

BirthMom Buds Bulletin

BirthMom Buds



1-855-4mybbud
www.birthmombuds.com
birthmombuds@gmail.com

Special Points of Interest

- Holiday Traditions, in Ideas and Insights, page 3
- Dear Santa, a poem, in Inspiration, page 4
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- Coley and Leilani's favorite Christmas treats, page 5

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Announcements

Save the Date - Save the date for the 2016 BMB Retreat. The retreat is scheduled for Friday, April 29, 2016 - Sunday, May 1, 2016 in Charlotte, North Carolina. More details will be available at the first of the year.

Fundraising - BirthMom Buds is beginning to fundraise for the 2016 Retreat. Please consider making a donation (every little bit helps!) via [our go fund me page](#). We're also looking for sponsors for the retreat as well. If you or your organization is interested in becoming a sponsor, please [email us](#) for more information.

Bloggers Needed - BMB is looking for a couple of new bloggers. If you are interested in being considered, please [email Coley](#) for more information.

BMB on FB - Don't forget to like [our fan page](#) on Facebook. This is a great way to stay up to date on the latest blog posts,

retreat news, give your input into periodically asked questions, and more.

Mentors Needed - We are always in need of mentors, specifically birthmoms who placed after the age of 25 or were parenting a child at the time of placement, for our Pregnant and Placing program. For more information about this program and how to become a mentor, please visit [this webpage](#) or email our Pregnant and Placing Coordinator, [Natasha](#).

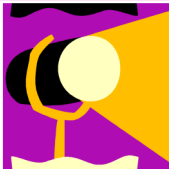
Writers Needed - We have an ongoing need for birthmoms to write articles for this newsletter. If you'd be interested in writing for an upcoming issue, please email our newsletter manager, [Monika](#).

Healthy Birthmoms - We have a new private Facebook group for birthmoms who are looking to support one in another in the journey of being healthy by sharing tips, recipes, and encouraging one another. Please [email BirthMom Buds](#) if you'd like an invitation to this group.

Adoption Spotlight

Review and Interview of Revealing You: A Journal for Birthmothers conducted by Coley Strickland

Christmas is a rough time of year for many birthmoms. We are reminded even more of what we've lost, our everyday motherhood to the children we placed for adoption, at this time of year. I believe during the holiday season it is most important to take care of ourselves and find outlets and ways to work through the grief that comes up. One great way to work through grief is journaling, and fellow birthmom [Michelle Thorne's](#) new book does just that.



Adoption Spotlight continued from page 1...

[Revealing You: A Journal for Birthmothers](#) is not your typical book. Instead, this interactive book is more about you, your thoughts, your feelings, and working through your grief through journaling. This book is divided into fourteen different chapters. Michelle shares her thoughts, quotes, and journaling prompts on a different subject in each chapter, and then provides you with lots of blank, lined pages for oodles of journaling.

Michelle has been a birthmom in a semi-open adoption for fifteen years now. I asked her a couple of questions about why she wrote the book and how journaling has helped her over the years and specifically at holidays.

How and why did you come up with the idea of creating a journaling book for birthmoms?

"I think that writing is a safe and healthy way to cope with the intense grief associated with adoption. As a birthmom, and also as a Birthparent Advocate for Bethany Christian Services, I have seen the need for positive coping mechanisms after placement. I have used a lot of the ideas and questions in the book with the post-placement support group I facilitate. It has proven to be helpful."

How has journaling helped you as a birthmom?

"I process through writing and have since I was young. Journaling helped me understand

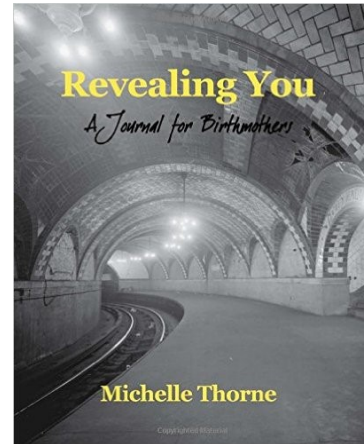
and organize my story. It made me realize two things. One, my story is important and needs to be shared, and two, my story changes. There are things that remain, but when I look back to the writing from 2005 or 2010, it is vastly different from my story today in 2015. Writing about my adoption journey is tender, but helps me own my story—the good, the bad, and the ugly, all of which are important and make my story what it is."

How has journaling helped you make it through holidays such as Christmas?

"The Holidays are hard because families are hard. On days like Christmas, when we are full of joy and give gifts to loved ones, I feel the distance between my son and me. The moments I don't get to have with him can leave me feeling really depressed or even chaotic when I am enjoying the children I am parenting. It's so conflicting and complex. Writing has helped me recognize that and honor him in a way that is all mine."

Why do you think journaling is important, specifically and especially for birthmoms?

"Birthmothers need positive coping mechanisms. So many positive coping mechanisms are simply designed to keep you out of jail or from getting pregnant again. I think journaling is valuable to birthmothers because it helps us process what happened and what is happening now. It's more than a quick fix. Journaling is a walk with yourself when you need honest com-



pany to get you through the moment."

Anything else to add?

"You don't have to be a writer to journal. This journal has prompts and questions to help you think critically through your adoption journey. The chapters can be visited and revisited as you continue on. The hope is that you take the journal and make it your own with thought and color and out of that comes some sense of hope and purpose, and perhaps a bit of relief too."

So grab your favorite pen and work through some of your holiday-related grief and stress by journaling, whether it is through Michelle's book or in a journal of your own making.

Ideas and Insights

Holiday Traditions

By Madison B.

The holidays are the time of year when traditions seem most important. As I think back to Christmases past from my own childhood, they are laced with yearly traditions involving loved ones. Because birthmoms aren't parenting the children they've placed, developing holiday traditions can be more difficult, but not impossible. Traditions with your child are about passing on a piece of you, something that means something to you. It's just another way for your child to get to know you.

