

October/November 2021

Youth News

Educational, Motivational, & Inspirational Stories

A Couple's Adoption Journey Leads to a Blessing

From city-to-city, coast-to-coast and nation-to-nation our focus is FAMILY:
Foster Adopt Mentor Investing in Lives of Youth (www.whalers-creation.us)



L. **Youth News** magazine is a way to celebrate the good news of youth. *Youth News* provides fostered, adopted, kinship cared and mentored youth with real on-the-job training skills. Youth are paid as they learn how to produce this publication for the community. Donations for ad space is how we pay youth in training. The "Dove" logo is a symbol we use as a message of good news. Our goal is to bring educational, inspirational and motivational stories to encourage people to open their hearts and support youth.

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Youth News

October/November 2021

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Youth News



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I am deeply honored to work with these amazing people from our youngest writers to our retirees, we are all committed to educating our communities about the vast need for people to become foster, adoptive parents and mentors.

In this issue we're talking about *National Adoption Awareness Month*. This issue is especially meaningful to me because of the children I love and have adopted. Please open your hearts and home and help a child in need. You never know you may help to raise the next most important person. From city-to-city and coast-to-coast, "I Support Youth"

One of our team members may call you to ask for support. Please "*Answer the Call*."

From city-to-city, coast-to-coast, and nation-to-nation, our focus is FAMILY: Foster Adopt Mentor Investing in Lives of Youth.

Thank you,

La' Toria



A Couple's Adoption Journey Leads to a Blessing

By Paula Margus

Navigating through the adoption process requires a great deal of dedication, time and patience. The decision involves extensive preparation, adherence to state and country adoption laws, satisfying eligibility requirements, working with an adoption service provider, completion of adoption forms, and an in-depth home evaluation.

There are an estimated 1.5 million adopted children in the United States. Of the approximately 135,000 children adopted each year, about 20,000 have been adopted annually from other countries over the past 10 years (U.S. Dept of State and Bureau of Consular Affairs).

These countries include China, India, and Africa. Each country has its own requirements for adopting parents.

In January 2004, Mary and Boyd Anderson, residents of Frederick, Maryland, started the process to adopt an infant daughter from China. Mary was born in Ireland and relocated to the US to be with Boyd a few years earlier after a three-year long distance relationship. Neither had biological children and wanted to enrich their lives through adoption. Both were over the age of 40 and had a strong desire to have a family. When asked why they chose adoption, Boyd replied; "In the Chinese culture, males are valued over females because they are considered employable and able to provide security for their parents in their old age and we wanted to provide love and a home and possibilities to a little girl who may not otherwise have those things." Traditionally, Chinese families have long favored sons over daughters. In China, a male child is responsible for the continuation of the family lineage. Although times and attitudes are changing, some of these practices are deep rooted within the culture. The controversial one child policy introduced by China in 1979 had a huge impact on

adoptions in the US. Tens of thousands of baby girls were made available for adoption. (Brett Sember, Dec. 2015).

For Mary and Boyd Anderson, the entire adoption process took close to 2 years and was very involved. Six months after a dossier with all their paperwork was sent to China, they were notified of a match. Prior to this, many formalities and requirements had to be met. The Andersons performed extensive online research to identify an agency to work with in King of Prussia.

There they were able to meet with other prospective couples wanting to adopt. They were informed by the Agency that the required home study would need to be conducted by a licensed social worker in their residing state of MD. For the home study, multiple visits were made to the Anderson's home to determine whether they could provide the physical, emotional, and financial stability for a child. This entailed in-depth interviews to assess their views on parenting; daily life routines, family background, religious upbringing, support systems, and scenarios such as whether they could care for a child with medical issues. They submitted volumes of notarized paperwork, including financial statements, medical and employment records. Background checks, medical exams, and personal references were also required. The fire department came to certify the safety of their home, and an agency from the county came to conduct tests on their water. Boyd recounts: "at one point, we were required to send a photo of the contents of our refrigerator to the Chinese adoption agency, as part of our application." Since this was an intercountry adoption, they had to apply to both the US Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Chinese Embassy. In preparation for their trip to the orphanage in Shanghai; numerous vaccines

A Couple's Adoption Journey Leads to a Blessing (continues)



were required to include hepatitis A and B, tuberculosis; smallpox; and polio. Mary and Boyd sent items such as toys, photos, a video, and a blanket to Eva at the orphanage where they would finally meet her in person. Eva was 16 months old when she was adopted. She had already started to speak Chinese, and her new life would require adapting to a new language, culture, environment, and learning to bond with new caregivers. The Andersons shared a fond memory of the strong bond that formed by placing Eva on Mary's stomach which offered her comfort.

