org

Scholarships Available

Child and Family Service Agency
continued from page 12

take him and slowly nurtured him back to health. I was amazed at his strength and resilience. I also met his parents. I realized that my fostering not only gave the child a chance to heal but also gave his parents time to get the help they needed to provide an appropriate loving home. The child eventually returned to his parents. I still see him occasionally. He is growing up healthy and strong, and I'm

proud to have played a part in making that happen.

Next, I took a 10-month-old boy. He was a wonderful child whose mother said she no longer wanted to care for him. Even at 10 months, he was feisty and busy. I got to see many of his developmental milestones including his first steps and his first words. He was so active! One day after putting him in his crib, I went downstairs. But then I heard crying that was getting louder and louder. I turned around and saw that he had

climbed out of his crib, come down the steps, and had his arms up wanting me to hold him! In that moment, I realized we loved each other. I decided to adopt him. That led to a long, contentious trial. But in the end, we became a forever family.

Fostering and adopting have made me a better person, more compassionate and patient. This morning when I dropped my son at school, out of nowhere he said, "I really love you, Daddy." I melted and said, "I love you more."

Fostering and adopting have made me a better person, more compassionate and patient. This morning when I dropped my son at school, out of nowhere he said, "I really love you, Daddy." I melted and said, "I love you more."

Throughout my journey, Child and Family Service Agency (CFSA) has helped me at every step. As a single parent, it's important to have a support system. Some of the people at CFSA have hearts of gold. My support worker is always there to help. And CFSA has a ton of resources that help make this work possible—good training and connections to other foster parents in a supportive network. CFSA has been extremely inclusive and affirming of me and my family.

I encourage you to become a foster/adoptive parent. It's a life-changing experience. You never know what you can do until you do it—and then amazing things happen. I am a living witness. Learn more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent through Child and Family Services Agency by calling 202-671-LOVE (5683) and visiting www.fosterdckids.org. ▼

Photo courtesy of Child and Family Service Agency

Helping Small Miracles Happen



- COMPREHENSIVE FERTILITY CARE • INTRAUTERINE INSEMINATION (IUI)
- IN VITRO FERTILIZATION (IVF) • PREIMPLANTATION GENETIC DIAGNOSIS & SCREENING (PGD/PGS)
- DONOR EGG • DONOR SPERM • IVF/DONOR EGG REFUND PROGRAM

The Reproductive Science Center of NJ is a leading provider of advanced reproductive technologies. Our center combines a commitment to compassionate care with a cutting-edge fertility program. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to be a parent and a treatment plan can be customized to fit his or her unique situation. We believe that the most important quality a fertility clinic can offer is genuine concern and understanding for you and your emotional needs. Our experienced doctors, nurses, and staff fully understand the emotional and medical challenges that confront prospective parents. We strive to make all patients feel calm, comfortable and confident throughout their entire course of treatment. RSCNJ has 3 convenient locations within Central NJ offering free phone consultations and free second opinions, along with evening and weekend hours.



Reproductive Science Center of NJ

DR. WILLIAM F. ZIEGLER | DR. ALAN M. MARTINEZ | DR. VIRGINIA A. MENSAH
EATONTOWN • TOMS RIVER • LAWRENCEVILLE
732-918-2500 | FERTILITYNJ.COM





A Caring Approach to Egg Donation



Beverly Hills Egg Donation

433 N. Camden Drive, Suite 600
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
WWW.BHED.COM
OR CALL US AT (310)-279-5272



When you're ready for a family count on our expertise & compassion.

UNCOMPROMISED FERTILITY CARE
(201) 288-6330 | uranj.com



HASBROUCK HEIGHTS • HOBOKEN • WAYNE

Swim. Play. Sing. Learn. Create. Explore.

Tumble into SummerSault!


Your child's joyful summer begins June 19!



learn more and register for camp at:
www.SummerSaultNYC.org
The Town School, 540 East 76th Street, NYC

Ages 3 - 6.
Early childhood experts on faculty.
Two-week sessions June 19 - July 26.





Year 'round farm vacations Fun for the whole family!

The Inn at East Hill Farm

Troy, New Hampshire



east-hill-farm.com
1-800-242-6495

The Son of an Amazing Lesbian Couple Has Big Dreams for His Family

“He wants to get a school bus so we can help that many kids.”

Andrew was in foster care for 1,500 days before being adopted by Raquel and Crissel Guerra-Luna. Now, this little guy shares his moms' dreams of building a big family of foster children. In this RaiseAChild “Let Love Define Family®” series installment for Gay Parent Magazine, contributing writer Danielle Lescure tells their story.

“Ever since I was little and I pictured my family, my dream was always a mini van and a house and lots of kids and being on the PTA and being a soccer mom,” confessed Raquel Guerra-Luna, “And I am so blessed that I have exactly that right now, and it’s all through adopting from foster care.”

When Raquel, 34, and her wife, Crissel Guerra-Luna, 33, first shared their story two years ago, they had just begun the process of adopting a little boy and spoke eagerly of their hope to have more children

through foster-adoption. Today, they are the proud parents of that boy, 5-year-old Andrew, and have been fostering siblings aged 1, 2, and 3-years old for almost a year. That mini van has become a necessity for this busy family!

Prior to their current set of siblings, the couple fostered three other placements. As much as they enjoy it, they’ve also been moved by how each time Andrew has happily embraced the role of big brother.

“Andrew loves them. Every single one that we’ve had he takes them under his wing,” shared Raquel. “We don’t been through the



Andrew Guerra-Luna on his adoption day.

know what’s going to happen with this sibling set, but Andrew told us if they leave can we keep helping kids. He just has the biggest heart for this and that makes us happy.”

“He wants to get a school bus so we can help that many kids!” laughed Crissel.

“Yeah, we’re really proud of him,” added Raquel. “We kind of went back and forth thinking what is this gonna do to him because he’s already

continued on page 18

Photo by Juliet San Nicolas Bradley

MATH
K-12 GRADE

DANCE

AQUATICS
K-12

FUN
K-12

EXPLORE
Create

Film Making

Sports

Technology
K-12

IMAGINE

SURFING
Create EXPLORE

INSTRUCTIONAL

Swim

science

Basketball

Camps

Performing Arts

Jazz Workshop

Visual

AFTERCARE

High School Credit Classes

MUSICAL THEATER

SUMMER at CROSSROADS

ENROLL TODAY: summer.xrds.org

Email summer@xrds.org or call 310-829-7391 ext. 506

Nuestros empleados hablan español.

CROSSROADS SCHOOL FOR ARTS & SCIENCES

Middle and Upper School: 21st Street Campus | 1714 21st St., Santa Monica, CA 90404
Elementary School: Norton Campus | 1715 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90404

CARING • COMMON SENSE • CONSIDERATION • COOPERATION • COURTESY

The
JOHN THOMAS DYE SCHOOL

11414 Chalon Road
Los Angeles, CA 90049

www.jtdschool.com
310.476.2811

Magination Press®

New from the Stonewall Award-winning author of *This Day in June*

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of the rainbow flag with the story of its creator, Gilbert Baker.