Here are some ideas of traditions you could start with your child.

- When I was growing up, each year we'd get to pick out a new ornament. Adapt this tradition by choosing (or making it if you are a crafty gal) a special ornament for your child each year. Purchase or make two so you have the same ornament for your own tree as well. Be certain to write the year somewhere on the ornament.
- If you are a cookie lover and baking is one of your favorite holiday traditions, mail your child a package with some homemade cookies in it. Consider sending a recipe card with the recipe along with the cookies, especially if you make different cookies each year. Just make sure to pack the cookies well – you don't want your child to get cookie crumbles!
- If you are into fashion, start a tradition of sending your child some article of clothing each holiday season such as fun Christmas pajamas, an ugly Christmas sweater, funky Christmas socks, or some winter accessories.
- If you are a reader and have fond memories of reading Christmas books as a child, start a tradition of sending your child a different Christmas book each year. Don't forget to write a message and the year inside the book.
- If music is the language of your heart, purchase a different Christmas CD for your child each year.
- If holiday movies are your thing, purchase a different Christmas movie DVD each year for your child.



If your adoption is not open and you can't send gifts, you could still start any of these traditions and just put them away to share with your child one day, or consider taking a few quiet moments each holiday season and writing your child a holiday letter.

Traditions are fun and something to which we all look forward. I think traditions with your placed child are special because they give him or her something else to look forward to each holiday season, something that is special just between the two of you.

Birthday Celebrations



October

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

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

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

Inspiration

Dear Santa A Poem By Patty Savol

Dear Santa,
Today I'll write my list out
It really isn't much,
Maybe just a phone call,
A picture, letter, or such.

Its only been a month,
Plus a few days more,
Since the day I saw them take,
My baby out the door.

I swore I wouldn't cry,
and for days I didn't dare,
I knew that he understood,
I know he knew I cared.

But this year my list will be different,
No CDs, candles, or clothes,
I only want one thing from you,
And that's to let him know I love him
so....

Perhaps this isn't an order,
That you can fill yourself,
So maybe you can ask God,
If he can offer a little help.

After all He sent the angels,
That comfort my little man,
So maybe he could ease my fears,
I've done all I can.

So now I'll close this letter,
With a thank you, and a please,
Send my boy a piece of my heart,
Because this Christmas he won't be with me.

Love Always,
A Birth-Mother



Editor's Note: Even though this poem was written by a new birthmom, our hope is that you find encouragement and understanding in these lines, no matter how long you've been on this journey, and no matter how much or how little contact you have with your child.

Founder's Corner

One of our favorite things about the holidays is all the occasions to make and share treats, so we thought for this quarter's Founder's Corner, we'd each share one of our favorite recipes with you.

Coley's Recipe

I love peppermint and candy canes and the holidays are a perfect excuse (but really when do you need an excuse) to make yummy treats starring candy canes and their minty flavor. The recipe I'm sharing with you today is a super simple Candy Cane Fudge recipe. Seriously, if you can pop popcorn in your microwave, you can make this fudge!

Candy Cane Fudge

Ingredients:

1 bag of white chocolate chips
1 container of whipped white/vanilla icing
1-2 TBSP mint extract (depending on how minty you like things)
1 tsp shortening
Red Food Coloring
About 12 mini candy canes crushed or 4-6 regular sized



Directions:

1. Over medium heat begin to melt the white chocolate chips stirring continually. As they begin to melt, add in the entire container of frosting, the shortening, and the mint extract. Continue stirring until it's all melted and combined.
2. Spray a dish with cooking spray and pour the fudge in the dish. Put a couple of drops of the red food coloring in different spots randomly and then use a knife to pull the red food coloring across the white fudge to create a swirly look.
3. Put your candy canes in a Ziploc bag and crush them up. Pour the crushed candy canes on top of the fudge, pop it in the fridge for a few hours and let it set.
4. Cut them into small squares and enjoy!



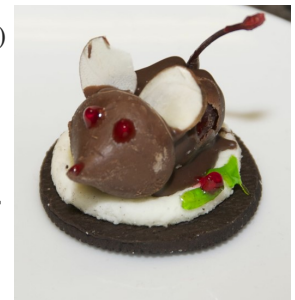
Leilani's Recipe

This time of year everyone is baking and sharing treats. With so much to do, I like to simplify and get more for my time by combining activities like craft time and dessert time with no bake recipes since Oreo already did a great job. Below is one of my favorites and it's always a hit!

Oreo Christmas Mouse Cookies

Ingredients: (This makes 24 cookies; you could always make more or less depending on your needs.)

24 Oreos (or more for error)
24 Hershey Kisses
24 Cherries with stem on (or more for error)
4 oz. melted chocolate for dipping
28 almond slivers
Red Icing gel (won't need much)
Green icing gel (won't need much)



Directions:

1. Carefully separate the top of the Oreo cookie, keeping icing on bottom base for the mouse.
2. Melt chocolate in a double boiler (two pots can work if one fits into the other) or in a microwave oven stirring every 10 seconds. Dry the cherries so chocolate will stick and then dip cherries in chocolate. Be careful not to break off the stem, as it will serve as the mouse's tail. If you do, no worries, eat it and try again. ;)
3. Attach the cherry (body of the mouse) to the base of the Hershey's kiss which becomes the face of the mouse.
4. Carefully slide the almonds between the Hershey's kiss and cherries or lightly dip one side of the almond into the melted chocolate and place it behind the Hershey's kiss to serve as ears.
5. Decorate the Hershey's kiss with red icing for the eyes and nose.
6. Create a small holly leaf and berry using the green and red icing gel next to the mouse.
7. Enjoy!