



How adoption will change your life forever

By **Paul Batura**

Since receiving the privilege of adopting our three sons, my wife, Julie, and I have allowed ourselves to ponder the “What ifs?” surrounding their lives and adoptions. What if their birth mothers had not chosen to courageously carry them to term? What if they had chosen someone else to adopt them? What if they had decided not to make an adoption plan at all?

All of these questions, some admittedly haunting ones at that, led me to start pondering the “What ifs?” of other well-known adoptees.

For example, what if John Hancock had become a pastor instead of a politician? What if Nelson Mandela’s adoptive father didn’t have deft leadership skills that rubbed off on his son? What if Steve Jobs had been adopted by a couple in Florida instead of one in Silicon Valley?

With these “what ifs” in mind, I tried



to investigate the circumstances surrounding the providential adoptions of men and women who grew up to change the world. Unfortunately, most of the information about their adoptions was limited to a single sentence in their biographies.

But there had to be more. How could such an emotional, monumental, and transformational moment be reduced to a passing reference? Was their adoption a mere factual footnote in their lives, like their birth date or

hometown, or was it one of the driving forces behind the stories of their successes?

This is what led me to write *Chosen For Greatness: How Adoption Changes the World*. In it, you’ll see that every single one of the individuals profiled didn’t succeed in spite of being adopted or intimately cared for by someone other than their biological parent; they rose to their level of accomplishment in no small part because of their adoption and relationship with their new parent or

parents.

In fact, their adoption didn’t just change the course of their lives and the families who embraced and loved them. Instead, you’ll see their adoption has changed—and is changing—the course of your life and mine.

You’ll also see, I hope, that adoption, like life itself, is a gritty and an often imperfect process. It’s nothing like you

see in the movies, watch on television, or even read in a bestselling novel.

Indeed, it’s far more dramatic—because the stories you’re about to read are true and involve real people who made and are making a significant difference in the world.

—Paul Batura’s *Chosen For Greatness: How Adoption Changes the World* is in bookstores now.

God helped our family grow overnight

In 2003 I married by best friend. We tried to get pregnant, but it never happened. We went to several doctors who said we couldn’t get pregnant due to infertility issues I was having.

Finally in 2012, we listened to what we felt God was telling us we needed to do: Foster care. I called KCSL and asked how we could become foster parents. We were looking to adopt from foster care and prayed it wouldn’t take long. We had a few kids placed with us who were able to return to their family and then finally

November 14, 2012, we received a phone call asking us to take in two sisters. Of course we said yes. Over the next three years we cared for and loved these two precious girls as if they were our own. Finally in the beginning of July 2015 we were approved to adopt Sumaya and Sanaa. Two weeks later we found out I was



pregnant. The adoption was finalized November 21, 2015, and we gave birth to our son March 4, 2016. Our family practically grew overnight, but we couldn’t be happier. This is our first family photo taken July 2016.

—Ronmel, Heather, Sumaya, Sanaa, & Jay-Shaun Gilbert

Considering adoption?

It’s a big decision, making a lifetime commitment to a child. Beginning or expanding your family through adoption can be both exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. And the process can seem more than a little overwhelming.

At Saint Francis Community Services, we’ll help you get started on the right track with you to the end.



There are hundreds of children waiting for a loving family like yours. Let us help you find the best possible match. We’ll be here to guide you every step of the way.

www.st-francis.org/adoption | 800-423-1342



Saint Francis
Community Services
Serving Children and Families Since 1965

Christian Family Adoption

Austin K. Vincent
ATTORNEY AT LAW

2222 SE Pennsylvania
Topeka, KS 66605

785-234-0022

akvlaw@cox.net

Christianfamilyadoptionks.com



From Heart to Home

Infant Adoption Program

An adoption agency you can trust.

For over 120 years, adoption has been a core service throughout KCSL’s history. Let us help fulfill your dream of having a child.