Readers follow Gilbert's childhood in a small town in Kansas where he didn't fit in to his historic artistic career in San Francisco. Today his flag is everywhere, reminding children that it's okay to be their colorful selves!

ISBN 978-1-4338-2902-4

Learn more:
www.apa.org/rainbow

Your Journey to Parenthood Starts Here

We're Here to Help

Call today to let our knowledgeable and caring staff help you with your donor choice, photo matching, or any questions. Our donors are screened and chosen with care. We think you will find our vial, shipping and storage costs are reasonably priced.

Reproductive Resources, Inc.
Building Families Since 1985
504.454.7973 | 800.227.4561
www.reproductiveresources.com

SpringCreek fertility
Jeremy Groll, MD
SpringCreekFertility.com

Making your dream a reality.

At SpringCreek you will experience:

- success rates above national averages
- costs below the national averages
- individualized, compassionate care

Our network of experienced professionals in reproductive law, donor sperm, donor egg, gestational carrier agencies, and counselors will help guide you through the process.

SpringCreek Fertility
7095 Clys Road - Dayton, OH 45459
(937) 458 - 5084
Everyone deserves to have the family of their dreams.

RaiseAChild “Let Love Define Family®”
Series continued from page 16

ringer himself. Is this doing more damage or maybe helping him? But he keeps asking for more and he takes every kid as his sibling, no questions asked, and when one leaves he asks for another one. He really has a big heart and he’s a big helper.”

Given how great the need is for people willing to foster, this pair appreciates the importance of educating others. They always volunteer to share their experience.

“Years ago, RaiseAChild recommend-

ed us to an agency called Five Acres. Now, we speak at their trainings for oncoming foster parents,” said Raquel. “We like to answer questions, share our tips and tricks and our stories. We hope that people can hear multiple stories and hopefully see themselves in the story and see how attainable it is. Hopefully answering their questions helps dispel any fears that they might have.”

“I think that the biggest question people ask is, ‘We don’t know if we have a big enough house or if we



Left to right, Crissel, Andrew and Raquel Guerra-Luna.

make enough money,” Raquel continued. “We tell them when we first started we had a two-bedroom apartment. I was a stay-at-home parent; my wife was a full-time student who just got out of the military. And we’re doing it. Not a big income, not a big house, but we have a big enough heart. It doesn’t matter about your income or the size of your house or what job you have; it’s the size of your heart.”

They also recognize that simply being seen out in the world as a family sets a powerful example, especially for the LGBTQ community.

“I think there’s a stigma with gay couples that this can’t be done, but we try to encourage others,” said Crissel. “When we’re out at a restaurant with all our kids we do get stared at, but there’s a couple that ask and we tell them it’s doable, especially as a gay couple here in California. It’s amazing to have this opportunity.”

“We try not to hide, just be very out there in our daily lives. We’re very involved,” shared Raquel. “I’m on the PTO board at Andrew’s school. Crissel has coached two of Andrew’s soccer teams. We’re hoping we’re a billboard that we’re gay and we can do everything everyone else can, and answer questions along the way when people have them.”

While they acknowledge that fostering sometimes means saying goodbye, they insist on focusing instead on the difference they can make in a child’s life in whatever time they have together.

“I love the kids so much; it’s hard to see them go and worry, make sure they’re gonna be okay, be safe, loved, and all that,” admitted Crissel, “But we trust God has a good plan for their lives. Most of the



Top left photo, Raquel and Crissel Guerra-Luna receiving recognition at the 2017 RaiseAChild HONORS event in Hollywood (photo by Eric Charles Photography). Top right photo, the entire Guerra-Luna family.

kids we’ve had, they’re very quiet, very shy. They don’t want to play, they’re a little behind in speech or other things but with time, man, you should see them. It’s amazing. That’s what keeps us going.”

Most importantly, they’re grateful for all the gifts fostering continues to give them and how every day they continue to grow as a couple and a family.

“We were always very good with our communication in our relationship but this has helped us to communicate in other ways,” said Crissel. “We got handed a 3-year-old. As a couple we needed to figure it out really, really quick. We’re learning from each other and we’re learning from him too because of all the things he’s gone through. It’s been fun to see the change in us as a couple, as parents, and also the change in him.”

“I’m just so happy that I have my dream now and it’s all from adoption from foster care,” Raquel said. “I love it all. It’s hard but it’s everything I wanted and I’m so thankful to this process. Neither of us had the happy upbringing we’re providing these kids. I’m so happy that we’re able to have kids, to take care of and love kids through the trauma that they’ve experienced in their short little lives so far.”

“We were talking about it the other day, having gone from all those bad experiences to having a Bachelor’s degree and being able to adopt and have my little family. It’s something that I never imagined could happen and I’m very thankful and overjoyed by it,” added Crissel. “It’s something we feel very strongly that we’re called to do. It’s extremely rewarding to see the kids who with time, with love and



care and security, you see the change in them and that’s what keeps us going. I at (323) 417-1440.

think we needed each other.”

If you have ever considered building a family by fostering or adoption, it would be RaiseAChild’s honor to help you. There are children in every state of the nation in dire need of a permanent, safe and loving home. Register now at RaiseAChild.org. Email your questions to Info@RaiseAChild.org. Call us now



Rectory SCHOOL

An Independent, Coed, Junior Boarding (Grades 5–9) and Day School (Early Childhood–Grade 9)

528 Pomfret St.
Pomfret, CT 06258



Understanding Your Child Is Our Priority.

At Rectory, we emphasize the personalized approach, where we measure success by the improvement realized by each individual student. The interests and learning habits students develop at Rectory form an essential foundation for our graduates as they complete their schooling and become tomorrow’s leaders.



SUMMER@RECTORY


A 4-week program combining academics and summer fun for students in grades 5–9!

Continue learning and growing during the summer. Think creatively, discover new interests, make friends—all while building on an educational foundation with morning classes and afternoon activities.

July 1–27, 2018 | www.rectoryschool.org/summer

860.928.1328 | www.rectoryschool.org

The Valley Hospital Fertility Center
Creating Families Together




Precious moments brought to you, in part, by The Valley Hospital Fertility Center.

Miracles happen at The Valley Hospital.

Having a baby is one of the most exciting journeys of your life. Each person’s wants and needs for building a family are unique. That’s why The Valley Hospital Fertility Center has team members with incredible skill and compassionate hearts who are dedicated to making your dreams come true. Our higher-than-average success rates and variety of services — from gestational carrier services and ovum donor services to intrauterine insemination — mean you’ll receive the most individualized care and improved chances of success.

Explore your options for growing your family. Let the experts at The Valley Hospital Fertility Center help you start your journey. Learn more at ValleyIVF.com.