Overall, 40% of adopted children are of a different race, culture, or ethnicity than both of their adoptive parents (Adoption Network). When asked whether they were concerned about raising a child with a different ethnicity, both reacted: "Not so much. We were told by the agency to anticipate her fear of being suddenly taken from her surroundings into a new environment where the people looked different, spoke differently, and possibly, even smelled differently. We believe the Chinese are beautiful people with an ancient culture, so, we were excited and happy to adopt her."

The Andersons noted that the adoption service provider was very helpful in facilitating the trip to China. For others considering adoption, they emphasized that life quickly goes from zero to fast speed; and it's a big adjustment and change in lifestyle. It's important to be sensitive to the fact that the child is going to leave the only surroundings they've ever known. Mary expressed that one cannot anticipate how much you love this person. You already love the child before meeting her.

Toaday, Eva is a delightful teenager and busy high school student. She's very open about being adopted and readily communicates her feelings. She believes it's good to be unique and is proud to stand out. "I never realized how privileged I was; I get to bond with a lot of people and relate to both white and Asian lifestyles." Eva is very aware that growing up in the US has provided her with many opportunities. She has not returned to China since being adopted; and has visited Ireland; her mother's birth country; several times. Both she and her parents are content to have her explore her Chinese heritage in time at her own pace. As an Asian American raised by an Immigrant Irish mother and an American father, Eva has a great appreciation for how lives can be enriched by being part of a culturally diverse family.

Note: the names of the individuals in this article were changed at their request in lieu of racial tensions toward the Asian community.



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HALLOWEEN



SAFETY TIPS



12 Spook-Free Safety Tips to Keep Your Kids & Pets Safe this Halloween

KID HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS

Choking hazards: Avoid anything that passes through a cardboard toilet paper roll holder. Look closely at all display items from bats and ghosts to the pumpkins you roast. Hazards lurk everywhere!



Flashlights: Child safe flashlights have a battery door secured by a screw to prevent battery removal, preventing parts from becoming choking hazards. Use flashlights/ electric candles to light up your pumpkins. Flames and kids don't mix.



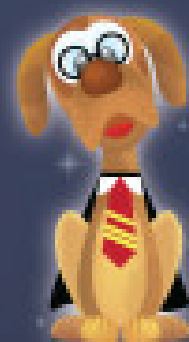
Halloween lights: Use tamper resistant bulbs that can't be removed. Cords pose a strangulation hazard. Keep all cords short, out of a pathway and tight. Excess cord should be bound with a zip tie. Make sure the cord can't be made into a loop and placed around a child's neck.



Pumpkin carving: Everyone should use child safe cutting tools while carving pumpkins. Kids learn by watching you, if you use real knives they will too.

PET HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS

Pet costumes: Your fuzzy family member might not be as thrilled with the outfit as you are. Get an amazing photo, then get your pet out of that costume asap. Make sure the outfit is comfortable, pay special attention to straps that impinge on the neck and the extremities. Never leave a pet unaccompanied in a costume to avoid any "wardrobe malfunctions!"



OUCH!
HMPH...

No chocolate! Chocolate is toxic for pets. It contains methyl xanthine, which can cause stomach upset to tremors, hyperthermia, seizures even death. The darker and more concentrated the chocolate, the more dangerous. Always contact your veterinarian to see if immediate treatment is needed.



History of Foster Care in the USA

The National Voice of Foster Parents

Some of the earliest documentation of children being cared for in foster homes can be found in the Old Testament and in the Talmud. These references establish caring for dependent children as a duty under law. Early Christian church records also show children were boarded with "worthy widows" who were paid by collections from the congregation.

It was English Poor Law, however, that lead to development and eventual regulation of family foster care in the United States. In 1562, these laws allowed the placement of poor children into indentured service until they came of age. This practice was imported to the United States and was the beginning of placing children into homes. Even though indentured service permitted abuse and exploitation, it was a step forward from almshouses where children did not learn a trade and were exposed to horrendous surroundings and unsavory adults. Various forms of indenturing children persisted into the first decade of this century.

