



Spring/Summer 2012

# Looking Through the WINDOWS Of Chrysalis House



Vol. 25, Issue 1

## The Grabowski Family's Adoption Journey By: Liz Grabowski

Jon and I met my first year of college. We started dating the following year, and married in 1995. I had just turned twenty and Jon was twenty-two. I dreamed of becoming a mom and hoped to have four kids. Jon, on the other hand, was happy with the idea of the traditional two. So, we set out to accomplish the typical American dream: a good job, a three-bedroom house, two cars, and 2.2 kids.

We managed to see the reality of these dreams over the next few years. Jon landed a great job, we bought a car, and purchased our first home. Our first son, Micah, was born in 1999. In 2001, Alex entered the world to make our family a cozy four. We entertained the idea of having a third child, but decided we were happy right where we were. All of our baby items were packed up and given away. Eagerly, we looked forward to the next phase of our lives.

Then a whisper of adoption began in the back of our minds. That whisper became a loud voice in 2005. A new dream began to form. This dream was of a sweet, petite, brown-eyed little girl from China. Paperwork was completed, a dossier was compiled, and we settled back to wait the estimated 6-8 months for a healthy infant girl.

We waited. We waited some more. That 6-8 month timeframe became one year, two years, three years, and seemed to never end. I began to watch other families enter the adoption journey for a special needs child (waiting child program) and return home while my family continued to wait. It was heartbreaking. No one could even give us a reasonable estimate on our timeframe. We contemplated entering the waiting child program, but always dismissed the idea because we felt we would be switching just to speed along the process.

Then God began to change our hearts about adoption. The term "special needs" began to look less scary. We realized that there were many special needs that were not so terrifying for us. We decided to trust God in how this adoption would be completed and filled out the medical checklist for a child with special needs.

Imagine our surprise when five years after our initial

paperwork was begun, a file of a sweet little girl showed up in our email inbox. With great excitement, I clicked open the attachment. There before me was our new daughter. She was not at all what I had dreamed of for the last five years. She was a chunky, blue-eyed, platinum-haired little girl. Our little one had a very visible special need, Albinism, and we fell in love with her that moment.

The trip to China was perfect in every way. We enjoyed the sites, the other families, and meeting our new daughter, Lily. She took to us right away and our happy little family of four became a joyful family of five. We were smitten. The transition home was a breeze. Lily fit our family like a glove on a hand.



One month after returning home we jumped back into the process to adopt another little girl from the special needs program. God had changed our hearts tremendously concerning special needs. We learned to see past the diagnosis and see the heart of the child instead. I dreamed of another blue-eyed, platinum-haired little girl. When the call came that we had a referral I was shocked to discover she was a petite, brown-eyed, brown-haired cutie.

Our new daughter, Mae, had brachial plexus nerve damage to her right arm limiting its function. We couldn't wait to go back to China and welcome her into our family.

While we waited to bring home Mae, God began to stretch us in ways that we could never have anticipated. Pictures of little boys with albinism were constantly coming before me. I felt that God was asking us to do more, to love more, and be willing to risk more. I approached my husband not once, but twice to entertain the idea of adopting a boy with Mae. Each time he said no. He was adamant that we were a one at a time family. A boy was in our future, but not now.

I couldn't let the matter drop. I nudged my husband one more time. I showed him pictures of these precious children who had been sitting on the shared list for more than a year. Jon and I prayed together about adopting two at once and decided to make the call to our placing agency. One hour after that call, we had a referral for a little boy, three years old with albinism. His name would be

*(Continued on back page)*

## Introducing our Director, Dr. Brandy Lucas



I am honored to introduce myself as the new Executive Director for Chrysalis House, Inc. I can't wait to put my education and experience to use every day while pursuing the goals and mission of this agency. Foster care, adoption, and women's issues are my specialty areas, and I have spent years focusing on helping women, children, and families in need. Adoption is an issue near and dear to my heart personally and professionally, and I am thrilled to take on this leadership role for CHI.

When I'm not sitting in the Director's chair, you can usually find me outdoors, walking my dog, gardening, or swimming whenever possible. I was born and raised in the San Joaquin Valley, and graduated from Fresno State with my undergraduate and graduate degrees. Then, in 2010, I graduated from Texas Tech University with a Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy (yes, you can call me doctor!) During my doctoral education and in the years that have followed, I have had several clinical and leadership positions that included supervisory and administrative tasks, and I am excited to put my expertise to work for this amazing agency.

I am looking forward to meeting many of you in the upcoming weeks and months as I familiarize myself with the children and families of Chrysalis House. I am optimistic and enthused about the future of this agency and am thrilled to be part of the Chrysalis family!

## Help Wanted

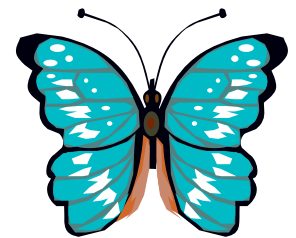
Chrysalis House, Inc. is currently making plans for an upcoming Fundraising Event. We need your help and donations of goods and services for a Silent Auction. We hope to have a successful event as all money raised will go towards helping us expand our services and help more families come together through adoption!

If you would like to help with this event please contact Lindy Allen at [lindy@chrysalishouse.com](mailto:lindy@chrysalishouse.com). Thank you all for your dedication and endless support of our agency!



