

## Bringing Jeremiah Home



When God put it on our heart to adopt a teenage boy, we started talking to the Love One Campaign which told us several ways to get started. In September 2016, we started with the local DFCS in Savannah, Georgia. After meeting with them, we filled out the paperwork and they said it would take about a year to get through the Home Study. Once the Home Study was complete, then we could start meeting with teens that needed a Forever Home. It was all moving too slowly and on Thursday, December 8, I reached back out to the Love One Campaign representative. She gave me Julia's name and contact information for A Adoption Advocates of Georgia. It was the beginning to finding our new son.

I called Julia and discussed what we were looking to do and where we were with the process. She was AMAZING! It turns out that she was moving from Savannah to Atlanta in the next 8 days, but said that she could meet with us. Over the next week, we completed the initial paperwork and she completed the interviews with us. This was all happening while she was packing up her house. She gave us all of the information to start our references, background checks and medical checks. She was so knowledgeable about the process and gave us advice on how best to proceed with each step. Over the next 6 weeks, we submitted all of the supporting documentation and she wrote up our home study.

By the end of January 2017, our Home Study was complete and we started looking for young men to join our family. Julia has an incredible attention to detail and is extremely organized. She met with us to ensure all of our file was in order in preparation for the day we would submit it for our son. When we had a meeting scheduled for Julia to interview our college boys, Julia was incredibly flexible when flight delays caused us to reschedule for our third son.

In February 2017, we started looking for our new son. As I was browsing the “AdoptUSKids.org” website, I would regularly communicate with Julia about the boys that we had applied for. She would follow-up weekly with the corresponding agency to ensure that they had received our application. She would give us corresponding updates on the boys. On multiple occasions, she set up phone calls for us to speak with the agency representatives. She even walked us through walking away from a young man that we just did not feel was our one. I cannot explain how much I valued the time she took to honestly discuss the reality of the different needs of the different young men we were considering.

On March 16, 2017, we applied for several more boys. We received a call the next day from an agency that liked our file. Two weeks later, we were driving to Virginia to meet Jeremiah. Over the next 6 weeks, we meet with him three times in VA and in Savannah, GA. We knew he was the young man that God had put on our heart. He is smart, funny and has a really joyful spirit.

On Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, we drove up to VA to bring him home. We had 2 months for the Home Study, 2 months of searching and 2 months of spending time with our new son. Julia had coordinated in 6 months what we were told would take 18-24 months with the local DFCS team. I told you she was AMAZING!

We officially adopted Jeremiah on January 30, 2018 per the guidelines with his home state of West Virginia. Julia visited us each month to do check-ins. If I thought the adoption process could be challenging, I was a little naïve about the process of transitioning a child from foster care. There were months when Julia was on speed dial giving me feedback and encouragement on how to handle the different challenge of a hurting teenager. She has become like part of the family. Most importantly, Jeremiah LOVES Julia. She has been another person along the way to love him!

You might think Julia compensated us to write this letter, but every word is true. Her knowledge about the foster care program, her organizational skills, commitment to doing every step in a timely fashion and her deep love for these children shows throughout the process. Julia has been a blessing to our family and we know that God lead us to her on that December night.

Here is a picture of our expanded family...as you can see, Jeremiah is an incredible young man and we know that God has good plans for him (Jeremiah 29:11).

Sincerely,

Steve, Amy, Stephanie, Joel, Matt, Josh and Jeremiah Kollman