In 1636, less than thirty years after the founding of the Jamestown Colony, at the age of seven, **Benjamin Eaton** became this nation's first foster child.

In 1853, Charles Loring Brace began the free foster home movement. A minister and director of the New York Children's Aid Society, Brace was concerned about the large number of

immigrant children sleeping in the streets of New York. He devised a plan to provide them homes by advertising in the South and West for families willing to provide free homes for these children, whether for charitable reasons or whatever help these children could be to them. In many cases, these children were placed in circumstances similar to indenture. However, Brace's daring and creative action became the foundation for the foster care movement as it exists today.

As a result of the New York Children's Aid Society's placements, sectarian social agencies and state governments became involved in foster home placements. Three states led the movement. Massachusetts, prior to 1865, began paying board to families who took care of children too young to be indentured. Pennsylvania passed the first licensing law in 1885 which made it a misdemeanor to care for two or more unrelated children without a license. South Dakota began providing subsidies to the Children's Home Society after it was organized in 1893 for its public child care work.

During the early 1900's, social agencies began to supervise foster parents. Records were kept, children's individual needs were considered when placements were made, and the federal government began supporting state inspections of family foster homes. Services were provided to natural families to enable the child to return home and foster parents were now seen as part of a professional team working to find permanency for dependent children.



Foster!

Adopt!

Mentor!

National Days to Celebrate

October

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- National Book Month
- Homecoming
- Mental Illness Awareness Month
- National Dental Hygiene Month
- National Book Month
- Photographer Appreciation Month
- Dyslexia Awareness Month
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- American Pharmacist's Month
- Bullying Prevention Month
- Crime Prevention Month
- Principals Month
- Physical Therapy Month
- 1st World Smile Day
- 3rd-9th Fire Prevention Week
- 4th - 10th Mental Illness Awareness Week
- 4th - 10th Healthcare Supply Chain Week
- 4th - 10th Healthcare Food Service Week
- 4th Children's Health Day
- 4th Improve Your Office Day
- 5th - 9th Customer Service Week
- 11th Indigenous peoples' Day
- 11th Columbus Day
- 16th Boss's Day
- 16th World Food Day
- 11th -17th Emergency Nurses Week
- 16th National Mammography Day
- 16th - 22nd International Infection Prevention Week
- 18th - 24th Pharmacy Week
- 18th-22nd National School Bus Safety Week
- 23rd - 31st Red Ribbon Week
- 25th - 31st National Respiratory Care Week
- 24th United Nations Day

November

- Native American Heritage Month
- American Diabetes Month
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month
- Men's Health Awareness)
- Epilepsy Awareness Month
- National Adoption Month
- National Alzheimer's Disease Month
- Military Family Month
- Home Care and Hospice Month
- 1st - 7th National Patient Transport Week
- 7th Hug A Bear Day
- 7th - 13th Radio logic Technology Week
- 7th - 13th Nurse Practitioner Week
- 11th Veterans Day
- 13th World Kindness Day
- 14th World Diabetes Day
- 15th America Recycles Day
- 15th-19th American Education Week
- 19th Great American Smoke-out
- 25th Thanksgiving
- 27th Small Business Saturday
- 28th - Dec 6th Hanukkah
- 30th Computer Security Day
- 30th Mason Jar Day



Hello Fall

World Beard Day

Written by: Ronald Neubauer

World Beard Day is celebrated internationally on the first Saturday of September. According to the World Beard Day website (worldbeardday.com), the exact origins of World Beard Day are unknown, but some evidence suggests that it began with the Danish Vikings as long ago as 800AD. On this “sacred day” (worldbeardday.com) bearded communities worldwide are encouraged to have celebrations of beards.

So why did I think World Beard Day deserved an article? Because of COVID-19. The isolation resulting from COVID-19 afforded many people the opportunity to try all sorts of things, from trivial to grand, both positive and negative. On the trivial side, I grew a beard. I’m 69 years old and I had not gone without shaving for more than a few days -- ever. On the positive side, I know folks that began exercising in earnest; began online music lessons; took up painting; read classic literature. I’m not going to address the negatives of forced isolation, which are numerous, profound, and well-documented elsewhere. I’m not going to address the grand activities, they are outside my little world. For the fortunate people who kept their employment and remained reasonably healthy, the forced isolation of COVID-19



provided much time to be occupied, and positive activities to fill the time were/are abundant.