How I Became Jon's Father

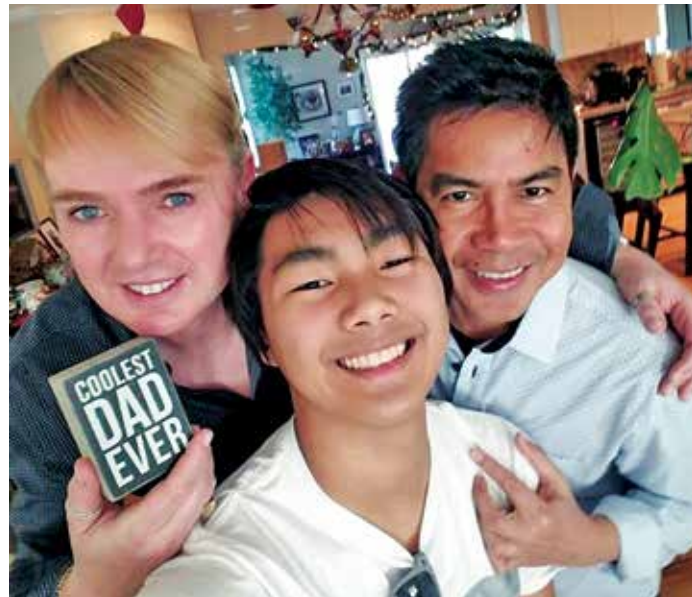
By Tom Bauer

I had no intention of ever working with foster children. Fast forward just a few years and I am a parent of an adopted foster child, loving, sharing and even raising money for the cause.

In 2011, I was rescuing pugs with my partner, Nilo, and we made a point of taking on the pugs in the very worst situation. We had a very active social life, enjoying our great house, our rewarding jobs (mine as Vice Chancellor at the San Mateo County Community College District), and a fun after-work life. Now, how does a child fit into that? How does a child fit in with a gay couple, was my question and fear. But I had both maternal and paternal feelings, which clearly was evident with the pug rescues and adoptions and a deeper outlook. I had no idea that what was about to take place would change the life of a child and others, for the better. I had no idea that a son would soon change my life.

As a man without children I could go anywhere I wanted, and I could do just about anything I wanted. But the question *what am I going to leave behind* lingered. There was something miss-

Left to right, the author, Tom Bauer, son Jon and partner Nilo last Christmas. Tom said receiving the "Coolest Dad Ever" gift from Jon made him cry.



ing. Enter my friend Brigitte. She saw the longing for more meaning. By Christmas, 2011, her positive push to bring me into CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates (for Children), was something I was familiar with; I knew the players and I thought the organization was great. That's it, nice organization, period. I sent in checks. Brigitte, CASA Executive Director Patricia Miljanich and my boss, Ron, however, had more in mind, and urged me to take a CASA-training class, but after no, no, and

no, I decided to shut them up by just attending the training. I went with a firm reservation. I believed in many of the pervasive myths about foster children and their families, and I wasn't about to get in too deep. These are indeed myths. While children in the foster care system *continued on page 22*

You can Change a child's Life.

Klingberg Family Centers is looking for single and two parent Connecticut families willing to open their lives to a child or adolescent and provide them a safe and nurturing place they can call home.

Become a Foster Parent

We believe in creating partnerships by providing Licensing, Training, and 24/7 support to families in Connecticut, affording foster children the best opportunity to be successful in their new homes.

Call us and learn how you can get involved
(860) 832-5536



2 GREAT RESTAURANTS IN 1 AMAZING NEIGHBORHOOD

BOGOTA
LATIN BISTRO

141 5TH AVENUE
PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN
BOGOTABISTRO.COM

MITI MITI
MODERN MEXICAN

138 5TH AVENUE
PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN
MITIMITINYC.COM

GAY-OWNED & OPERATED

Nationwide Pride Events

June is that time where we come out loud and proud to celebrate the LGBTQ community. Most, not all pride celebrations take place in June. We could not fit them all on this page but the following is a list of some of the many celebrations taking place across the country.



California

June 23 - 24, 2018, San Francisco Pride Parade & Celebration, www.sfpride.org

Colorado

June 16 - 17, 2018, Denver PrideFest, www.denverpride.org

Connecticut

September 8, 2018, Hartford Capital City Pride PrideFest, www.hartfordpride.com

District of Columbia

June 7 - 10, 2018, Capital Pride Alliance Pride Celebration 2018, www.capitalpride.org

Florida

June 22 - 24, 2018, St. Pete Pride Weekend, www.stpetepride.com

Hawaii

October 20, 2018, Honolulu Pride Parade & Festival, www.hawaiilgbtlegacyfoundation.com/honolulu-pride-2018

Illinois

June 24, 2018, Chicago Annual Pride Parade & June Pride Month, www.chicagopridercalendar.org

Indiana

June 9, 2018, Indy Pride Festival '18, indypride.org

Iowa

June 9 - 10, 2018, Capital City Pride Des Moines Pride Fest, www.capitalcitypride.org/fest.html

Kansas

June 1 - 3, 2018, Kansas City PrideFest 2018, www.gaypridekc.org

Louisiana

June 8 - 10, 2018, New Orleans Pride, [https://togetherwenola.com](http://togetherwenola.com)

Maine

June 8 - 17, 2018, Pride Portland, www.prideportland.org

Maryland

June 7 - 17, 2018, Baltimore Pride, www.baltimorepride.org

Massachusetts

June 1 - 10, 2018, Boston Pride, www.bostonpride.org

Michigan

June 9 - 10, 2018, Motor City Pride Festival & Parade, www.motorcitypride.org

Minnesota

June 23 - 24, 2018, Twin Cities Pride, includes Family Picnic on June 17th, www.tcpride.org

Montana

June 16, 2018, Big Sky Pride, www.bigskypride.com

New Jersey

June 3, 2018, NJ's 27th Annual LGBTQ Pride Celebration, www.erseypride.org

New York

NYC Pride, June 17 - 24, 2018, featuring a Family Movie Night on June 19, www.nycpride.org

Ohio

June 15 - 17, 2018, Columbus Pride, www.columbuspride.org

Pennsylvania

July 28, 2018, The 26th Annual Pride Festival of Central PA, www.centralpa-pridefestival.com

Rhode Island

June 16, 2018, Rhode Island Pride, www.prideri.org

Texas

August 11, 2018, The Austin Pride Festival and Parade, www.austinpride.org/paradeandfestival

Virginia

June 24 - 30, 2018, Hampton Roads Pride 2018, www.hamptonroadspride.org/pridefest

Washington

June 24, 2018, Seattle Pride Parade, www.seattlepride.org

Photo by Angeline Acain

Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be. ~ Rita Pierson



For more information about Foster Care, Adoption, Respite or Mentoring, Please call 1-888-KID-Hero or visit

www.ctfosteradopt.com



The ideal first sleep-away camp!



