

BirthMom Buds Bulletin

BirthMom Buds



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Special Points of Interest

- **Making It Through Mother's Day**, in Ideas & Insights, beginning on p. 1
- **My Sacrifice**, in Inspiration, on p. 3
- **Retreat Recap**, in Founders' Corner, on p. 5

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Ideas and Insights | 1 |
| Ideas and Insights, cont'd | 2 |
| Birthday Celebrations | 2 |
| Inspiration | 3 |
| Adoption Spotlight | 4 |
| Best of the Blog | 4 |
| Founder's Corner | 5 |

Announcements

BirthMom Buds 2016 Slideshow - The 2016 Slideshow, which debuted at the BMB Retreat, is now live. View it [here](#).

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 answers to periodically asked questions, and more.

Mentors Needed - Our Pregnant and Placing program is 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 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](#).

Ideas & Insights

Making It Through Mother's Day
By: Michelle Thorne
[www.michellethornebooks.com](#)

Mother's Day, an important and painful time for me each year, is just around the corner. It is a day that forces the issue of what it means to be a mother. It stirs the pot emotionally, doesn't it? Don't you just love and hate Mother's Day? I do.

There aren't too many greeting cards for birthmoms. We don't get a lot of applause in the community do we? Going out seems impossible with strangers' invasive questions on that day. Mother's Day is an annual reminder of consequences to my choices. It doesn't let me off the hook, even though I am currently parenting two children.

Ideas & Insights continued from page 1...

So much of this adoption journey is both/and. There is great joy and great pain. There are tender moments of love and sharp moments of regret. Bravery and fear, confidence and doubt, and vulnerability and shame are all emotional couples that make an appearance in my story. Mother's Day is the same for me. And not just the day but also the month leading up to it is enough to induce a chronic panic attack. How, then, do I honor myself as a mother on this holiday? How can we, as birthmothers, begin to make it through the chaos of how we feel on Mother's Day weekend?

Here are a few suggestions I have for you to make it through this weekend of both/and. "This is not a weight loss program," as birthmother of 30 years Beth James says, "This is grief." Please, take what you need and leave the rest.

Don't rely on anyone to justify you as a mother.

You are a mother. Do not let anyone tell you otherwise. You do not need your family, your friends, the local church or the world to agree with the truth of who you are. Adoption is hard enough without letting others decide

how you will make the journey. Don't rely on them. You are a mother.

"Treat Yo Self!"

If you love *Parks & Rec* like me, you know what I'm talking about. New shoes, a pedicure, and splurging on a spa day are all in the realm of possibility on "Treat Yo Self" day. Give yourself something you normally wouldn't, not because it will be a cure but because you are worth it.

Engage

If you want to, if you can, engage in the grief that is associated with Mother's Day. This will be different for each of you. For me, it's that two of my children are celebrated publicly and one of my children is only celebrated by a select few of my dearest loved ones. That is a loss for me. Engaging can look like writing, telling your story, looking at pictures, etc. and letting the grief wash over you. Ignoring it doesn't make it better. It's there. If you want to, if you can, find a way to engage your heart and foster an environment of and opportunity for healing.

Turn your brain off.

There are days, there are moments, that I just can't handle the weight of

adoption. If you are aware of how you are feeling and know you need an out, this can be helpful. Turning your brain off can give you distance from the sting of grief. I turn my brain off by watching movies and television that have absolutely no adoption in them. Another thing I do is play Minecraft™ or video games (cause I'm a nerd like that—say word!). You may be interested in music, either playing or listening. Whatever you do to turn your brain off, remember it is for a short time, not forever.

Wherever you are, be all there.

This is by far the best advice I have ever been given about my adoption journey. Be where you are without apology. You have the freedom to be happy, sad, indifferent, angry, ecstatic, etc. Wherever you are, be all there.

If you hear nothing else, hear this: Mother's Day doesn't own you. It may be a yearly reminder, but you don't have to buy the idea of 'mother' that they sell in Target. I hope you don't! You define mother in a unique way that mainstream media can't categorize. Own that! Celebrate that! Wake up and be present to yourself. Be your own present. Give yourself the gift of acceptance this Mother's Day.

Big love to you, friends. Big love!