The World Beard Day website states that it is customary for the beardless members of the family to wait “hand and foot” on the bearded members of the family on this sacred day. That was not my experience last month...

US Adoption Resources

- Centers for Disease Control International Adoption Health Guidance
- U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs Adoption Process
- AdoptUSKids.org
- Child Welfare information Gateway
- Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI)

Other Helpful Resources

- Adoptive Families Magazine
- Adoptive Parents Committee
- American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA)
- Child Welfare League of America
- The Center for Adoption Support and Education
- Dave Thomas Foundation
- Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute
- International Social Services
- National Adoption Center
- National Council for Adoption (NCFA)
- North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC)

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A Paul Gonzales production

Senior Citizens: End-of-Life Care

Written By: Ronald Neubauer

Last month I wrote about celebrating and honoring senior citizens. This month I will highlight hospice care, which helps patients and their loved ones deal with the end-of-life.

Hospice is medical care for patients with a terminal illness -- expected to live no more than six more months as determined by a physician -- when curative care is stopped and care focuses on symptom and pain management; helping the patient live as well as possible with as high a quality of life as possible. A team of medical professionals and volunteers address physical, psychosocial, and spiritual needs of the patient and loved ones. Importantly, hospice is paid for by Medicare and/or Medicaid, and also is usually covered by private insurance. Hospice can be in a hospital or other care facility, as well as at a private home. Hospice volunteers can talk with, read to, or play music for patients; hold their hand; or just be a caring and comforting presence. For home hospice patients, volunteers support family caregivers by providing them a respite while they take care of necessary



errands or need an emotional break. After the patient passes, volunteers can assist professionals in the bereavement process for loved ones.

No One Dies Alone programs date back at least to 2001. Volunteers provide compassionate companionship to hospice patients in a hospital or other care facility to substitute, as best as possible, when there are no loved ones or friends.

Senior News



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120,000 children and teens are waiting to be adopted. The number of children in foster care nationwide increased 2.3% this year to 437,465. Making it a figure that has risen every year since 2012. Studies indicate that one out of every four youth who age-out of foster care will end up in a homeless shelter within three years.

Do you want to help a youth?

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Youth Spotlight



Liam

Youth Spotlight

Written By: Loney Nguyen, LCSW-C

Liam is a 6'2, hard working, sport enthusiast and male model. This young man began college this year to pursue a degree in media broadcasting, combining his love of sports into a career as a professional sports anchor. Liam will begin the ROTC program in his college soon with plans to serve his country in the United States military.

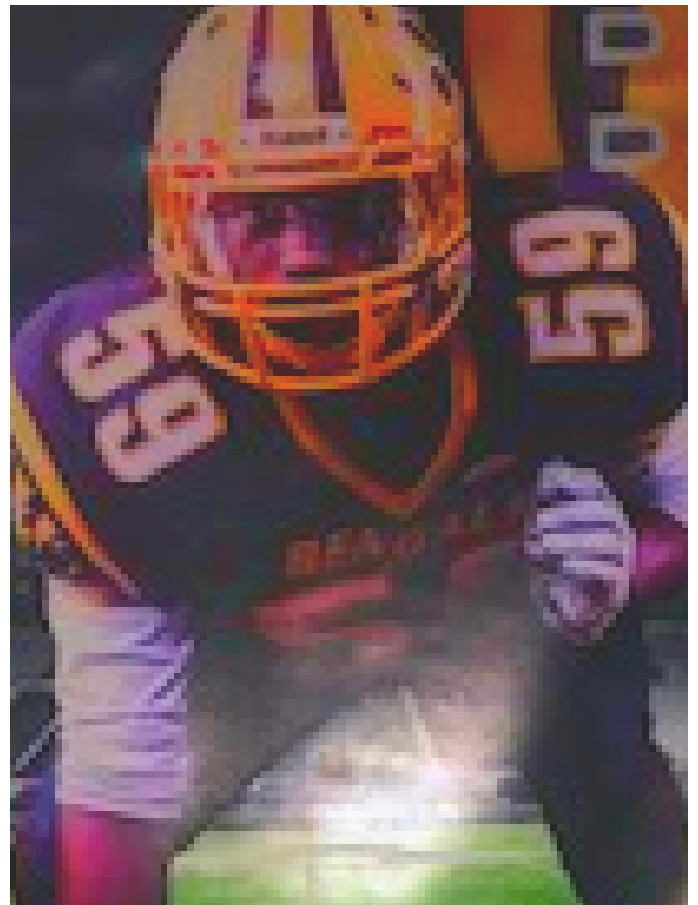
Growing up, sports has always played a major part in Liam's life, which has helped shape his interest in working in this field. Liam earned his 2nd degree black belt at the young age of 10. This naturally gifted athlete has skills in sports ranging from baseball, basketball, soccer, swimming, lacrosse, tennis, and cross country running. If he had to choose his favorite sport, it would be football. This athlete also has an amazing and strategic mind, competing and winning chess tournaments in middle school.

