

... FOR SOME OF OUR FAMILIES, AN "OPEN ADOPTION" IS A HAPPY CHOICE.

An Uncertain Beginning. Giving up a child for adoption is one of the hardest decisions a birth parent can make. For Austin's birth mother, Rebecca, it was even more difficult. While still pregnant, she had decided to place him for adoption, but by the time Austin was born his birth father had convinced her to keep their baby. He would be always be there for them, he promised...

...but less than six months later he was gone, leaving Rebecca alone and with no way to support their sick little son who had already been hospitalized several times with severe asthma.

Rebecca found two part-time jobs and did her best to meet Austin's needs, but in time she became exhausted and overwhelmed by the responsibility. With her family unable to help and having nowhere else to turn, she brought Austin to us and asked to have him placed in our foster care program. Two hours later, 11-month-old Austin was cradled in the arms of one of our wonderful CHS of NJ foster mothers who had opened her heart and her home.

The Decision. In the weeks that followed, Rebecca attended several CHS of NJ birth parent counseling sessions. She also visited regularly with Austin and saw him flourishing in his foster home. Realizing she could not give him the family and security he needed, Rebecca made the very painful but loving choice to surrender him for adoption.

A New Family. Ryan and Melissa, meanwhile, had been waiting two years for the right child to adopt. When we told them about Austin they were overjoyed! He was the same age as many of their friends' children, and they were thrilled and more than ready to jump right into the world of play dates and visits to the park with a child they could already push on a swing.

They began meeting with Austin at his foster home, and soon he started spending time at theirs. The more they were together with Austin, the more Ryan and Melissa became convinced that he was the child they were

meant to have. He even shared Ryan's love of cars! At 20 months, Austin knew the color of each toy car in the collection Ryan had given him.

The Happy Ending. In September of 2007 Ryan and Melissa brought Austin home *to stay*. As the first grandchild on both sides of the family, he was welcomed with tremendous joy by all of his new relatives who could not wait to meet him!



Austin and his dad have since graduated from playing with toy cars on the floor to building model cars that they can take out-side and race together. Rebecca now lives in the Southwest, and by agreement she writes to the family once or twice a year and includes a picture of herself (the latest one is in Austin's bedroom on top of his book-case with his soccer trophies and karate belts). Each year on Austin's birthday Ryan and Melissa send Rebecca a letter and a new picture of Austin. They look forward to the day when Austin can write to his birth mother himself and thank her for the "gift of love" she gave them all.

Today, Austin has everything Rebecca had wanted for him. He is an active and healthy five-year-old with a loving family and lots of friends in his kindergarten class, on his soccer team and at his karate school where he is their youngest pupil ever to have achieved a Yellow Belt! Coincidentally, after his adoption there was a remarkable improvement in Austin's asthma and he was able to cut back on his medication. He has had few asthma attacks since then.

Your gift today will give another child like Austin the chance to benefit from our services and to grow up with loving parents in a safe and stable home. Please make your check payable to CHS of NJ and mail it now. Thank you!