Kansas Children's
Service League

877-581-5437 • www.kcsl.org

These Kansas kids need forever homes

Do you know what aged-out means? It's when a child turns 18 and enters adulthood still in foster care, never having found a forever family. While many young couples choose to adopt infants, there are hundreds of children who are older but have never known a loving home. Metro Voice seeks to assist these children find a forever family before they enter adulthood. Here are the kids who just may be a perfect addition to YOUR family. These children are from Kansas.

For information on any of these great kids, call 1-877-457-5430.

Sheila

Sheila is 16 and is a delightful girl with a beautiful smile! She enjoys playing with animals, listening to music and going for walks. She is a great singer and is most proud of her writing. Sheila's favorite class in school is baking and pastry. She enjoys interacting with people who have a sense of humor and is happy to just hang out and talk. Sheila needs a family who can keep her smiling and meet her needs now and in the future. Case # CH-5241



Deacon

Sixteen-year-old sports fan Deacon is a smart and resilient teen who enjoys staying active. Football, basketball and baseball are among Deacon's favorite sports. Football is his favorite sport to participate in, but Deacon believes he's best at playing basketball. When he's not participating in sports Deacon enjoys going to the YMCA. Deacon's favorite class in school is his math class. After high school he would like to attend college to study genetics. Deacon is a great kid who deserves a family that will love and care for him unconditionally. Case # 101440



Juan

Juan is 15 and loves when others read to him! Juan enjoys anything that makes music or sounds; his Elmo toy that sings and dances is his favorite. Juan is most happy when he is around other people; he shows that he is happy by smiling. Juan is home schooled and has a very special relationship with his teacher. He is learning to communicate his needs and wants by using "eye gazes". He is also learning to stamp on paper. Juan has skilled nurses that care for him around the clock. Juan needs a family that can physically commit to caring for Juan's multiple needs for many years to come. He deserves a family that can provide unconditional love, patience, and help support him throughout his life. He needs a forever family that will advocate for him and that is knowledgeable about medical services in their community. Only families in Kansas will be considered for Juan at this time. Case # 101453.



Shawn and Dorothy

Shawn, 12, and Dorothy, 11, would like a forever family to call their own. Shawn loves trains, cars and anything that has to do with Thomas the Tank Engine. He prefers to play with younger children instead of same aged peers. Shawn gets extremely

anxious during times of transition. He will need to have an adjustment period to get settled in. Shawn will need a lot of one-on-one attention to guide him through those transitions and in the classroom. Shawn continues to work on how to better manage his behaviors in the classroom. Shawn does better when things are structured and a solid routine is in place.



Dorothy is a loving child that enjoys coloring, dancing and having tea parties! She likes going on evening walks to help burn off some energy. Her favorite time at school is art and she likes being able to share her art projects with others. Dorothy continues to make improvements in school. She will need school professionals that are willing to work with Dorothy and understand her special needs. Dorothy continues to work on improving her interactions with her peers and expressing herself through words instead of actions. Like her brother, she does better with a strict routine in place. Dorothy will need to have her own room in her forever home. At this time, only families living in Kansas will be considered for these children. Case # CH-5852

Ryan

Fresh air, sunshine, and wide-open spaces bring a smile to Ryan's face. Ryan is 15 and has a huge love for the outdoors! He enjoys fishing, riding four wheelers, camping, and taking care of horses. He states that "being outside helps keep me calm." Ryan enjoys staying active both outside and inside. He also



enjoys football, soccer, and wrestling. When asked what Ryan's favorite class is at school he answers, "PE for the exercise" and science class because he enjoys the experiments, stating, "it's fun to learn about new things and see what happens during the experiment." Ryan currently has educational supports in place and is attending an online school where he is doing very well.