From his early childhood years until graduating high school, he always knew he would have a career in the sports industry. When he was younger, Liam often said he wanted to become a sports attorney, working on behalf of professional athletes. As he got older, he discovered his talent for being on the mic and in front of the camera.

Today, Liam is the host of a sports show on KFAM Youth Radio, where he gives the latest news and personal updates on high school, college and professional athletes. No sport is off limits for him, he studies sports on a daily basis and enjoys citing facts that few people know about. Liam, is currently employed at an elite gym, and works out between 1-2 hours every day. He also tries to eat healthy as often as possible.

Outside of sports, Liam enjoys modeling and is a gifted musician. When he was four or five years old he wrote a rap song, that if it got into the right hands today would become a number one hit! This star athlete enjoys giving back to his community as much as possible. He often volunteers in the community to help people in need and participates in neighborhood cleanups.

Make room ESPN, Liam is heading your way!



Cancer in Children

Written By: Lenna

Cancer develops in children as a result of mutations in genes that lead to uncontrolled cell growth.

According to the National Cancer Institute, this year there were an estimated 10,500 new cases among children from birth to the age 14. The tragic news is that 1,190 of those children were expected to die from the disease, but the encouraging news is that the death rate from 1970 to 2016 declined by 65%.

There are multiple types of cancer. Common cancers in adults and children are leukemias, brain and other central nervous system (CNS) tumors, and lymphomas. Though treatment among adults and children are not the same, common treatments are surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy, and stem cell transplants, all performed by pediatric oncologists who specialize in the care of children with cancer. A children's cancer center usually includes primary physicians,

pediatric rehabilitation specialists, pediatric nurse specialists, social workers, and psychologists. The Children's Oncology Group(COG) is the world's largest organization for conducting clinical research to improve the safety and effectiveness of pediatric cancer treatments.

Lastly, health effects can develop later in life because previous treatment affects children physically and emotionally into adulthood. Therefore, childhood cancer survivors must receive follow-up care throughout their lifetime to monitor their health.





Nelson Mandela

Former President of
South Africa

Foster Care/Adopted

From Foster Care to Adoption

Lisa Joyner-Cryer

Reporter

Adoptive Parent

Foster Care/Adopted



A man with a beard, wearing a black t-shirt, is working on a garage door mechanism. He is holding a long metal rod with both hands, adjusting it. The background shows a garage interior with a window and a green ladder.


