

# BirthMom Buds Bulletin

BirthMom Buds

## Announcements



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### Special Points of Interest

- **A Time for Renewal, in Ideas and Insights**, page 4
- **Finding Your New Normal, in Adoption Spotlight**, beginning on page 1
- **Birthdays**, page 3

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**2016 BMB Retreat** - The 12th annual BirthMom Buds Retreat is Friday, April 29, 2016–Sunday, May 1, 2016 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Please check out [this page](#) for more details and [email BMB](#) for a Registration Form if you are interested in attending our retreat.

**Fundraising** - Please consider making a donation (every little bit helps!) via [our go fund me page](#). We're also looking for sponsors as well as items for the SWAG bags and door prizes for the retreat. If you or your organization is Interested in becoming a sponsor or donating items, please [email us](#) for more information.

**Slideshow Submissions** - BirthMom Buds is currently accepting photo submissions for the annual slideshow. The slideshow debuts at the retreat and then is available online. Please check [this page](#) for photo submission guidelines as well as links to past slideshows.

**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.

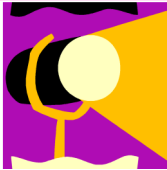
**Mentors Needed** - Our Pregnant and Placing program is always in need of mentors, specifically birthmoms who placed after the age of 25 or were parenting a child at the time of placement. For more information about this program and how to become a mentor, please visit [this webpage](#) or email our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

## Adoption Spotlight

### Finding Your New Normal By Brie M.

Giving birth is an amazing thing. I think that all mothers can attest to that. There are many people who have no idea the magnitude to which giving birth can change one's entire life. A lot of these people are our close friends and peers. Most teenagers have not even seriously thought about having a baby. There are way too many parties, tests, and boyfriends to worry about to be thinking about babies. We are not most teenagers though. Many of us did give birth when we were quite young and because of this we find it hard to relate to those around us. On top of that, most young women who have a child do not chose adoption for that baby. Again, no matter our age, that sets us even further apart from those around us.

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## Adoption Spotlight continued from page 1...

All of this can be very isolating and lonely. How can a birthmom transition back into the “real world” and back to interacting with those around us?

I had my daughter, Annika, the week before my second year of college. I was determined to get back into the college life and back to being a “normal” college student. I had it in my mind that if I just did not talk about Annika or my experience that I could pick my life up where I left off before I got pregnant. As one can imagine, this did not quite work out. I would be with friends and could not get her off of my mind. I would try to have fun and end up feeling miserable. I did not get very close to any one because I would not allow myself to share that big part of my life with them.

Frustrated that my life was not instantly back to normal, I sought the advice of another birthmom. “When will my life go back to normal?” I asked. Her advice has helped me thus far and continues to help me in my day-to-day life. She explained to me that this was my new normal. I had a little girl in my life now that I loved more than life itself. She told me that the world would never be the same because it had a special new addition to it, so how were things supposed to be the same in my life? Yes, I was still a college student, but I wasn’t just a college student anymore. I was a college student who had placed her child with an adoptive family. I did not like that answer at the time. I wanted my old normal back. Gradually this advice began to make more sense. The more I tried to fit back in to what I considered my “old normal” to be, the more isolated and lonely I felt. I realized that it was impossible to return to my old life. That left me with two options: continue trying to fit a circle into a square which was what I was es-

entially doing, or accept my “new normal” and allow myself to be comfortable with who I had become.

I was miserable with how things were going, so I decided to give this concept of a “new normal” a try. If I was thinking about Annika, I told people that. I brought pictures places and showed them off to my friends. Slowly, I came to see that this is how my life will be. This new normal was not something to be afraid of, it just was. Once I was able to embrace my new normal, I was able to feel more like those around me. Everyone has their unique stories and experiences; this was mine.