Monday through Friday at Camp AND Home with Family on Weekends

The Weekday Sleep-Away Camp

- Coed, Ages 7-15
- Transportation included from NY/NJ metro area!
- 2 or more weeks
- Campers choose their own activities!
- Fine Arts • Athletics
- Performing Arts
- Nature • Aquatics
- Fitness



campuskids.com • 973-845-9260

How I Became Jon's Father
continued from page 20

may have emotional problems, they are there because the adults in their lives failed them in one way or another, sometimes catastrophically, as with my then advocate child who is now our son. All these kids need is someone who loves them without condition, who will provide structure and support and who will believe in them and protect them. Some of the abuse that these kids suffered is horrific as in the case of our son. All that horror in his past notwithstanding, Jon is flourishing in our home. With our love and support coupled with the teachers at the incredible school he attends, Jon's potential is limitless. He is now an A student whose smile is broad and shown often and whose head is always held high.

January 8, 2012 was orientation day, and they talked about the children, the investment of taking on a hurting child. They educated us on the system that surrounds the children. Then they brought out an emancipated foster youth, who told his harrowing story, the trauma of having nothing and no one. A child... with nothing and no one. For those of us who wanted to continue on, to find out more, we filled out the paperwork and I was on to more training.

The training was very moving. The foster



youth gave us the real story, beyond what

Tom and Nilo at Jon's adoption day.

old Jon's file was horrific—no one wanted this. But I was intrigued by this very case. "I've got to meet this kid," I kept thinking.

Looking back, it took way too long for justice. Teachers and neighbors were reporting their suspicion of abuse inflicted on Jon numerous times but each time, the investigation proved inconclusive and the abuse went on. The grandmother was physically beating him and emotionally abusing

him; his father was inflicting abuse that no-one should inflict on a child---no one, especially a parent. Jon was clearly not clean or cared for, but finally a neighbor reported suspicions to a Fremont detective of sexual abuse against his sister. This Fremont detective did not give up. The father pleaded no contest to the charges against him, and was sentenced to prison, but only for his crimes against his sister. The DA would not bring charges for the crimes he committed against Jon because he was reluctant to talk about them as a frightened 12 year old boy, and because he is a convicted felon and he is a citizen of the Philippines, the birth father will be deported after a mere five to seven year sentence.

From February to April 2012 I completed the training. I met Jon on May 16, five years ago. He was very shy at first. And that was totally okay. He had a short attention span and plenty of nervous energy. I would take the time he needed. He had been abused so horrifically, sexually, emotionally and physically. From the age of five, his biological father and his paternal grandmother tortured him, and sank his spirit. This was one of the toughest cases San Mateo County had and I wanted it. I knew I was ready. I just wanted to help this child.

We played Connect Four. He won every single game. I talked about the Filipino heritage that I had learned from my Filipino partner. He was obviously a sweet child who deserved love. His sister appreciated my knowledge of Filipino culture. "You're going to like Tom," she said.

The foster parent was well meaning and had no background information on him or legal right to it. CASA volunteers are allowed to know everything about the child. But the foster mother did not have the tools to completely help him or meet all his needs. I was his CASA and I was determined to get to the bottom of what he needed, having all his background information.

I saw him once a week at first. We would go to the beach, restaurants, movies. He devoured good food. Jon was undersized from eating nothing but junk food. He was as skinny as a rail. We spent many days that first summer together and had lots of fun. Then we started to work on issues. I made a decision that I was going to push for a more thorough psychological evaluation. We began to deal with his most sensitive issues. "This is about what happened to you. You have to realize, people like your father are ill."

He had been picked on at school and terrified, and here he was about to embark on middle school. I read everything credible I could get my hands on. I wanted to know the science and the art of caring for a child who had been through what he had been through. I found factual information from CASA. Their training classes were very helpful.

Having a background in education, I understood how I could help him with learning and growing. Ultimately, I became his educational rights holder. All well-meaning people working toward helping him get over what happened. But the resources are limited. The schools assumed he wouldn't be a good student and were little help. His executive level functioning, the brain function that controls task management, did not form completely because of what he had to deal with at such a young age. But I knew Jon was very smart. I spent the rest of 2012 working with the social worker, who was overwhelmed, and doing all I could to help and support his first foster mother, who was

dealing with all of the issues. I would make up what he needed. I knew he needed better psychotherapy, and I pleaded with the social workers and eventually the judge, who genuinely listened. We found additional resources. I relied on Dr. Janet Chaikind who does all the health screenings in San Mateo County, who was a huge help to Jon. She became part of the team who worked together to give him the consistency he desperately needed.

As the years began to go by, I fell in love just like a father would. Jon was very, very sweet. He was the pleaser I learned about in CASA training he would be. He didn't want to let me go. He would wrap himself

continued on page 25



**Open your heart.
Open your home.**

**Become a foster parent
with Children's Home
Society of Florida.**

**Visit chsfl.org/foster to
begin your journey today.**

Right now, thousands of kids in
Broward County are in foster care –
they need **you**.



**SPECIALIZING IN
SMALL MIRACLES**

WITH PERSONALIZED INFERTILITY CARE

**OFFERING THE LATEST IN REPRODUCTIVE CARE
IN A warm & compassionate ENVIRONMENT.**

DR. LOUIS R. MANARA

*"The only Doctor who is with you from
Consultation to Conception"*

The Center for Reproductive Medicine & Fertility

- Over 30 years of experience
- State of the Art Facility with IVF Lab on Premises
- IVF and all innovative new treatments
- Artificial Insemination
- Donor Egg Program • Egg Freezing
- Enjoy the comfort of knowing your doctor really knows you!



**BOARD CERTIFIED IN REPRODUCTIVE
ENDOCRINOLOGY & INFERTILITY**

FOR AN APPOINTMENT CALL **856-767-0009**
200A RT. 73 N., VOORHEES, NJ 08043 (ACROSS FROM VIRTUA) www.louismanara.com



Allison-McCloskey Escrow Company

**The Most Trusted Name in Surrogacy
and Egg Donation Escrow Services**

We provide our clients with personal and outstanding customer service and are committed to providing the highest quality fund management services at a reasonable cost.

Allison-McCloskey Escrow Company will eliminate some of the stress by managing the funds associated with the Surrogacy and Egg Donation process. All the parties will benefit by having our team manage the distribution of funds.



Allison-McCloskey Escrow Company is an Independent Escrow Company since 1946 and Licensed by the Department of Business Oversight, State of California, License No. 963-0010 and is Bonded by Starr Indemnity & Liability Company for \$5,000,000.00.



(619) 583-5110



- Member of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine
- Member of the Pacific Coast Reproductive Society

**** Allison-McCloskey Escrow Company is Licensed by the Department of Business Oversight, State of California, License No. 963 0010.**

www.allisonmccloskeyescrow.com



Nearly 13,000 children in Michigan are in need of a safe, loving and temporary home. Samaritas licenses foster homes regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation.



For more information on
Becoming a Foster Parent,
call (616) 260-3441 or visit us at
Samaritas.org/Foster-Care

California Couple Opens Their Home to Foster Care and Adoption

By Michael P Coleman

Pedro Virgen and Victor Pulido met on a popular social media site almost nine years ago. While it was far from “love at first sight,” less than a year later, the men found themselves dating, and soon moving in together.

