

Adoption & Birth Parent Services

A Mother's Love: An Adoption Journey



Like me, you recognize the powerful difference a loving, stable home can make in a child's development and later life. I am sharing my journey to encourage support for the Adoption and Birth Parent Program at The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSofNJ) and to inspire those considering fostering and adoption.

Being a mother always comes first for me. When I had my son Lorenzo* in 2013, I decided to put my career second and spend as much time with him as possible, especially during those early years. I may not have the most money or the biggest house, but I am present for him and always put him first.

I have degrees in Special Education, Counseling, and Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology. I evaluate children, adolescents, and adults who have experienced various types of trauma. I work one day a week in the office and write my reports from home on my own time, allowing me to prioritize my role as a parent.

I started my "career" as a mother at the encouragement of my former partner, Erin, who wanted to foster and adopt and recommended we connect with CHSofNJ. We participated in the special home service provider training through CHSofNJ so that we could foster "medically fragile" infants and toddlers. We were comfortable fostering because we both worked for Early Intervention and provided treatment in the homes of

foster parents. We joked that living with us was like living with two therapists! The kids were getting 24/7 physical therapy and developmental intervention.

Erin and I fostered 13 medically fragile infants and toddlers over a two-year period. This was such a wonderful experience that I decided I would adopt when the time was right. Every single child I cared for holds a special place in my heart. Each time an infant left my care to go to a new family, I gave them a copy of Nancy Tillman's book, *Wherever You Are My Love Will Find You*. My favorite quote from that book is: "You are my angel, my darling, my star... and my love will find you, wherever you are."
– Nancy Tillman

When I felt ready to add to my family, I again reached out to CHSofNJ to pursue adoption. I was worried no one would ever choose me as an adoptive mom since I'm single, older, and already have a child. It turns out that one of the reasons Francesco's* parent's chose me is because I am a seasoned parent and he would have a big brother! Francesco was welcomed with open arms by his big brother, Lorenzo, and our family now feels complete. We get together regularly with Francesco's biological siblings and my Mom and family are also part of our support system.

I was a varsity athlete in high school and college and continue to do weight lifting. I am a "boy Mom" if there ever was one! I really enjoy watching my kids have fun and I like to do kid things too. I love our holiday traditions and the time we spend together going to museums, games, and the beach. Lorenzo and I cannot wait to take Francesco on all the rollercoasters when he gets bigger and turn him into a rollercoaster fanatic!

I am grateful to be Francesco and Lorenzo's Mom. Valerie Fiorentino, director of the Adoption and Birth Parents program, was a constant beacon of support and guidance to me and Erin when we fostered and again many years later, in helping me to complete my family through adoption.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story and I hope you will consider supporting the Adoption and Birth Parent program at CHSofNJ. Your generosity and kindness can make a significant difference in the lives of many children and families. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps build loving, stable families where children can thrive.

**To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used for Lindsay's children.*