Transitioning to this “new normal” is not an easy thing to do, but doing it has been very rewarding. Here are some things to keep in mind while trying to find your new normal:

1. Let yourself think about your child. All moms think about their children. I’ve found when I try not to let myself think about my daughter I only think about her more.
2. Share a little bit about your child with those whom you feel comfortable doing so. Your child is a big part of your life it is ok to let other people know that.
3. Do not feel bad when you are having a good time and not thinking about your child. Especially in the beginning it can make you feel like a bad mom if you are not thinking about your child. It does not make you a bad mom; it means that you are adjusting to your new normal!
4. Do not worry about those who do not understand your choice or your feelings. You do not need their approval. This is who you are others can take it or leave it. If people cannot accept the journey that you have been on, chances are you do

not need them in your life.

5. For those in open adoptions, decide how often you would like to have visits. It is hard not to want to visit every day possible, but you need to remember that part of your new normal will be integrating your child into your life. You cannot spend your life trying to integrate yourself into your child’s life. Open adoption creates the opportunity for you to be in your child’s life and still have your own life. Do not feel bad if, as time goes on, you feel as though you do not want as many visits. This is normal!

Many of us placed our children in an era that has moved past the “place your child and forget this ever happened” philosophy. Understanding this; each birth mom must decide what her new normal will be. This new normal can really be much better than the old normal. We approach this new normal as women who have seen an angel in our child’s face and have survived one of the toughest moments in our lives. We owe it to ourselves to establish this new normal and enjoy it to its fullest potential!

## Inspiration



### Today's Birthmother: Who is She? by Coley Strickland

You're a birthmother but have you ever stopped to think about other birthmothers? What are they like? What do you have in common with them?

The media often portrays birthmothers in a negative light. Society has sometimes viewed birthmothers as women who "[gave away their children](#)." Movies like [Juno](#), storylines in soap operas, and television programs like [Glee](#) often paint birthmothers as a stereotypical teen mother. But often times, that is far from the truth.

Perhaps in previous generations, such as the Baby Scoop Era, a birthmother placed her child for adoption around a certain age, during her teens. But nowadays that is far from the truth.

Birthmothers who are placing their children for adoption today do not fit into a cookie-cutter idea of a birthmother. Today's birthmothers come from all walks of life, different backgrounds, and are all different ages. They choose adoption for a multitude of reasons.

Today's birthmother may be a teen, in her 20's, 30's, or even her 40's. She is married, divorced, in a steady relationship, or single. She has a high school diploma, a college education, children, or a successful career. She may have been adopted, raised by two parents, or she may have been raised by a single mom. She has sisters, brothers, she's an only child. The child she placed for adoption could be her first, second, third, fourth, or even her last. She may have chosen an open, semi-open, or even closed adoption- though most birthmothers today typically choose some form of open adoption. She could be anyone: your sister, classmate, mother, daughter, neighbor, colleague, your best friend.

My point is that anyone could be a birthmother. She doesn't fit into a stereotypical mold. I think the most important thing you should know about today's birthmother is that she loves her child unconditionally. The motherly love she feels for her child didn't fade away when she placed her child for adoption and became a birthmother.

## Birthday Celebrations



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

### January

1—Angela Norris  
4—Madisen Cook  
4—Shelby Young's son, Jonah  
5—Nicole Wright-Ellis' son, Joshua  
11—Alicia Moser's daughter  
12—Corky Vestal's son, Noah  
19—Shelby Young  
19—Diane Parker's daughter, Lauren Alexis  
20—Brittany Fox's daughter, Karma  
24—Erin McCarthy's son  
26—Natalie (Avery) Vang's daughter, Ava  
27—Alicia Sappingfield  
31—Amy Schumaker's daughter, Kaylee

### February

1—Cheri Trussler's daughter, Stella  
4—Kelly Archie  
6—Sonya Banks' daughter  
13—Allison Alexander's daughter, Anastasia  
15—Corky Vestal  
16—Ashley Winsett's daughter, Emmalie  
21—Nicole Wright-Ellis  
22—Amy Lofthouse's son, Luke  
28—Allyssa Gunn's twins, Katelyn & Kenzlee

### March

1—Stephanie Dillon's daughter, Alena  
12—Lorinda Makinson  
15—Anne Bennett's son, Colin  
23—Christine Hively's daughter  
23—Kellie Shirek  
24—Kelsey Moore's son, Evan  
24—Alena Diaz' daughter, Makaela

