

BirthMom Buds Bulletin

BirthMom Buds



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Special Points of Interest

- Coley's Interview with Rachel Coleman of "Signing Time", beginning on page 5
- "A Birthmother's Christmas" by Shonna K, beginning on page 3
- A special section, A Member's Tip, on page 2

Announcements

Picaboo Christmas Fundraiser - Are you thinking of putting together a photo book of pictures of your child as a holiday gift or perhaps your family orders Christmas cards featuring your photo. Order photo cards, books, calendars and more from [Picaboo](#) between now and December 31, 2013 using the code PFBMB and receive 25% off your purchase and support BirthMom Buds at the same time as BMB will receive 20% of all purchases using our code.

Mentors Needed - We are in need of mentors for the Pregnant and Placing program. We are specifically looking for birthmoms who were over 25 years of age at the time of placement or birthmoms who were parenting another child at the time of placement. Must have good communication skills and be able to check email on a daily basis. For more information, please check out [this web page](#) or email our Pregnant and Placing Coordinator, Natasha. (pregandplacing@gmail.com)

BirthMom Buds Retreat - Save the date for

the 10th annual BirthMom Buds Retreat; May 1-3, 2014 in Charlotte, North Carolina. More details to come in the 1st Quarter 2014 Newsletter. We're still looking for members to serve on the Fundraising Committee and Swag Committee. (The Swag Committee is responsible for obtaining door prizes and items for the goodie bags.) [Email Coley](#) if you are interested in being on either committee.

Bloggers Needed - We are in need of weekly bloggers for the [BirthMom Buds Blog](#). You would need to be able to post weekly. Please [email Coley](#) for more information.

BMB on Social Media - Check out BirthMom Buds on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Chat Night - Don't forget about our chats every Monday night in the [chat room](#) at 10 pm eastern.

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Ideas & Insights

Holidays & Giving
By Amanda A.

With the holiday season approaching, I know that many of you are doing the same thing I am - scratching your head trying to find the perfect gift for your child. I find that when you are "one of us", gift giving for your child turns into a monster, so to speak. We place more pressure on ourselves to be perfect, find the perfect gift. So I thought for this newsletter, I would throw out some ideas for you!

My daughter is 12, so it's always trickier. But this year I've decided to do something that's close to her heart, an idea I've had for a few years now but haven't had the chance to do. My daughter loves musical theater, so I plan on getting a big basket and filling it with plays and musicals I loved as a teenager.



Continued on page 2...

Ideas and Insights continued from page 1...

West Side Story is my personal fave! It's something we share, so for me, it makes it personal.

Here are some other ideas:

- A photo album, filled with pictures of you, your family, your child, whatever you like. They might like having something all theirs to look at and show them all the people who love them.
- A journal. My daughter loved this, especially coming into her adolescence. It's something personal, that they can write down their thoughts and have them be their own, nobody else's.
- A personalized toy/teddy bear. Something that comes from your heart, to theirs. This can be a great gift at any age.
- A personalized CD/DVD.
- Personalized jewelry. This is more for girls, but it's nice to have something thought of by you for them

There are a few ideas. If your adoption doesn't allow you to mail your child a gift, you can always purchase, make, or even just write something for him/her and save it for the day you reunite. Good luck!

For Amanda's story and other writings, please read her blog: [The Forgotten Mom—My Journey](#)

A Member's Tip

Saving for the BMB Retreat by Leigh Harding

I am sure you have seen the announcements about next year's retreat and you may have thought about going because you know this is someplace you need to go to. You feel the need to be around others birthmothers for support and to perhaps meet women you have met online in person.

But like most nowadays, money is tight. So how do you do it??

I will tell you my saving strategy that I have done for the past few years to make sure that I get to Charlotte to spend a weekend with an amazing group of women who know how it feels on a day to day basis to miss your child.

The first thing I did was to make a change in my paycheck. I have \$10 per paycheck going to my Savings account. This will help with the cost of the room and food and what not and will get me through the weekend.

When my W2 comes in, I file my taxes and wait, impatiently, for the deposit into my account. Once the deposit hits my account, I get online and look for an airline ticket and since this is usually in mid to late February I can snag a good deal and purchase my ticket. Then I go online to the BMB forums and make plans to have a roommate. I have roomed with 3 different amazing women for the 3 years that I have gone and it helps when you can split the charge for the room with someone else.