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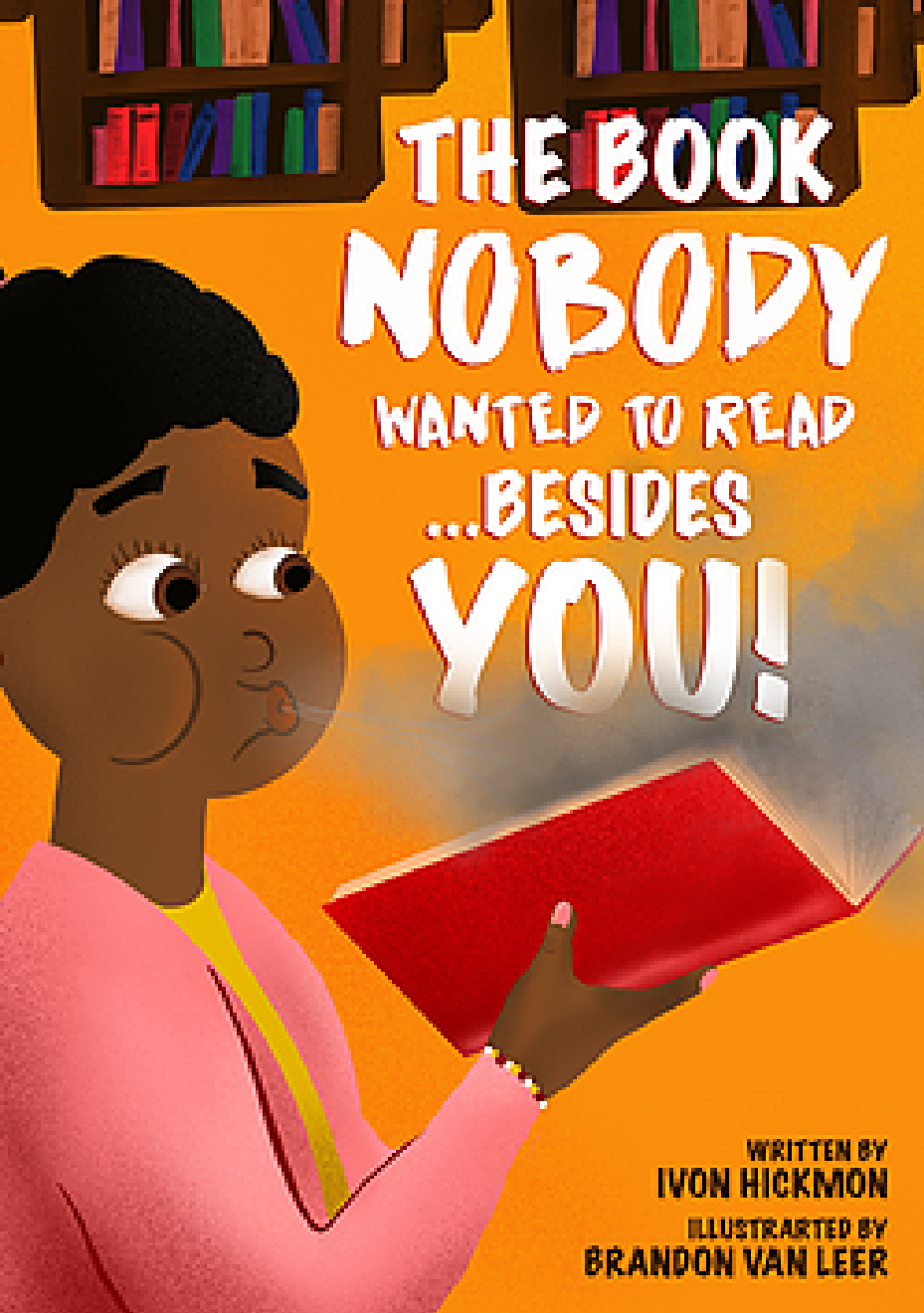
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football scholarship with honors and being selected as team captain and MVP.

A true "girl dad," Ivon spends hours visiting both his daughters' schools, cultivating children through the power of reading. These visits propelled Ivon to release his debut children's book, *The Book Nobody Wanted to Read...Besides You*, a fun and silly book that introduces children to emotional intelligence and inclusion.

Inclusion

Diversity

Unity

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To book Ivon for speaking engagement or fitness training:
<https://www.thehickmonhelper.com>

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This beautiful story captures the need for inclusivity and emotional intelligence. Readers are introduced to the protagonist, as she shows empathy and compassion towards our book character. By definition, inclusion is the action or state of including or being included within a group. Inclusion must be taught and fought for. Equipping children is essential for this life's journey. Emotional intelligence is a set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way. This dynamic story teaches your children a proven, practical tactic to develop emotional intelligence skills. After reading this story, children will be empowered to love and embrace themselves fully and gain awareness of their emotional state.

About the Author: The youngest son out of three boys to military parents, Ivon found his dreams of playing among the NFL greats were closer than he'd ever imagine. Ivon's football career journeyed from "last man" on the roster to earning his

A portrait of a man with a shaved head and a goatee, sitting on concrete steps. He is wearing a blue blazer, a purple shirt, and a grey tie. His hands are clasped in his lap, and he is wearing a watch on his left wrist. The background shows a brick wall and more steps.

Ivon Hickmon

Movie Reviews

Written by: Tolu

Hello beautiful people! Tolu here, bringing you tea, so grab your cups to get filled with the news in town. Today's news is all about movies we should all be excited about! Movies that will make us laugh, smile, giggle, cry; movies that will lighten up our mood after a really, really, really long day or week. Psttt, all movies mentioned come out this year or might have recently come out.