Shortly thereafter, they decided to expand their family. It really wasn’t much of a “decision” for Virgen. “I have always wanted to raise my own kids,” Virgen said. “I grew up in a big family — I have 12 brothers and sisters! We started looking into different options and methods. We decided that fostering to adopt was our best decision, and we started the process of getting licensed through Foster VC Kids (www.fostervckids.org).”

After that decision was made, the process moved along very quickly for the couple. “We had a home inspection on a Friday and got our license,” Virgen said. “The following Tuesday, we got a call about two siblings, aged six and eight, that needed a home. We had our room ready for a baby, so we only had an hour after we agreed to the placement to make changes to the room to accommodate them!”

“The first few hours we had a lot of questions but no answers, since it was so late that night,” Virgen remembered. “We felt nervous, anxious — we couldn’t sleep that night, thinking about the boys. The next day was better, as they were really open about getting help and helping us understand their situation.”

Those boys were eventually reunited with their family of origin, and Virgen and Pulido went on to foster a set of three siblings for about a year and a half. They also weathered a failed adoption during that period, leaving the couple “hurt and discouraged.” They ultimately decided to take a break from the search for children of their own.

Three months into that break, the couple got a call that would change the course of their lives. “We received a call from a social worker about a baby that was becoming eligible for adoption,” Virgen shared. “They asked if we were interested, and we decided to give it a try, asking if we could meet the baby, who had been in a foster home since he was born.”

“It was love at first sight,” Virgen said. “After a few visits and completing some paperwork, he was placed with us, and after lots and lots of courts and more paperwork, we finalized his adoption on January 6th of last year.” “Mattias is the most adorable, curious, and smart little one we had ever met,” Virgen said, sounding like the proudest dad in the world. “Even though he had some issues due to his birth mother’s exposure to drugs, he has overcome them.”

After Mattias was safely and permanently at home, Virgen and Pulido continued fostering, even though their journey has had its share of pitfalls. “We started working in the foster care system with the idea to adopt two to three kids, and since then we’ve fostered 16,” Virgen said. “Every case was a potential adoption, and for different reasons most of them failed. Every time that happened it was very difficult for us. Even with the



Pedro Virgen (left) and Victor Pulido with their Mattias.

continued on page 27

Do you dream of being a parent and want to learn more about adoption and foster adoption?

Holy Family Services
adoption & foster care

When you care enough to consider adoption

California License #: 1978055292 & 5291

Holy Family Services

840 Echo Park, Los Angeles, CA 90026

1-800-464-2367

www.hfs.org

Serve 5 local counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside



RAISE HOPE.
FOSTER DREAMS.

Become a foster parent.

To learn more, call 240-375-6407
or email fostercare@nccf-cares.org



Visit www.nccf-cares.org
to apply!



How I Became Jon’s Father
continued from page 23

around my legs so I wouldn’t leave. He began to really trust me, and listen, and I was able to help him.



Left to right Tom, Jon and Nilo

Jon was along side his sister in his first foster home but was eventually moved to another home that was a designated therapeutic foster home. He received all the comforts of home, along with safety and love. But still, there was no father.

In 2015, his school called me and reported that he was in trouble. We soon learned that he was being tested by a gang, which does happen to foster kids. Gangs prey on foster children. Without strict rules and structure at home, he would hang out later than teenagers should after school. The teens we suspect were in a gang was made up of 18, 19 year olds and they gave him little assignments to see if they could trust him. After the call, when I arrived at the school, I worked with the vice principal to deal with this in an appropriate way. I was very concerned that Jon was beginning to get into trouble. I had to make some decisions,

and though they were complicated, I was happy the school, social workers and Jon’s foster mother worked with me. More than that I realized that even with my limited involvement, he needed a family. I brought Jon to our home on a number of occasions and made sure he was continuing at school. I grounded him for the rest of the school year with the support of social services and his foster mom who all worked to give Jon some structure. I was helping, but it was clearly not enough.

While grounded he obeyed the rules and I increased my time with him, back to once a week. We got closer. That Christmas I said to my husband, “I’m telling you we need to adopt him.” My husband, a caring person, was initially resistant. For the rest of the school year Jon limped along. My support was helpful, but I could see him not doing well if things continued. He then began to break the rules after being grounded. He was lying to me.

We went to the Cheesecake Factory on a Monday in May, 2016, for lunch. I wanted to know why he was so angry, but I knew the larger reason. Exasperated, I threw up my hands and said, “I should just adopt you!” Softly, he said “I wish you would.” “What?” I asked. “You think you could live by my strict rules after what we’ve been through?” “Yes,” he said again. I left the Cheesecake Factory overwhelmed with the enormity of the decision, especially since I knew my husband didn’t want to adopt. But after some pleading and explaining how strongly I felt about adopting Jon and how committed I was to him and to Jon—insisting that nothing would change, my husband responded with a beautiful resounding yes.

So after years of working with Jon, I could

not stand at arm’s length. He would likely not be adopted at 15 by anyone else. But there I was, a natural father to him. I would adopt him.

March 4, 2017 stands out because it was going to be my parent’s 50th wedding anniversary and growing up, I always knew I would be celebrating that day. But it wasn’t going to be. My mother died unexpectedly back in 2000. When I was told the adoption would be legal on March 4th it was another sign that this was a family meant to be. This has been one of the best experiences of my life. What Jon has given me is a chance to be a father of a very special son.

I immediately enrolled Jon in Silver Oak High School, a charter school that has helped make an incredible difference in his life. He loves the school, the teaching style and is doing better than he has ever done in school.

The biological grandmother is barred by court order from seeing the children. Both of Jon’s foster families and all of the people who provided love to Jon, are still in our lives.

And Jon has flourished. We are enjoying life together, as one unit, as family. On April 7, 2017, at the end of the third quarter of school I stood in the kitchen and opened his report card. Jon now has a 4.03 GPA with two honors classes in the mix of college prep classes. It brought me back to last year, when I sent a letter to the school asking him to be admitted, and wrote, “The only thing Jon needs is love, understanding and support. Armed with these, I know his future is limitless.” For more information on the Court Appointed Special Advocates program, CASA of San Mateo County visit www.casaofsanmateo.org. ▼

Photos courtesy of Tom Bauer

May-June 2018 Issue #118 www.gayparentmag.com 25



PROFESSIONAL PARENT PROGRAM

You may have not been there for their past...
But you CAN be there for their future!

Learn more about becoming a
NAFI Foster Parent today.

Phone: (860) 560-7324 ext. 1005

Email: clanceevictor@nafi.com
Website: www.NAFICT.org

#FAMILYSTRONG

A Family of Faith

By Gary Hurtubise

To kick off our upcoming 20th anniversary issue at the end of this year, Gay Parent Magazine is featuring a series of update stories on families that were previously featured. The Galvez family was first featured in Gay Parent Magazine-New York 2015-2016 issue #13.

