



447 South Nova Road
Ormond Beach, FL 32174



EMBRACED
by Grace
Adoption Agency
NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Events



February:
2/24—Experiencing Embraced by Grace, 7:00-8:00
2/27— Encouragement Night, 6:30-8:00

Ephesians 1: 4 - 6

Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

Mission Statement

Embraced By Grace, Inc. is an adoption and home study agency dedicated to the glory of God and the promotion of family through the adoption process. We are devoted to the ministry of placing adoptable children into permanent godly, Christian homes.

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Volume 2, Issue 2
February, 2009

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Is it Ever too Late?

By David Wooten

Michael was one of thirteen children by a mother who was a crack cocaine addict. He didn't know his birthday. He didn't know his father. He wasn't even sure if Michael was his real name. Every day's goal was mere survival.

He had attended eleven different schools by the time he was fifteen years old due in part to his bouncing around the foster care system. He had no permanent address. He was a black homeless teenage dropout surviving on the streets of inner-city Memphis.

A white Christian family invited him into their home. The Tuohys ended up legally adopting Michael Oher into their family.

They sought to enroll him in a Christian school, but he had only a 0.6 grade point average. School officials didn't think he could handle the academic rigors of a private Christian academy. His IQ score was only 80. Through homeschooling, tutoring, and some online classes that replaced previous poor grades, he was able to get a provisional enrollment. His grade point average continued to rise to a 2.05 making him eligible to play football on the high school team. By the time he graduated, he was on the honor roll.

Michael had never played organized football before, but he flourished as an offensive and defensive lineman, and was invited to play in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in 2005 on ESPN. The network named him the #1 offensive high school lineman in the nation.

After graduation, Michael went to Ole Miss where he started as a freshman and was named to several All-Conference and All-America teams. He also made the dean's list at the university. Analysts predict that he is a likely first round pick in this year's 2009 NFL Draft.

Oher's story has been chronicled in Michael Lewis' 2006 bestselling book, *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game* that is being made into a movie to be released in 2009.

This is a remarkable story about a Christian family showing the love of Jesus in a powerful way. The Tuohys were a white family living in a racially-charged city where prejudices run strong. They took in this homeless black dropout son of a crack addict because of the compassion of Jesus Christ. At great personal sacrifice and inconvenience, this family reached out to the helpless and hopeless and made a difference. This boy who would possibly have ended up dead on the streets of Memphis or incarcerated may soon be a successful player in the NFL.

It makes me ask myself, "What am I doing to show the unique and extraordinary love of Jesus Christ to others?"



Adoption Story of a Sweet Baby Boy

By Rachel Mergener

The adoption story of our little Mason began when Michael and I were at the dawn of our married life. Because of a diagnoses of Type 1 Diabetes before we were married, Michael and I knew that it would put me at great risk to carry a child for nine months. We began to prayerfully consider adoption. It was through our study of God's own adoption of us into His forever family that we embraced the thought of it with joy and anticipation.

It was at that point that we decided not only to trust in the Lord but to apply the necessary God-given means of accomplishing our goal. We attended Embraced by Grace's adoption seminar, a non-profit adoption agency birthed in our own congregation through the deep convictions of Gwyn Picerne. We learned so much from the seminar about the process as well as the great need for adoption. When it was over, Michael and I knew that we should press forward in our pursuit of adoption. It was amazing how God broadened our hearts and minds in the matter, and we grew to love an unknown child before we ever saw his face.

Of course it wasn't all so spiritual. There was paperwork, waiting and more waiting which produced moments of anxiousness that seemed to stand still for lengths of time. As I look back on it, we were spurred on by these perceived difficulties to greater prayer and faith in our dear Savior's intentions for us. If it was not to be, then we learned to rest in that; and if it was to be, we would give God the glory for His kindness and mercy.

A day I will never forget was soon to be our lot. It would be impossible for me to put into words the exhilaration we experienced when we got the call to meet our first birth mother. When we finally met the birth mother in an office, we were aware that she had already met another couple. Oh, ye of little faith, because our doubts flooded out our hope and we were certain that she would pick the other couple over us. However, as we spoke with her, it was as though we both fell in love with the child she was carrying. When we arrived home that evening, we petitioned the Lord that He would give us a peace about the matter and help us to rest in His will. It was extremely difficult, I might add, to pray, "Not my will, but thine be done", because frankly, I wanted that baby in the worse way. But the Lord, knowing my impatience, gave me a resting peace to abide in His purposes.

The next day, HALLELUJAH! We received the call of a lifetime. "Rachel", she said, "the mother picked you." At first, I thought it was a dream but she repeated it again, I began to weep as though all the tears of a lifetime were unleashed from my heart. I rejoiced with thanksgiving to the Lord because I know He alone moves the heart.

Finally, the day had come for little Mason to be born, January 10, 2008. When we heard the chimes in the hospital play the Brahm's Lullaby, we knew he had finally arrived. We cried, we rejoiced and cried some more as we felt the arms of our Savior pouring out His love upon us. When we finally got into the nursery and they handed little Mason to me, I lost it. I could not believe such a miracle was in my own arms. God had answered our pleas and our hearts desire with such abundance that we could barely contain ourselves.



The next six months, before the adoption was legally finalized and Mason became officially Mason Donald Mergener, we fell more in love with our baby boy. We cannot imagine life without him; he is such a joy and so loved by all of our family. Michael and I have vowed to love him, care for him, and provide him a home that is filled with the love of Christ. It is our grand hope that he will find grace in the eyes of the Lord and one-day join us eternally in the heavens.

We are so grateful for supportive parents, family, and friends, especially at Riverbend for their strong encouragement, fervent prayer and tender love and joy shared with us in this, our great joy. We are also eternally grateful for the wonderful experience we had with, Embraced by Grace staff members who carried us so tenderly through this amazing process. Most of all, we give God the glory for His immutable love and abounding mercies. May our Savior abide in the heart and on the lips of our dear Mason, until his allotted sojourn on earth is finished and he takes his abode in the bosom of his dear Savior.

Family Services of Metro Orlando, 'Give a Child a Childhood' Breakfast

By Lauren Stephens

During the month of December, the Embraced by Grace staff was busy making phone calls inviting our clients, donors, and volunteers to join us at a fundraiser breakfast called, 'Give a Child a Childhood' hosted by Family Services of Metro Orlando (FSMO).

The theme of the breakfast, 'Give a Child a Childhood,' encouraged those in attendance, that together we can make a difference in the lives of foster children, either through adoption or by financially supporting adoption efforts.

The breakfast was an enjoyable time filled with prayers, songs, and heartfelt speeches from FSMO staff members. These staff members earnestly desire to reach out into the community and be used as a helping hand in Central Florida to foster children and hurting families. They encouraged all of us to join them in their efforts to get involved in the lives of foster children.

During the breakfast, FSMO played a touching video of foster children from the Central Florida area who had been adopted. These foster children expressed their gratefulness for the people in the community who reached out to help them in their time of need. One of the young men featured in the video gave an inspiring speech encouraging those in attendance to be the means of support for foster children through adoption or financial support towards organizations, such as FSMO.



Towards the end of the breakfast, all participants were asked of their own free will to contribute financially in an effort to help the foster children and hurting families of Central Florida. Many people think they are unable to help children in need because they are currently unable to adopt a child into their home. However, this breakfast made it clear that there are tangible ways to help children and families in need through prayer and financial support. It was such an encouragement and blessing to see the amount of people who were so eager to aid in this endeavor.



Will you open your heart this Valentine's Day to a child in need of your . . . Love?



"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 18:10"