

BirthMom Buds Bulletin

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

Special Points of Interest

- Gifts for Our Children in Ideas & Insights, beginning on p. 1
- A Christmas Poem in Inspiration on p. 3
- Christmas Choices in Adoption Spotlight, beginning on p. 4

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Announcements

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

Save the Date - The 2017 Retreat is scheduled for Friday, May 5, 2017 - Sunday, May 7, 2016 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Registration and more details will be live at the end of January 2017.

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, [Krissy](#).

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

Gifts For Our Children
By: Madison B.

Choosing and sending gifts for our (placed) children can be such a struggle for many birthmoms. I think it is because it is one of the few ways that we can physically express our love to and for our children so we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to choose and purchase the perfect gift(s).

First, I'd suggest asking your child's adoptive parents for ideas. They are with your child daily and will know their likes, wishes, and desires as well as practical things like clothing size.

Ideas & Insights continued from page 1...

Still feeling uninspired? Don't fret; this year I'm here to help you out with some ideas to at least get you started thinking in that direction.

- ◆ **Ornaments** – Several birthmoms I know [send an ornament](#) to their child each year at Christmas. This is an easy idea. Ornaments are everywhere this time of year, relatively inexpensive, and could be something your child will learn to look forward to from year to year.

- ◆ **Books** – Books are a great gift idea for children of all ages. You could choose a book with an adoption theme such as [The Tummy Mummy](#), [a recordable book](#) for the younger kiddos, or even gift your child a book title that was meaningful from your own childhood. Don't forget to write in the front of the book why you chose it and what it means to you.

- ◆ **Make something** – If you are the crafty type, give your child the gift of handmade this year. From [tied blankets](#) to [decopauged picture frames](#), handmade gifts are

inexpensive and can be more meaningful than anything purchased at a store. You can also do [cool things with photos](#) as a gift if you have an open adoption and have photos from past visits.

- ◆ **Gift Cards** – While some people look down on giving gift cards, I think they are great (especially for teens and tweens) and extremely practical because your child can choose something that they wanted but didn't receive for Christmas. Going shopping after Christmas to buy something special with a gift card you sent can be a fun treat.

Whatever you end up sending your child, I'm sure they will treasure it as it is done in 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.

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

Inspiration

A Christmas Poem by Linda J Schiltt



It's Christmas time, the gifts are wrapped,
And piled beneath the tree,
Yet every year there's an absence,
That is only felt by me.

I prepare the table for the feast
And bow my head in prayer,
I try best to hide my grief,
For the child that is not there.

We raise our glasses for a toast,
To family and to friends,
But all that I am wishing for,
Is to hold you once again.

So amidst the Christmas joy,
Is an emptiness I bear,
An ever present heartache
For the child that is not there

And when I see children laugh
With that twinkle in their eyes,
I cannot help but wonder
If you think of me sometimes

And when the day comes to an end,
No grief can quite compare,
To another Christmas yearning
For the child that is not there.



Adoption Spotlight

Christmas Choices by Michelle Thorne

It's the Holiday Season again, and if you are like me, you are not looking forward to it. Along with all the shopping and joy this Christmas comes the sting of those not with us. I lost my mom this year and the thought of not being with her at Christmas is almost more than I can bear. I must though, because I have lived through worse.



This is my sixteenth Christmas without *him*, and it doesn't get much easier. I need to tell you though; this is not an uncharted island. Grief, loss, and your distance from one you love are well-known waters. They may be new to you, but you have a community here that knows. There are women who can and want to help you through this time in your life, who want to connect with you no matter where you are at presently.

There is a story being written about you right now. On the heels of my mom's funeral, I know this well. It reminds me of a song by my favorite band, The Avett Brothers, called "No Hard Feelings".