Ryan is overcoming past trauma, but is making great strides in his progress. Ryan's social worker states that he is "kind and cares about others." Ryan would benefit from a patient, supportive family that will encourage and guide him as he continues to ov" family that will always stick by his side and continue to help him grow and thrive. When asked what kind of a family Ryan would like to have, he answers, "I would like to have a mother and father" Case # CH-5068

Megan

Megan is 9 and is a happy and friendly young lady. She is very good at games and enjoys playing games with her friends, and also playing with her dolls. Her favorite class in school is music class because she gets to sing and dance, both of which she loves doing. She likes to laugh, and Disney movies are the best at making her laugh. She wants to be a Disney princess when she grows up. Megan works hard at picking up toys and following the rules. Megan is friendly and funny and looks forward to finding a forever family who can help her grow and thrive. Only families living in Kansas will be considered at this time. Case # CH-6114



Nicholas's Siblings

Energetic, sporty and super smart describes these three siblings! They all agree that they love country living, pets, and each other. They would enjoy an active family who would keep them involved in school, sports and art. Nicholas is the big brother. He excels in art and in sports and he's a valuable asset to his high school football team. Nicholas enjoys joking around with friends, playing video games and he has a close bond with his younger sisters. The middle sibling, Demetria loves to be the center of attention! Like her older brother, she loves sports, especially soccer and softball. She is a hard worker who expresses pride in being on the honor roll at her school. She does especially well in math and science classes because they are her favorite and will help her achieve her dream of becoming a doctor. She gets along well with others and truly enjoys giggling at her younger sister, Kylie. Kylie is a Straight A student who says she loves all of her classes so much that she couldn't pick just one favorite. She likes to play soccer and softball and is also quite a gymnast. She is witty and smart and has a great sense of humor. She enjoys making her older siblings laugh but says she cracks up the most when her older brother tickles her. They need a family who enjoys attending sporting events, helping with homework and has the energy to keep up with this fun loving bunch! Case # CH-6068



32 years Fostering Children Pays Back Mother's Wish

On his own since age 15 when his mother passed away, Darrell Stewart worked overnight and put himself through high school. Honoring his mother's wish that he would have a better life, he and his wife fostered children in their home for 32 years to help those children have a better life. On Oct. 4 Stewart was honored with a Topeka City of Character recognition certificate.

Stewart serves as community outreach manager for Shawnee County Parks + Recreation. At his mother's hospital bedside when she passed away, Stewart committed himself to honoring her wish for him. He worked overnights at Jostens Publishing, got himself to school in the morning, napped in the afternoon and then went to work again.

As an adult, Stewart began fostering children in his home. He bought few items for himself, choosing instead to invest his earnings in the children so they could have a better life. For years, he ran SCP+R's Hillcrest Community Center, holding to the philosophy that the more time kids spent in the center doing something positive and productive, the less time they spent on the streets where they could get into trouble. Today, he is a Key SCP+R link to the community, working with neighborhood associations and neighborhood improvement associations as well as partner agencies to improve SCP+R's service to the community.

Over **7000** Kansas Children in Foster Care

Each child needs a safe, stable, loving home like yours

Churches in Kansas
What are you being called to do?

Please sponsor a child in foster care during this holiday season by donating gifts and gift cards.

Contact: Alex Eichman
Phone: 785-406-6980




Become a KVC Foster Parent
1.888.655.5500 | www.kvc.org

Every child deserves a loving, caring home. A family they can call their own. A place where they belong. With people who will be there for them always.




Adopt Kansas Kids

www.adoptKSkids.org • 877-457-5430

Adopt Kansas Kids works to connect foster and approved adoptive families with children throughout Kansas who need adoption. This service is provided by the Kansas Children's Service League through a contract with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).




Shane Jones, L.S.C.S.W.

COUNSELING YOU CAN TRUST

Areas of expertise:

- Marriage & Relationships
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Adoption
- Addictions
- Grief-Loss
- Foster Care

2704 N. Topeka Blvd., Suite D
Topeka 785-266-7732

5040 Bob Billings Parkway, Suite B
Lawrence 785-832-8838

www.shanemjones.com