So, my savings have begun for the 2014 retreat and I hope to see you in Charlotte!

Inspiration



A Birthmother's Christmas By Shonna K.

It was the night before Christmas
And all through the world
Birthmothers were praying
For their precious boys and girls.

One certain Birthmother
Was trying not to mourn
For this Christmas was the first
Since her baby had been born.

Knowing her decision
Was one for the best
She lights a candle in memory
Then sits down to rest.

The wick of the candle
Flickers with light
The wind outside is howling
She finds little comfort on this lonely night.

For this is the first of many
She will feel this great loss
For her child reaps the benefit,
She simply pays the cost.

She takes out an album
And gently dusts off the cover
It is all she has left
To feel like a mother.

She treasures each photo
Of her little one
They are her only ties
To her precious son.

Silently a tear
Slips down her cheek
She wipes it away quickly
So she doesn't appear weak.

Christmas will never
Be the same again
She will always be thinking
Of her little man.

She knows through her pain
For him this was right
But her unselfless deed
Gives little comfort that night.

Her arms are still empty
Her heart is still breaking
He is with somebody else
And she is left aching.

Her heart sits on each page
Of that dusty book
In his eyes, his little face
The way that he looks.

The clock strikes midnight
It is officially Christmas morn
The first that he's had
Since the day he was born.

Continued on page 4...

Inspiration continued from page 3...

She can't hide her pain
She can't hide her tears
This is the first of many
Long, painful years.

But the light that she sees
At the end of all this
Is the smile on his face
He is truly blessed.

With that thought
She slowly readies for bed
To sleep all night
Dreams of him in her head.

She slowly lays down
And heads off to sleep
Knowing his memory
She will always keep.

*This poem was in a previous year's newsletter, but it's one of our favorites and definitely worth sharing again!
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Birthday Celebrations



If you'd like yours or your (placed) child's birthday shared in a newsletter, please email it to bmbulletin@gmail.com.

October

- 4—Charlene's son, D
- 30—Heather Sabin's daughter, Haley

November

- 10—Monika Z.'s daughter, Mack
- 12—Amanda Moody
- 16—Kristin R.'s son, Paul Matthew

December

- 7—Caitlin K.
- 10—Angela Norris' son, Nicholas
- 11—Mandy M.'s daughter, Isabella
- 14—Mandy M.
- 14—Heather Sabin

Founder's Corner





Adoption Spotlight

Interview with Rachel Coleman from Signing Time by Coley Strickland

Years ago, in 2003, my Mom was watching the Today Show when she saw a segment featuring a lady named Rachel Coleman. Rachel had a daughter, Leah, who was born profoundly deaf and had started producing a series of videos called [Signing Time](#) with her sister starring herself, her daughter, and her nephew. Rachel wrote and sang fun little songs to help children learn ASL (American Sign Language.) My Mom called me thinking these videos would be great for my (parented) son, Noah who has special needs and is primarily non verbal. The videos helped Noah and my entire family (and even Lani's kids and Charlie!) learn some ASL. I can still hear the Signing Time theme song running in my head.

Little did I know then that being a birth mother would be something I had in common with Rachel Coleman. Years later in 2010, I received a text message from a birth mother friend who knew of our love of the Signing Time videos that said, "Rachel Coleman is a birth mother!" with a link to Rachel's "coming out" post, [They are Gonna Love You](#).

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Rachel and asked her some questions about her adoption and reunion story. Tearful at times, Rachel took me back to the seventeen year old version of herself. Born in the middle of 9 kids, Rachel was a junior in high school in 1992 when she found out she was unexpectedly pregnant. Rachel says, "At 17, I sat down and thought about my options. I knew abortion wasn't on the table inside my personal beliefs. I knew my boyfriend and I wouldn't last. We were 17 and breaking up every other week! It got real and adoption seemed to be my only choice."