This issue pays a revisit to Jason Galvez – first featured in Gay Parent Magazine’s annual New York edition in 2015. At the time, Jason and hubby Eric were busy raising their 3-year old son, Luke, and Jason had just released his new book: “I Am Loved Right Where I Am” (a children’s book that reflected the diversity of family makeup in today’s society). Let’s find out how Jason, Eric and Luke’s lives have changed since then.

When we last spoke, Jason had embraced the role of stay-at-home-dad – one he maintains and loves to this day. “Don’t get me wrong,” he warns, “it’s a ton of unending work, but I feel as if I am on God’s clock, and there’s no better job I’d rather punch into.”

Eric – who works as a patent attorney at FUJI-

FILM Holdings America Corporation in Rochester, New York – took parental leave when the kids were first born. “His jobs have been very generous with the amount of paternity time they offer,” Jason acknowledges, adding that Eric truly enjoys his work (aside from the almost four-hour daily commute). “He considers it a labor of love.”

As for Jason’s daily schedule: “I am up from ‘son up ‘till son down’ (lol!), so I don’t have a tremendous amount of personal time,” he admits, “but I occasionally catch a stage show or get-together with family members and catch up.”

Somehow, Jason also finds time to be a board member for his local LGBTQ organization, Central New York Pride (www.cnypride.org). “I spend the



Above, early photo of the Galvez family with Luke as a baby and as a toddler. Jason (on left) with husband Eric.

majority of my free time doing everything from typing minutes to writing businesses for donations.” Just recently, Jason connected Central New York Pride to the region’s St. Patrick’s Day festival. “I love serving on the board as it allows me to pay back to a community that helped me and gave me so much, but also pay it forward for the next generation. Our community, the invisible minority, has made great strides in the past few years but unfortunately, we have a long road ahead before we reach complete equality.”

Eric and Jason’s son Luke, who turns seven in July, is currently into soccer, though his dads encourage him to try a variety of activities, such as horseback riding and karate, so that he can ultimately decide what he enjoys the most. Jason describes their eldest child as having a quick and witty sense of humor, while still having a sensitive side. Another activity Luke has picked up along the way? “He is a little man knowing all makes/models of every car that passes us on the highway!”

Interestingly, Jason has noticed that neither Luke nor his friends see their family makeup as ‘different’. “Let’s face it,” Jason says, “kids are raised nowadays with a grandparent, older sibling, a foster family, two moms, two dads, single parents... We live in a world where kids are exposed to all different types of families. I’m not sure kids in general put much thought into different family dynamics anymore.”

Indeed – when asked by his dads why he is special, Luke always begins with: “Because God

Virgen and Pulido family continued from page 24 shortest placement, we got attached. The idea of the child going to a place or to people who are not ready for them was really upsetting and sad. We felt a roller coaster of emotions – sadness, anger, discouragement – but then we would go back and think about why we started fostering.”

“We realized that it was never about us,” Virgen said. “It was only about the kids.” Currently, Virgen and Pulido are fostering a teenage daughter. As anyone who has ever parented a teenager would know, that decision has presented a whole new set of challenges! But in this family’s case, as with many foster families, those issues are exacerbated by other issues the teen has had to face prior to being placed in the couple’s home. “Victor and I talked about it, since we had never fostered a teenager,” Virgen shared. “Prior to taking her into our home, the eldest had been eight years old. We decided to give it a try, and scheduled a meeting with her. Two weeks later, she was placed in our home.”

“We can honestly say that this past year has been a challenging time for everyone in our house,” Virgen confided. “The problems and situations she was going through and the responses she was having, early on, to those issues were very different than the ones we were used to with younger kids.”

“Even though it’s been challenging, we are learning together every single day,” Virgen contin-

ued. “We are already seeing some good changes in her, which makes us think we are headed in the right direction.” Virgen said the family’s experience with their foster teen – and her own journey – are emblematic of their experiences with all of their foster children.

“We have seen all of the faces of the kids that were placed with us. They were angry, they had fear, they were hurt and crying,” Virgen emotionally recalled. “Some were hungry and thirsty. Some needed baths. Some either could not sleep, while others slept a lot, trying to escape their reality. To be able to take care of them, feed them, provide the basics that they had been lacking and seeing the response that most of these children have is the most amazing feeling.”

“When you see these kids eating and sleeping good, when you see their grades in school improving, and you can help change their fear to smiles, and when they can finally say ‘I love you’ is the most incredible reward a foster parent can get.”

It was wonderful to learn that Virgen and Pulido have maintained contact with many of their foster children, even after they had been returned to their families of origin.

“We have had some [placements with which] we’ve even had contact with the biological parents, and we try to always be there for them even if they are living with other relatives,” Virgen said. “Birth-



days and holidays are special because we try to spend some time with them.” And even as they continue fostering, sometimes standing in and stepping up at a moment’s notice when there’s a family – a child – in need, Virgen and Pulido plan to expand their family with additional adoptive children...when the time is right. “Our goal is to adopt at least two more kids,” Virgen confided. “We are ready, and even though it has not happened yet, we know it is going to become a reality when we least expect it!”

▼ Photos courtesy of Consortium Media

Michael P Coleman is a freelance writer who’s a native Detroiter living on the west coast. He’s also a biological, adoptive, and foster father. Connect with him at michaelpcoleman.com or on Twitter: @CoilemanMichael

A Tribute to Kristi Parker of Liberty Press

By Angeline Acain

Sadly, the LGBTQ community has lost a valuable asset. Kristi Parker, Publisher, Editor and owner of *Liberty Press* passed away of a stroke on March 10, 2018, she was 49. *Liberty Press* covered the local LGBTQ news and events of Kansas. A free magazine distributed in Kansas, Parker had been publishing for nearly twenty-five years, launching the first issue of *Liberty Press* in 1994. With her passing, *Liberty Press* has ceased to publish.

As a fellow member of the LGBTQ media, I met Kristi in June 2011 when we were part of a press trip in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I was able to invite my partner Susan and daughter Jiana on the press trip since the magazine I publish, *Gay Parent Magazine*, focuses on LGBTQ parenting. My family and I got to know Kristi when we invited her to go kayaking on the Allegheny River during our press trip. We learned she was raising a son named Jack with her ex.

Learning that she was a parent, I thought it would be a great idea to feature her and Jack in *Gay Parent Magazine*. Our September-October 2014 issue #96 features an article on Kristi and Jack. The article focuses on how Kristi started *Liberty Press* because of a need to create a LGBTQ community in her hometown of Kansas. This need blossomed after she took a road trip and experienced New York City's vibrant LGBTQ pride. In a quote from the article Kristi says, "The event was amazing for me. There were so many gay people! I was energized. I attended

the Dyke March the night before the big march and ran into Leslie Feinberg and Minnie Bruce Pratt. I spent the whole next day at Central Park watching people and

the stage full of inspirational speakers and famous people and bands. We were there for like 14 hours!" Kristi published the first issue of *Liberty Press* August 1994.