"When my body won't hold me anymore
 And it finally lets me free
 Will I be ready?
 When my feet won't walk another mile
 And my lips give their last kiss goodbye
 Will my hands be steady?
 When I lay down my fears
 My hopes and my doubts
 The rings on my fingers
 And the keys to my house
 With no hard feelings
 When the sun hangs low in the west
 And the light in my chest
 Won't be kept held at bay any longer
 When the jealousy fades away
 And it's ash and dust for cash and lust
 And it's just hallelujah
 And love in thoughts and love in the words
 Love in the songs they sing in the church
 And no hard feelings...
 ...Lord knows they haven't done
 Much good for anyone
 Kept me afraid and cold
 With so much to have and hold
 Under the curving sky
 I'm finally learning why
 It matters for me and you
 To say it and mean it too
 For life and its loveliness
 And all of its ugliness
 Good as it's been to me
 I have no enemies"

What story do you want told at your end? You get to choose right now, because friend, it isn't your end yet. Your story isn't over yet. What you choose today will directly affect tomorrow's outcome. Where do you want to be and who do you want to be next time you see your child?

I know, *I know*, it feels impossible at times, but you get to choose and those choices have tremendous power. You can stop your life and fall apart, or you can be that strong mama you have shown yourself to be; get up and do life. How? You may wonder. Well, I have a few thoughts that might help you through.

Choose love. You have the opportunity to choose fear or love. In each moment and each relationship, choose love.

Choose yourself. There are times you should choose you over them. Whether *they* are a destructive relationship or just a distraction, you must choose yourself. This is not to say put yourself first in love, but rather, know that you have inherent worth and deserve to be loved by yourself, not only give your love away to others.

Choose your child. No matter what your child's adoptive parents are doing, you can choose your child. If they won't let you see your child (as much as you would like), you can still keep a record for your child when he/she comes looking for you. Write your child cards, buy presents, record celebrations and memories for your child and keep them in a box. One day, if not today, you will get to give them to your child. How amazing for your child? What better way to silence the possible doubt in their mind of your love and longing for connection? Don't let others determine how or how much you connect with your child. You can do something now. Choose your child.

Disappointment is the fruit of expectation. This year, dare yourself to expect nothing. Let go of what you want and be open to what you are given. There will be gifts this year that aren't what you expect. Health, joy, knowing yourself, acceptance, and love come to mind. You have at least one of those, as you love your child. Savor that.

Be open to surprises. Whatever contact you have will never be enough. Know that and work on acceptance. This year, instead of clouding this Holiday Season with speculation and doubt, consider what you have presently in every day or each moment that surprises you, and be open to surprises.

Just breathe. There will be times, brief moments or weeks, where you must tell yourself to just breathe. Do that. You are worth knowing and loving. Just breathe.

The Holidays are a time for wonder, awe, and miracles. These precious children of ours are all those things. You, friend, helped create that. Hold on to the joy of wonder, stop and stare in awe, and honor the miracle your child is.

Happy Holidays, friends!

Founder's Corner

Dear Friends,

We were recently discussing how our Christmas tree is full of ornaments that contain memories of our friendship and life.



Leilani's Thoughts: Some of my favorite memories at Christmas are the smallest of things like ornaments. I love ornaments because they each have a storyline. I love that our Christmas tree is full of memories and moments from our life. Aunt Coley sends each of my sons a sweet ornament each year and I'm reminded that had it not been for one of my hardest times in my life (placing my daughter for adoption) that I would not have some of my most prized memories. Looking at my tree is reminder to focus on all the sweet memories. I know the holidays are hard and bring up big, hard memories sometimes but if you look hard enough you'll find life is filled with sweet little ones in the in between.

Coley's Thoughts: For a few years, I did themed Christmas trees like all snowmen or all angel ornaments and then I realized that while themed trees are pretty to look at, trees full of memories are much more meaningful so now my tree is full of ornaments that have meaning and each tell a story of a time in my life. Every year, just after Thanksgiving when I pull out the Christmas decorations, I rekindle my love for all those ornaments containing memories. Ornaments that hold photos of both my placed and parented son over the years and ornaments Leilani made or gave me are some of my favorite ornaments hanging on my tree.



Wishing each of you a memorable & peaceful Christmas!

~ Coley and Leilani ~