**Chrysalis House, Inc. will be closed in observance of the following Holidays:**

- **4th of July: Wednesday July 4, 2012**
- **Labor Day: Monday September 3, 2012**



## Adoption Training & Support Group

Chrysalis House, Inc. offers a monthly Adoption Training & Support Group, free to all our families. This group meets the **SECOND TUESDAY** of each month, 6:00pm-8:00pm. You have the opportunity to meet other families just like you and listen to their stories and share some of your own experiences.

If you would like to be added to our e-mail invite list please contact Megan Schulze at [megan@chrysalishouse.com](mailto:megan@chrysalishouse.com).

# Thank You For Your Support

Thank you to those families who have contributed to our agency so far this year. Specific items and monetary donations help our agency better serve all of our families and their children. We are a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible.

Additionally, thank you to all those who have purchased items through Amazon and Fundraising Solutions and those who you have so generously donated your time and energy.



## Kara's Book Corner

### Three Little Words

By Ashley Rhodes-Courter

#### Description

"Sunshine, you're my baby and I'm your only mother. You must mind the one taking care of you, but she's not your mama." Ashley Rhodes-Courter spent nine years of her life in fourteen different foster homes, living by those words. As her mother spirals out of control, Ashley is left clinging to an unpredictable, dissolving relationship, all the while getting pulled deeper and deeper into the foster care system.

Painful memories of being taken away from her home quickly become consumed by real-life horrors, where Ashley is juggled between caseworkers, shuffled from school to school, and forced to endure manipulative, humiliating treatment from a very abusive foster family. In this inspiring, unforgettable memoir, Ashley finds the courage to succeed - and in doing so, discovers the power of her own voice.

**Hardcover, 320 pages  
memoir**

**Published January 8th 2008 by Atheneum**

**Florida Teen Read Nominee 2009**

**more details...**



**Kara's Rating: \*\*\*\*1/2 stars out of five stars**

#### Review

A very stirring memoir on the often harrowing road through foster care and into adoption, *Three Little Words* was a memoir that I could hardly put down. As a former CPS social worker and current adoption social worker, I thought that this was an excellent portrayal of how so many children within the foster care system have to learn to survive in order to live. Her voice is poignant, fresh, and heartbreaking, and you can't help but to root for Ashley and cheer for her when she finds success and her forever family. I was very impressed with her adoptive parents for the unconditional love and patience that they bestowed on her.

Many of our Chrysalis House families are interested in adopting through the foster care system, otherwise known as fost/adopt. I think that the average prospective adoptive family is not fully aware of some of the unique challenges that these former foster children may face. *Three Little Words* is an excellent example of all the different stages of grief, distrust, shame, hurt, and eventually, healing and acceptance, that a typical child from the foster care system might be dealing with, and could greater prepare a family interested in adopting older children. *Highly recommended.*

**\*Kara is an admitted bibliophile and especially enjoys reading books on adoption and social welfare issues. Become her friend on [Goodreads](#) and check out her social work library for other great titles related to adoption.**



Chrysalis House Inc.

7395 N. Palm Bluffs Ave, #106  
Fresno, CA 93711

Phone: 559-229-9862

Fax: 559-229-9863

[response@chrysalishouse.com](mailto:response@chrysalishouse.com)

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## Return Service Requested

**Would you rather receive this newsletter via e-mail? If so, please contact our agency at 559-229-9862 with your current e-mail address.**

Nathaniel, meaning gift of God. A new journey had begun.

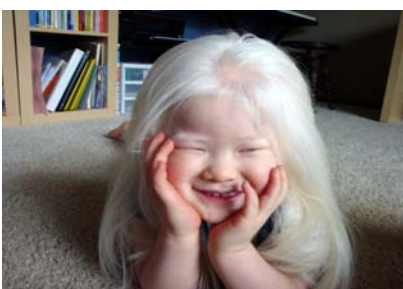
This new journey has been one that has stretched and pulled us in ways we could never have anticipated. The trip was hard, stressful, and exhausting. Mae came to us first kicking and screaming. She hated me. It broke my heart to see her reaching for her caretaker while her caretaker cried. I held Mae tight while trying to calm her down. Within moments Nathaniel was brought to us. Jon took over with Nathaniel while I continued to hold Mae. Nathaniel didn't skip a beat when he was brought to us. As long as he had food he was content.

In China was tough. Neither of us ever got a break. Mae would not let me put her down, so I never had a chance to bond with Nathaniel. Jon never had the chance to bond with Mae because he was always looking after Nathaniel. We opted out of all the touring because it was just too much. We handled it fine, but we were tired.

Once home, I was ready for some tough adjustments. I wasn't blind about the challenges we were going to face, but I wasn't prepared for everything. Lily really had a tough time. She now had to share me, her toys, and her room. Her tantrums escalated. Nathaniel now had to learn how to be in a family and have boundaries. His whole world had opened up and he was ready to explore. His self control was seriously lacking. Mae seemed content to just sit back and watch.

Since returning, there have been many ups and downs. There was a time around four months home that I wasn't sure how I was going to get out of bed every day. I was exhausted and overwhelmed. Loving Nathaniel was and continues to be a challenge. Every day Jon and I have had to make the choice to love him through our actions and to see him through the eyes of Christ. Every day I get out of bed praying that I would be patient and loving.

As time goes by, the hard days become a little easier. We have been home a little less than a year and I see how God has bound us together as a family. We are incredibly blessed to be able to walk this journey of adoption. It's not always easy, but the rewards are tremendous.



Lily



Mae



Nathaniel