Birthday Celebrations



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

April

1—Kayleigh Me's' daughter, Grace
2—Chelsie Burke
2—Suzi Ellis' son, Jace Christian
6—Annie Ritsch's son, Micah Keegan
13—Natasha Lapham's daughter, Dominica
16—Lora Rudsill's son, Devin
17—Leigh Harding's daughter, Jessica, aka Supergirl
19—Stephanie Dillon
24—Sammii Lynn's daughter, Hailey
26—Ashlee Mendenhall's daughter, Tayber
30—Erin Crawford

May

17—Tabitha Nilsen
17—Melanie Mosberg's daughter, Sarah
22—Karen Braddock's twin daughters, Emily and Elizabeth

June

3—Alicia Sappingfield's son, Ezra
3—Miranda Moss-Addy's son, Thomas
7—Ashlee Mendenhall
9—Tabitha Nilsen's son, Ellis Morgan
10—Maria Alexis Laney
14—Amber Berryman
18—Melanie Mosberg
27—Leigh Harding
30—Janice Collins

Inspiration

My Sacrifice

A poem by Rachel,

There is not a day that goes by
That I can't shake the empty
Feeling I have inside.
I should be happy, when I see you.
I know I should not cry.
But my emotions take over me
And I cannot keep a dry eye.
Just know, what I have done
I did it all for you.
Your father was not around
What else was I to do?
I made the decision
To give you the best.
Even though by doing this,
I ripped my heart from my chest.
I sacrificed my happiness
To change so many lives.
And I keep it all to myself
So nobody hears my cries.
I cannot explain the hurt
From the pain that I feel.
I just pray in time
My heart will eventually heal.
So many things happened
There was not a lot to do.
I am so sorry.
It is like I never fought for you.
God lead me to this
I was meant to share my gift.
To make so many happy
And happiness is bliss.
When the moment finally came
Your mommy was so glad.
She even shed a tear
Because I was so sad.
I still get to see you grow
For this I am truly blessed.
I did a great job
Your mom and dad are the best.

We may have physically parted,
But in my heart you will FOREVER
Stay.
I love you little girl,
Each and every day!!





Adoption Spotlight

Quotes Featured at the 2016 Retreat compiled by Coley Strickland

Each year, at the BirthMom Buds Retreat, we display quotes in frames on each table that we not only found inspirational or fun but also related to the chosen theme for that particular year. This year's theme was "Sole Sisters: Never Walk the Journey Alone" and revolved around shoes. Below are some of the quotes we chose. We hope you find them fun and inspiring too!

- "It's your road. Others may walk it with you but they can't walk it for you."
- "Give a girl the right shoes and she can conquer the world."
Marilyn Monroe
- "I'd rather walk with a friend in the dark than alone in the light."
Helen Keller
- "If you don't like the road you're walking, start pacing another one." - Dolly Parton
- "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."
Lao Tzu
- "It's not what about the shoes look like. It's about what you do in them." - Michael Jordan
- "You have to do what is right yourself. Nobody else is walking in your shoes." - Unknown
- "Girls who can run in heels should be feared." - Unknown
- "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." -Dr. Seuss



Photo Credit: Laura Higgins

Best of the Blog



We want to take a minute to feature some of our favorite and the most popular posts published on the [BMB Blog](#) this quarter.

- [Getting Through the First Year](#) written by Erin and published on March 29, 2016
- [Who Are We](#) written by Elsa and published on March 12, 2016
- [Choosing a Family](#) written by Amber and published on February 24, 2016

If you'd be interested in blogging weekly for BirthMom Buds, please email Coley for more information!

Founder's Corner

Dear Friends,

Over the past weekend, thirty five amazing birthmoms gathered in Charlotte, North Carolina for the 12th annual BirthMom Buds Retreat. These women were from all walks of life, represented all different adoption types and had babies to grown adults. The common bond - understanding the feelings associated with being a birthmom - drew us together. Whether it was your first time attending, your fifth, or your twelfth, friendships were quickly rekindled and new friends felt like old friends in no time.



Each year, we choose a different theme and this year's theme was: "Sole Sisters; Never Walk the Journey Alone." The tables were meaningfully decorated in different shoes from different walks of life. To fit in with the theme, this year's craft was to decorate a pair of flip flops. We offered four different breakout sessions from which attendees could choose. The breakout sessions offered this year were: Identifying your Support System led by Amy, Managing the Holidays, led by Betty, Envisioning your Future, led by Jenifer, and Navigating Open Adoption Down the Road, led by Leah and Amy. We also had a couple of speakers; Amy shared different social identities she identified with and wove her birthmom story into those. Ginny shared how she grew her family through open



adoption over twenty years ago when open adoption didn't exist, and Lindsay talked about her love and respect for first families and biology. We ended our day with announcing the Buddy of the Year for 2016 (Congratulations Leah Outten!) and concluded with [the slideshow](#) and candlelight ceremony.



While the planned activities are meaningful and healing, it's the unplanned moments that often stick out the most in our minds; staying up into the wee hours of the morning, laughing and crying and just being around women who get it.

We are already planning for next year, can't wait to see our sole sisters again and we hope you can make it too. We'll be announcing the dates for next year very soon, so stay tuned on Facebook and to the website for more details.

Lastly, Mother's Day is this weekend. It's a tough weekend for almost all birthmoms. Hang in there and take care of you!



Hugs,

Coley and Leilani