Number one on our list is Shang Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings. Released on September 3rd, it is Marvel's first asian superhero movie and follows the life of a kung fu master, who is forced to face his hidden past after being drawn into the ten rings association.



Next on our list is also just released "Cinderella," but this time, with a twist. Rather than the normal Cinderella tale we are used to, Cinderella has dreams. She has dreams of owning a business and becoming the number one gown store in the land. A girl boss, we love to see it!



Hotel Transylvania: Transformania hops right in; Coming to screens on October 1st. It is sure to keep you at the edge of your seat as there is a mysterious invention that transforms the monsters into humans and human(Johnny), into a monster. They must travel across the globe to find a cure before their transformation becomes permanent, oh oh!



Releasing November 24, is, drumroll, Diney's Encanto. The movie is about a young columbian girl, who faces frustration for not having the one thing that is gifted to all her family:magic.



Last on our list, even though I have a whole lot more movies I would love for you to watch is Sing 2! Releasing December 22nd. The all star cast of animal performers get ready to host an extravagant performance at the top entertainment capital in the world, but in order to do so, they have to persuade the world's best rock star who has gone mia, to perform with them. Have fun persuading him.



I hope you've marked down the movies on your calendar. Which one will you watch first? If you ask me, I can't pick!

November is National Adoption Month

childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth/



#youthvoice



Children's
Bureau



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Adoption Awareness Month

I Support Youth



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Brian Tracy quote 2016



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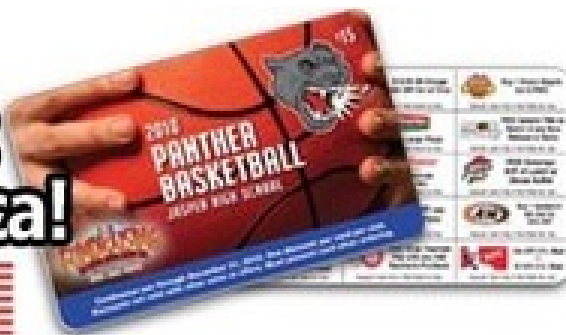
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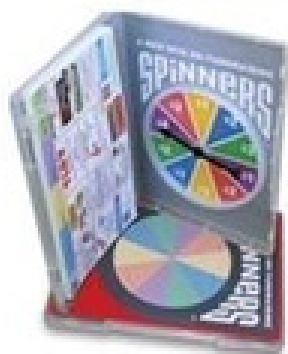
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The Mindful Corner

Mindfulness is a technique that can help us stop and be in the present moment rather than the past or the future. By practicing mindfulness, we can learn to become more aware of our own thoughts, feelings, and the environment around us. It helps us to refocus and recenter our mind, body, and spirit. Throughout this issue, you have read several articles that may have been thought-provoking or tapped into your emotions. Whether you were inspired by a story or an article that triggered a traumatic memory for you, take this moment to reflect on how you are feeling.

Written By: Loney Nguyen, LCSW-C

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The Five Minute Journal

This exercise is centered around gratitude, a positive psychology technique. Here are 5 daily questions to answer in your journal of choice:

IN THE MORNING :

Set your intention for the day

- (1) What are you grateful for?
- (2) What would make today great?
- (3) Daily affirmation. I am...

AT NIGHT- End your day on a high-note and reflect

- (4) 3 Amazing things that happened today...
- (5) How could I have made today even better?

Take a mindful minute

Breath-in
Breath-out
Relax

Message from the *Editor -in- Chief*

As summer winds down and the wonder of fall begins, I enjoy taking the time to reflect on the beauty of nature as it recharges my philanthropic spirit. In my clinical practice, I often remind my clients to take the time to practice mindfulness in every aspect of their lives. Something that is particularly special to me, is spending time with mother nature. As my responsibilities have grown in my professional life, I have made it my intention to take time away from work so I can “refill my cup.” One way I did that this summer was to take a trip to Las Vegas to connect with my “forever family” and visit the Grand Canyon for the first time. The Grand Canyon West Rim, was an idyllic place to recharge your energy and reconnect with nature. There was a sense of peace that I felt gazing into the vast untouched, sacred land of the Hualapai tribe. I share this personal journey of mine to remind us all the importance of taking the time to center yourself and find your peace. Working within child welfare, the world of advocacy and the journey of healing from trauma or supporting a loved one in their healing is all emotionally taxing work. To all the professionals, volunteers, resource parents, mentors, thank you for all that you do. Please make sure you take the time to “fill your cup” so you can continue pouring love to all of our children.