## Ideas and Insights

### A Time for Renewal By Jane Thompson



Spring has long been associated with the idea of new beginnings and with renewal. Flowers are popping up all over the place, and the days are getting noticeably longer, especially with the advent of Daylight Savings Time. For me personally, the start of the year and Spring in particular also mark new beginnings, for a different reason. The Fall and Christmas holidays are the roughest for me emotionally, so starting with January 1<sup>st</sup> I usually feel a lot of relief. It is with this thought in mind that I present some ideas for celebrating Spring, whether or not you have an open relationship with your child and his or her parents.

**Plant flowers, or buy a potted plant:** I live in an apartment, so I don't have a garden, and I tend to kill plants anyway, so gardening and me don't get along very well. However, a plant and/or a garden

serves a dual purpose. The first is that growing things work to add cheer to a grey and rainy atmosphere that usually represents the first few months of the year. The second is that you may be able to get a plant or plant a flower that you can dedicate to your child, even if you don't have a relationship with that child. You may even decide to keep a picture to show that child someday.

**Go to a farmer's market:** Going to a farmer's market is a very "springy" thing to do. In addition to allowing access to nature, especially if you live in a city, going to a farmer's market supports local artisans, even if they're not selling fruits, vegetables, or flowers.

**Get out in nature:** There's a beautiful tulip festival that happens in my state, and though it's several hours north of where I live, it's worth the drive to see the gorgeous flowers. I enjoy going even though I need to take allergy medicine before I go in order to avoid blowing up like a balloon, and even though I'm not a "girly girl." You might have botanical gardens near where you live, or another flower festival like the tulip festival where I live. The internet is a wonderful resource, and should open your eyes to all the beautiful things in our world.

**Swing at the playground and blow bubbles:** I love to swing and blow bubbles! One of the advantages of blowing bubbles is that it can be done anywhere – even indoors if it's too rainy to go to the park and swing. Though I haven't been a kid for longer than some of you have been alive, and though I don't have any children besides the one I surrendered, it's an amazing feeling to me to act like a child occasionally. Acting like a child can bring back the carefree feelings we all miss when we get caught up in the cares of this world, and can help us forget any stresses or negative emotions with which we may be struggling at the moment.

**See baby animals:** The zoo near where I live always has baby chicks, and a local farm may have more baby animals (geese, chicks, rabbits, goats, cows, and the like). It may be a triggering event for some, but for others, all the cuteness may overwhelm any triggering feelings.

**Play in the rain:** It seems like it's nearly always raining where I live, so this activity wouldn't necessarily be limited to a spring activity. However, I'm usually trying to avoid getting wet, so purposely dressing to get wet, including stomping in puddles and such, would be a unique experience. It would also give an excuse to use those cute new rain boots, and if you don't have them, it's a perfect new treat.

Most of these ideas have nothing to do with including the children we've surrendered, and I've done that on purpose. I know that not a day, hour, or minute goes by that I don't think of the child I placed and I'm certain you could say the same thing of your child. Because of this, my child is inherently in everything I do, so I don't feel the need to do things specifically in her honor. To do something for yourself is a renewal and will give you the tools you need when you encounter those bumps in the road again.

## 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.

- [Dear Society](#) written by Erin and published on March 23, 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,*

*Happy Spring! While we both love fall and winter, there is something so refreshing and exciting about spring. This quarter, we thought we'd share our favorite things about spring with you.*

**Coley:** *"After a gloomy winter, I am always ready for spring. One of my favorite things about spring is that the days feel longer with more sunlight, which gives me time to walk in the late afternoons. There is something just hopeful and promising about spring and that's a good feeling."*

**Leilani:** *"One of my favorite things about spring time is new life and seeing the buds on the trees and flowers. As I've gotten older, I've learned many only bloom for a short time, so I pause to enjoy them more. This reminds me that the world really is amazing. In the chaos and busyness of life, there is still beauty to be found if we only pause to enjoy it."*



*Enjoy your spring, friends!*

*~ Coley and Leilani ~*