



Press Release
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It's the same story – but 3 families distinct and different endings.

One origin.

One triumph.

It's the story of an abused little girl, the woman she grew into, and three lucky little boys – all adopted – who will never have to wonder what she did.

Her name is Lynn and her story began more than three decades ago – the foundation of the state guardianship during National Adoption Month, as a response to a case of what can go wrong in the adoption system, and what can go right.

Lynn and her older sister spent two and a half years in state custody, both as little girls hoping for the perfect family. “There was a lot of abuse and lots of neglect,” says Lynn, now looking back on the first years of her life. “I was disappointed for a long time, when I was only six months old, adopted, abandoned, and so on. Because of that, I never allowed to be cuddled or held.”

Because of the abuse the girls suffered in the hands of their birth mother, they were placed in state custody – when they spent time in several foster homes and three state agencies. “I used to have health, hearing, eye exams,” Lynn remembers, “when I would make my check up and make her talk to me.”

Finally, when Lynn was four and her sister was five, they were adopted.

The good news: the girls finally had a “real” home. The bad news: their sister – the best that comes from the abuse that they both endured – those kinds of words don't just disappear.



“We were very much the typical ‘adoptive kids,’ always trying to justify why we weren't with our real parents,” explains Lynn. “We made up our own stories, how our parents must have died in a plane crash or something very dramatic. There was the guilt that we weren't good enough and the abuse that we weren't lovable.”

These emotions are the ones that can't be used by the workings of a child's mind. There are the emotions that need guidance – that need support – that need counseling. But for Lynn and her sister, counseling was not available, and so the women assumed the old-fashioned way: they got one from the heart of the other and kept on working.

The wedding took Lynn “over the edge,” she says. “My sister said I had nothing, so for as my professional support, and that's what was strange. We had no time to grieve and so I had to work through on my own. It took me 30 very difficult years to put the pieces together.”

All of this reflects much of what happens in adoption today – and, sadly, it reflects much of what goes wrong with many of these adoptions. The process, itself, includes many agencies that work together to find homes for these children, but the one piece that is often missing is the “support piece of the puzzle.”

That's where Lynn has found a way to take her anger, childhood and now it moved for the state legal who work and her siblings. That missing piece, for Lynn and her family, is Portland's Kindy Heart – a non-profit agency committed to providing respectful support, mental health services and education to DV/MS/CSA, committed to the adoption process: the child, the foster family, the birth family, and the adoptive family.

Why Kindy Heart? It's simple: It's the only agency of its kind in Portland.

“It always haunts that I could adopt,” Lynn says. “I just know that that's hope for these kids. We can open them the support in their later years, which is something that I never got. I think it would have made a difference. I hope it would have made a difference.”

“Kindy Heart has made all the difference for us now,” the sister. “The support that parents is so important. They offer services for the entire family, which is the best part of it because it is a family effort.”



When Kindy Heart opened its doors – and its arms – three years ago, it did so because it recognized that children were falling through the cracks. Yet, they were being placed in homes, for many of these placements were failing – and the feelings could have been avoided had there been a source of education and support for all those involved.

Today, Kindy Heart fills that void. “They were instrumental in helping us with the tasks to be able to do this little family, the social support, the job to do, the child, the adult to do it on. Their philosophy is that the more you know about your kids, the more you can help them get through their issues. The professionals at Kindy Heart understand how hard it is to parent these kids, but they also understand how rewarding it is.”

Kindy Heart provides extensive services to all of those involved in the process. Lynn and her siblings shared a unique story when they were preschool age. They had been placed for adoption with a couple who was not able to care for them. “The couple came to counseling to talk about how to help the boys understand that they would be moving again. In addition, the boys came to Kindy Heart for play therapy and assessments to determine what kind of family they would need in the future.”

When Lynn and Ray expressed an interest in parenting the boys, they came to Kindy Heart to learn all about the boys' special needs. They eventually met with the other family, where Kindy Heart focused on meeting between Lynn and Ray and the parents that the boys had been living with previously. Then, later, Kindy Heart focused on meeting between all four adults and all of the children including the siblings that the boys had been living with in their disrupted adoption home.

“Kindy Heart had all of the adults meet, and we were all so close,” explains Lynn. “Then, later, we all met with the other family, which worked, and we did a ‘good bye’ with them, so we do know that the disrupted family will never have, even though they weren't able to continue to parent them.”

Today, Lynn, Ray and their three adopted boys are building a healthy, happy family. Thanks, in part, to the support they have found at Kindy Heart. “Right now, I personally know three different families in the middle of disrupted adoptions or planning to place the children in residential placement centers,” Lynn explains. “All of these children are eight years old or younger, and all of the parents have absolutely nothing about these kids before they adopted them. All of these adoptions are failing, but 100% are not failing. It's hard, it's a lot of work, but it is 100% children, thanks to Kindy Heart's support.”