Loney Nguyen



About the Editor-in-Chief: Ms. Loney Nguyen pronounced (Lonnie) is a licensed clinical social worker, professional model, and servant leader. Loney is the Director of Programs for WHALER's Creation and serves as Editor in Chief of Youth News magazine published by FAMILY Arts @ WHALER's Creation and Maryland's appointed Foster Youth Ombuds. An expert in youth engagement, she has over 13 years of lived and professional child welfare experience in Maryland, and 7 years supervisory experience in the District of Columbia. An international pageant Queen, she was crowned Miss Baltimore United States, 2019 and Miss Vietnam DC, 2014 respectively. When she is not competing in pageants, she volunteers her time as a local/national pageant judge, coach, and teaches life skills & etiquette classes to encourage a positive self image that ignites the Royal Queen/King in youth and adults.

Meet our
TEAM

GET TO KNOW OUR TEAM

Youth Under 21



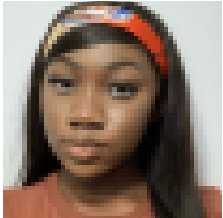
Liam, a photographer / host of 60 Second Sports Talk on KFAM Youth Radio. He is a recent high school graduate with dreams of becoming a professional sports anchor or sports attorney.

Foster



Lenna is a young writer living in a crowded city. Though she is a part of society's youth, she writes to show others what is important to the future generations and what our future world will look like. Lenna values education and strives to inform others on important topics relatable to the youthful audience.

Adopt



Tolu is an African writer, who uses her voice to advocate for change. She writes articles, poetry and screenplays alongside finishing her first novel to be published Spring 2022. When she is not writing, she loves fashion and cloud watching.

Mentor



Jordan, enjoys running, sports, and writing. As of now, she is not sure what career path she wants to pursue, but writing and academic maybe apart of her future.

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Contributing Writers over 21



Keisha Mitchell is an inspirational author, writer, poet, and creator. She self-published her first book titled, DO BLACK LIVES REALLY MATTER? at the age of 20. Keisha chooses her words wisely as she believes that her greatest power comes out through the use of words. Her favorite line to use, "What you speak is what you seek." As a registered nursing student, Keisha is dedicated to using her voice to advocate for improving health and wellness within the minority community.



Paula Margus, is a Quality Program Specialist, is always looking for opportunities to make improvements. She applies this to her personal life as well and enjoys helping others to improve their lives. She is very involved in her community and is passionate about youth advocacy, social justice and equality; animal rescue/adoption and health self-advocacy.

Paula is a long-time resident of VA.



Sarah Holcomb is a Human Resources professional and a graduate student studying organizational psychology. With a passion for personal development, she lives by the mantra "I never dreamed of success, I worked for it" (Estee Lauder). In her spare time, she enjoys staying active and riding her electric scooter around Washington, D.C., which she calls home.



Samantha Cooper is a 20-something writer living in the DMV area. She runs a blog, "Scoop's Animation Corner" where she reviews animated movies and TV shows. She is also the co-runner of the YouTube channel, "Chamber of Spoilers."



Ronald Neubauer retired in February of 2018 after being an attorney in the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps for 21 years and then a Defense Department civilian for 20 years. He specialized in international law and was privileged to work in 38 countries. In addition to volunteering as an editor and writer for WHALER's Creation, he also volunteers with Inova Fairfax Hospital and Compassus Hospice and Palliative Care. His hobbies include playing guitar, sailing, and reading.



Adria Kinney loves reading and writing and is passionate about expanding educational opportunities for underserved youth. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in International Education, and resides in Washington, D.C. where she works as

Program Officer for FHI 360.



Christa Cooke is a software engineer with a keen interest in technology, LGBTQ+ issues, politics, and the intersections between the three. She is an aspiring writer and avid sci-fi and fantasy reader, with a dream of one day publishing a novel of her own. Christa has spent much of her twenties traveling; she's now chosen to make Washington D.C. her home, close to her chosen family.

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