The article also focuses on Kristi meeting her ex Vinnie, their eventual separation, and co-parenting of their son Jack who is on the Autism spectrum. A quote from the article in *Gay Parent Magazine* describes Kristi's feelings about parenting: Overall, Kristi has felt that Jack's special needs have not been too difficult for her to handle. He is her love and her joy and even his quirkiness brings little surprising enjoyments throughout the day. "Just recently Jack was at din-

nie asked if he needed a sippy cup. He was really put off and said, 'I think you're insulting my manhood!'"

Especially in these trying political times, the passing of Kristi Parker and the discontinuance of *Liberty Press* is a great loss not just for Kansas but also for the entire LGBTQ community. ▼



Photos, left top, early photo of Kristi and Jack. Right top, current photo of Kristi and Jack, middle photo, Kristi on her road trip to New York City, bottom photo, photo of LGBTQ media press trip in Pittsburgh in 2011. Kristi is kneeling on the right. The author Angeline Acain is standing to the right of Kristi.



A Family of Faith continued from page 26

created me, and I have parents who love me." Jason is confident that, should questions arise in years to come, they can cross that bridge together, knowing that their love for each other is no different than in any other family.

When Luke was three, dads Jason and Eric decided to grow their family through fostering-to-adopt. They both understood that the emphasis was on reuniting children with their biological families, though in rare circumstances it could result in a child being released for adoption. The couple went through training and were certified as foster parents in the summer of 2016. Shortly thereafter, the calls for placements began to roll-in.

Bringing a new child into a home impacts all family members. Jason describes how he, Eric and Luke come to a decision whether to accept foster children or not: "our family carefully considers each call from the county and unanimously decides to open our hearts and doors, or agrees it may not be a perfect fit."

By August of 2016, the family welcomed their first of several foster sibling-groups into their home. "Twice we had three siblings, and once, five. One sibling group we had here was adopted out. Another sibling group was placed with various family members, and yet another group eventually went back to their parents after they 'got their act

together'. We often think of all the little hearts that have come into our lives, and always keep them in our prayers."

Almost on top of the two men accepting the first sibling group into their home, another call came from their social worker. A baby girl had been born and was up for adoption – a chance event that had not occurred in their area in over twenty years. They immediately said 'yes' to the offer.

"We finalized the adoption three months later – the fastest in the history of our county," the couple recall. "We made our local paper, and had our picture taken with several local politicians. It was wonderful!"

And so Sylvia – their daughter of Filipino and Irish heritage – came into their lives.

"She seriously makes my heart flutter," Jason says of Sylvia – who turns two this fall. "Her smile in the morning just melts my heart." Her big brother Luke is smitten with his sister, too, often running from the school bus to give her hugs and kisses (though he is somewhat less impressed when she constantly follows and copies him around the house).

The two kids' biological families presently have no contact with the children – each having signed away their rights, and having established no contract to visit with them. That being said, Eric and Jason are open to the possibility, should the children want to. "If either Luke or Sylvia want to meet their birth-parents, we would support them one hundred percent."

With two kids, Eric's full-time job, and Jason's charity work, the family recently decided to take a break from fostering. However, life has a way of changing the best-laid plans. "We got an offer to place a teen (let's just call him Brad), and we immediately felt a calling to help."

Brad is a senior – about to turn eighteen in just a few months. He is on the honor roll in a great school district, and is number one in his wrestling division. Jason describes



Above, the Galvez family visiting the Liberty Bell, left to right Jason holding Sylvia, Luke, and Eric. Photo below, left to right Jason, Luke, Eric and Sylvia.

the young man as extremely respectful, responsible, helpful and driven. "He simply needed guidance and assistance navigating his next steps in life," Jason explains. "It's certainly a change in our home as one minute we are changing diapers and the next filling out college applications, but there's no doubt we hit the foster lottery when we opened our hearts and doors to Brad. Our foster son came to us desperately needing to catch up in many areas. One of the goals we wanted to achieve was getting him into college. I am proud to say last week his first acceptance letter arrived and here we are visiting Brockport University."

There is one common thread that ties all of what Jason and Eric do in their lives: their faith. "We are gay Christians... or better yet, Christians who happen to be gay. The Word is our marital foundation, our life-line, and our way of life." The couple credit their belief in getting them through the good times, and the bad.

"We sometimes get an eye-brow raise from both the gay community (who ask how we can serve a religion that has treated us poorly for centuries), and from members of the fundamentalist community (who ask how we can call ourselves followers of Christ but 'practice' homosexuality). But that's quite alright," Jason declares. "I only need to answer to myself and to God." To learn more about Jason and his family, follow his blog at <https://jasonjdotbiz.wordpress.com/>. ▼

Photos courtesy of Jason Galvez



The New American Family, the Beach Family of Kansas

By Michael P Coleman



Left photo, the Beach family, Brooke (blonde) and Brandi in an early photo with their children. Photo on facing page, a recent photo of the family.

provide those “racial mirrors” for their kids, in a state that’s not known for being particularly diverse.

“We had cultural mirrors in our family prior to [having] kids, so that was easy for us,” Beach explained. “Our youngest daughter’s godmother, several family members and extended family members of ours are people of color. In addition, we search for people of color in the medical field and child care field. We also make sure to attend culturally specific events in our neighborhood, and patronize businesses in ethnically rich parts of town.”

“They have to understand that they are Black or Hispanic,” Beach continued, of adoptive children of color, “and what separates them, and what attributes should make them proud. We need to be diligent in educating ourselves and not bringing our children up completely whitewashed — whether it’s choosing diverse schools, things that you do at home...it’s just really important that you have a diverse environment for them because they’re not white, and they never will be! But there are ways that we can do this and have them become healthy adults, but we have to do our homework.”

Homework. This writer believes that the quality of a textbook can make or break home study, and let’s face it: there aren’t very many books out there that outline strategies and parenting tips for transracial same-sex adoptive families. Beach realized this — so she decided to write one, an extension of her *New American Family* blog and Facebook page.

“My book’s first section will be for people who are actually outside of the same sex-transracial spectrum, or just people who are not directly effected by it, but want some general information,” Beach shared. My wife and I meet many people who say that we’re the first family like ours that they’ve ever met. They have lots of questions, and I think it’s important for the average person to know how we do things, and hopefully that section will also help get rid of stereotypes that might be out there. Our families

kids, but helping other parents — especially those children of other races and ethnicities — do the same. A few years ago, she started a blog entitled *The New American Family*, and she manages a Facebook page of the same name (<https://m.facebook.com/newamericanfamily>). Both were designed to disseminate information salient to adoptive families, particularly those that are transracial.

“The number of same sex and transracial families is growing rapidly,” Beach said. “Additionally, same sex couples are adopting transracially at a rate that’s far beyond that of other couples. As such, educating ourselves about racial issues, cultural issues, and ties to race and culture is very important.”