Rachel then went to live with her older sister who was married with a baby living 40 miles away. She attended a Young Mother's High School and often felt judged as she was the only person who was making an adoption plan. Closed adoption was Rachel's only choice for adoption at the time. She was given profiles of families with non-identifying information. One profile, the first profile she looked at, really spoke to Rachel. "They were amazing. They had been waiting for 8 years to adopt and wanted a boy. I was sure I was having a boy. They could give my baby everything I couldn't; I wanted my baby to have the most opportunities and the biggest life." Their profile was out-dated and Rachel ended up asking her social worker through the adoption agency if they could write her an updated letter. The letter was addressed "Dear Rachel." Rachel was surprised because she knew they weren't supposed to know her real name per closed adoption rules. She was told that the family was told that Rachel was an assumed name.

On February 10, 1992 Rachel went into labor. She was shocked when her baby was born and the doctor said "It's a girl!" Rachel burst into tears because she thought her chosen family only wanted a son. She soon found out from her social worker that when the family wrote the second letter specifically for Rachel they told the social worker that they would adopt the baby if it were a girl too.

Rachel spent the next three days in the hospital loving on the baby girl that she named Sydney. Her family came to the hospital, they took lots of pictures, they wrote letters to

Sydney, and did all the things many of us have done during that precious hospital time. On Valentine's Day, Rachel and her boyfriend signed their rights away. The next day, as Rachel got ready to leave the hospital, she told Sydney goodbye and then instantly went back and corrected herself saying "see you later" instead.

Rachel went on to college and would often wonder if her daughter was cutting teeth, rolling over, crawling; all the things we as birthmothers wonder about our babies. "I thought of her every single day," says Rachel. Struggling, Rachel turned to writing and would write about her emotions and feelings as a birth mother. She began to rhyme the words in her writings and noticed that her writings often came to her with melodies to them. "Writing was a safe place where I could say what I wanted to say but wasn't brave enough to say out loud." Rachel wrote her first song "[Nobody would Know](#)" (and graciously shared the lyrics which will be at the end of this article) about her feelings as a birth mother. That song later ended up on her album [Shine](#).

Rachel went on to meet and marry her husband, Aaron. He was totally accepting of her being a birth mother and supported Rachel. They even celebrated her daughter's birthdays together. In 1996, they had their daughter, [Leah](#). When Leah was a year old, they found out she was deaf. Soon after Leah's diagnosis, Rachel wrote a letter to the adoption agency giving them her information and letting them know that she had a subsequent daughter that was born deaf. She felt it would be important for her daughter's parents to know this. She never heard back from the agency as to if they received her letter and passed on the information to her daughter's family.

Four years later, Rachel's daughter, [Lucy](#) was born with Hydrocephalus and Cerebral Palsy. Again, Rachel wrote a letter to the adoption agency letting them know about Lucy's condition so that they could let her daughter's family know. Again, Rachel never heard from the agency and didn't know if they had passed on the medical information or even received the letter.

What Rachel didn't know was that the agency did receive the letters and they did pass along the information to her daughter's adoptive parents. Her daughter's adoptive parents had renamed her Laura and they were very open with her about her adoption story. Laura grew up knowing that she had a sister that was a deaf and another sister who had Spina Bifidia and Cerebral Palsy.

Rachel says she left "bread crumbs" along the way so that she'd be easy to find one day. With the creation of Signing Time and her becoming a public person, it was easy for Laura and family to find her but because of this Rachel guarded the fact that she was a birthmother even more. Laura's adoptive mom just happened to be watching The Today Show the morning Rachel did her first interview. The instant Laura's Mom heard Rachel talking about her daughters she put everything together and realized that Rachel was Laura's birth mother. From that moment, she began to follow Rachel's career.

In high school, Laura took an American Sign Language class so that when she was reunited with Rachel one day, she'd be able to communicate with her deaf sister. In that class, Laura sat next to the bulletin board where her teacher had pinned an article about Rachel and Signing Time. Laura read the article, put the pieces together and realized that Rachel was her birth mother. But she didn't contact Rachel right away.

Adoption Spotlight continued from page 5...

Like many of us, Rachel longed for the “finish line” - her daughter’s 18th birthday. But then Laura’s 18th birthday came and went. *“It hit me then that she may not choose to find us.”* The Mother’s Day following Laura’s 18th birthday was an extremely tough one for Rachel. *“I kept thinking I don’t know what she’s waiting for...”* The next morning, the day after Mother’s Day, Rachel logged onto her computer and saw a Facebook message from Laura. *“When I saw her face pop up, I knew that today was the day!”* Rachel and Laura met just days after Laura sent that initial message. Rachel says, *“The similarities between us are amazing. We both love cherry Pepsi and we hold our pencils wrong when we write.”* Rachel and Laura have now been in reunion for 3 years and Rachel says that *“Every experience is exquisite. I don’t take them for granted.”*



Rachel meeting Laura for the first time.

Rachel and her family recently joyfully attended Laura’s wedding.



Rachel and family at Laura’s wedding.

Rachel is happy to find so much joy after so much sadness. For years, although her life was full there was still a lot of sadness from not having her oldest daughter in her life. Now Rachel says *“All the sadness was wasted; a waste of energy. She didn’t find me to heal my heart break. She didn’t*

know about that. I didn’t have to be sad and suffer for 18 years. I could have been happy. It didn’t change her life; it changed mine. I didn’t have to be sad to prove my love for her.”

Nobody Would Know by Rachel Coleman

(This is the first song Rachel wrote and was written about her feelings of being a birthmother.)

Living day to day what do people see?
 Nobody would know just by looking at me
 Smiling on the outside it’s the tears they cannot see
 How would someone know just by looking at me?
 The sadness faced by happiness and knowing what is right
 But nobody’s around to hear me crying late at night

Nobody would know
 Nobody would know
 Nobody would know
 Nobody would know

Look into my heart if you could see my soul
 You would feel the pain that I have felt and know the loss I know
 My cover on the outside is starting to wear thin
 I’ve run into a new dead end now where do I begin
 A chance to start all over what more could someone ask
 But pain and heartbreak shadows surround me from my past

Nobody would know
 Nobody would know
 Nobody would know
 Nobody would know

My heart is missing something I’m crying out in pain
 Is there something that I lost or did I give it away
 And those that knew me well, well they still don’t realize
 They say there’s something missing when they look in my eyes
 Did something wash away with all the tears that I have cried?
 Is that why I feel as if a part of me has died?

Nobody would know
 Nobody would know
 Nobody would know
 Nobody would know

I’ve passed my hardest test I’ve felt my deepest pain
 But the energy you use to win you never quite regain
 The energy I’ve used to win I never will regain

Nobody would know
 Nobody would know
 Nobody would know
 Nobody would know

Best of the Blog



When Dreams Die: <http://birthmom-buds.blogspot.com/2013/10/when-dreams-die.html>

written by Terri, published on October 17, 2013

I'm Having Their Baby Defense Mechanism: http://birthmom-buds.blogspot.com/2013/10/im-having-their-baby-defense-mechanism_23.html written by Coley, published on October 23, 2013

Life After Placement: <http://birthmom-buds.blogspot.com/2013/10/life-after-placement.html>

written by Annie, published on October 4, 2013

Good News!

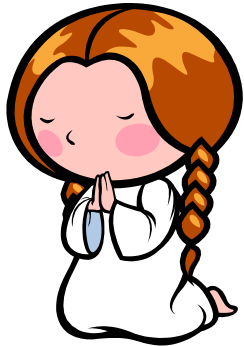


This is a new addition to our newsletter. In this section we will be sharing the noteworthy events of our members. If you know any of these women, be sure to extend a congratulations to them again!

- Congratulations to Britney Parcher, who is engaged to be married on December 14, 2013. We wish you and Grant a lifetime of happiness!

If you have a piece of good news you would like to have shared in a future newsletter, please let us know by sending an email to bmbulletin@gmail.com.

Prayer Requests



By including the prayer requests section it is not our intent to force religion on anyone. We've had multiple requests to include this section. If you don't pray, simply skip this section. If you have a prayer request for a future newsletter, please email it to bmbulletin@gmail.com.

- "Please pray for my Aunt Laura who is recovering from surgery she had recently when she donated a kidney to a friend." – Alicia Moser
- "Please pray for my health coaching business to pick up." – Amy Schumaker
- Please pray for Nancy Nelson who is now battling low grade papillary serous carcinoma.

Picture Perfect Fundraiser

Help us meet our 2013 fundraising goals, every order counts.

- 1 Go to www.picaboo.com and create your custom photo products.
- 2 Use code PFBMB and get 25% OFF your entire purchase.
- 3 Picaboo will give 20% back to BirthMom Buds.



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