“Kids like ours are in situations where we [as parents] cannot personally provide racial mirrors,” Beach continued. “There are certain things that white adoptive parents of children of color can’t provide without a lot of education and help. I have known white parents who are raising Black children who are just completely clueless, in my opinion, about everything when it comes to race issues. They’re nice people, they’re good people, and they wouldn’t actively do anything to hurt their children, but they’re not really doing anything to help their child become a Black adult in America. These kids are going to be adults one day, and they have to have a good sense of identity to be a healthy adult.”

As Brook and Brandi are raising their African American and Hispanic children in Kansas, I had to ask what they were personally doing to

Adoptive mother Brook Beach is one of the most dedicated moms I have ever met. She’s also one of the most guarded. I don’t mean that as a criticism — Beach’s passion for helping adoptive families is palpable. She was also fiercely protective of her children, for this article she did not want the names of her children published. The self-described “adoptee advocate” believes that she shouldn’t share many details about them, opting instead to allow them to tell their own stories — and on their own timeline. And she says all adoptive children should be given the same opportunity.

“I believe in adoptees’ privacy, and out of respect for them, I believe they should tell their stories themselves when they’re old enough to do so,” Beach said. “I’m not always welcomed by other adoptive parents, because I believe in doing things that might make them feel a little uncomfortable.”

Indeed, some of what Beach has to say might not go down very well with adoptive parents. At the very least, according to her, it hasn’t been well received by many white adoptive parents of children of color.

Beach and her wife, Brandi, are a part of that number, the adoptive parents of a 2-year-old daughter. Together, they also co-parent three other children adopted by Brandi when she was in a prior relationship. All of those children are of Guatemalan descent, and range in age from 2 to 16 years old.

Beach is focused not just on raising great



are different, but we’re very much the same in a lot of ways. That section of the book will also outline ways in which members of the general population can help, and how those parents can talk to their own kids about approaching our kids.”

Beach continued: “The book’s second section will provide strategies and tools on a variety of topics that are critically important to LGBTQ families, from how to have a happy marriage, to drawing boundaries with extended family who don’t approve of us, to how to manage family members who may not be on your same page racially and culturally when it comes to [our] kids. I’m from the south, and my kids come first above everything, and I have family members that I’ve dissolved relationships with. They are people who I would not necessarily take my kids around, because they’re not in the push for equality. They don’t have the same general values that I have. However, as some people aren’t ready to cut family members completely off, I’m including strategies in the book for managing those familial relationships.”

There will also be a large section of Beach’s upcoming book that will be devoted specifically to giving a voice to adoptees.

“In the last two years, I have spoken to, literally, hundreds of adoptees, many of whom are transracial and are now adults, about what they wish their parents had done and things they wish their parents hadn’t done, things that were detrimental to their emotional growth, and things that they did that were positive, as well.”

“This section stemmed from my own curiosity as my wife and I adopted our youngest

child. It made sense to me to start talking to adoptees. The adoptees I’ve spoken with have experienced many different outcomes. Some say they had really good experiences and had understanding parents, some feel like they didn’t and they weren’t given enough background and access to biological relatives or people of their same race.”

“It’s a really in-depth and complex subject,” Beach continued, “but it’s one I’m passionate about because I want to give my kids — and all of our kids in LGBTQ families — the best lives possible. Recognizing they have specific needs is important.”

Beach said she hoped to have her book, tentatively entitled *The New American Family*, out by this year. While a best seller with her byline on it would be great, she says she has a much more noble goal for the book. She also recently wrote a children’s book about siblings of different races and became a certified family coach for non-traditional families.

“With the new book, I just want to help LGBTQ families, especially those that adopt transracially, be well-rounded despite our specific challenges,” Beach said. “I want families like ours to be as healthy and well rounded as they possibly can be.” ▼

Michael P Coleman is a pansexual freelance writer and father of children who came to him biologically, through adoption, via marriage, and through the foster care system. Connect with him at michaelpcoleman.com or on Twitter: @ColemanMichaelP

Photo on facing page courtesy of Brook Beach, photo this page by Kym Rodda

UNCLASSIFIED AD

BUYING? SELLING? RELOCATING?

Instant Free Access to the Nation's Top Gay, Lesbian and Gay Friendly Realtors. FREE Buyers Representation - FREE Sellers Market Analysis - FREE Relocation Kit and City, USA! Choose your perfect agent on-line; WWW.GAYREALESTATE.COM or Toll Free 1-888-420-MOVE (6683)

HOW TO PLACE AN UNCLASSIFIED AD

\$25 minimum for 50 words or less. More than 50 words is 50¢ per word. Add your logo for \$20. Advertise in more than one issue. Submit typed ad along with payment and mail to GPM, PO Box 750852, Forest Hills, NY 11375-0852. Deadline for our July-August 2018 issue is June 10, 2018. Visit our web site, www.gayparentmag.com for more advertising options. ▼

DISPLAY AD INDEX

Adoption / Foster Care

See directory listing starting on page 10

Assisted Reproduction Services

Allison-McCloskey Escrow Company - page 23
Alta Bates In Vitro Fertilization Program - page 13
Beverly Hills Egg Donation - page 15
The Center for Reproductive Medicine & Fertility/ Dr. Louis R. Manara - page 22
CT Fertility - page 5
Donor Sibling Registry - page 6
Fairfax Cryobank - page 7
Robyn Harrod, MSW, LCSW - page 12
RMA of CT / Gay Parents To Be - page 2
RMA of New Jersey - back cover
Reproductive Resources, Inc. - page 17
Reproductive Science Center of NJ - page 14
SpringCreek Fertility - page 17
University Reproductive Associates - page 15
The Valley Hospital Fertility Center - page 19
Yale Fertility - page 10

Books

Sewing the Rainbow by Gayle E. Pitman - page 16

Camps/Summer Programs

Camp Clio - page 13
Campus Kids Summer Camp - page 21
Charles River Creative Arts Program - page 12
The Country School Summer Camp - page 27
Shire Village Camp - page 6
Summer at Crossroads School for Arts & Sciences - page 17
SummerSault at the Town School - page 15

Independent Schools/Preschools

The John Thomas Dye School - page 17
Mary McDowell Friends School - page 4
Montclair Cooperative School - page 4
Rectory School - page 18

Psychotherapy

Robyn Harrod, MSW, LCSW - page 12
Susan Eisenberg, LCSW - page 27

Restaurants

Bogota Latin Bistro & Miti Miti Modern Mexican - page 20

Travel / Vacation

The Inn at East Hill Farm - page 15

Your Path to Parenthood



Reproductive Medicine Associates
of New Jersey



For every hopeful parent, the path to building a family is different. We understand. Reproductive Medicine Associates of New Jersey offers a comprehensive approach and proven path to having a family in the shortest time necessary. As a recognized leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, we take great pride in our nearly 20 years of successfully helping Mom's and Mom's or Dad's and Dad's be parents.

Let us help you find your path to parenthood in NJ.

Hamilton | Marlton | 973-656-2089 | rmanj.com/lovewins 