

Lilly Graham

At the age of eight, my parents sat down with me and my two siblings to discuss an upcoming event that would change our lives. They said “you will be expecting someone new in our family in a few days.” My parents informed us that they were planning on having us become a foster family with the intention of adopting another child.

They specified that they were looking for a little boy that would be the youngest in our family and were open to any race.

The process was very intense and took many grueling months with multiple interviews and inspections. The social worker interviewed all family members and asked questions regarding how we were disciplined, and what rules we were expected to follow. The social worker had to inspect every inch of our house twice a month to make sure it was safe enough to bring someone new into the house.

There were specific requirements, such as making sure the bedroom had a certain amount of square feet. We had to report any appointments that the foster child had to go to. We needed special permission from the mother to get the child’s hair cut and to be taken out of state. The massive amounts of paperwork were brutal. I remember seeing my parents stressed out from multiple piles of that needed to be filled out.

October 11, 2011, I remember that day so clearly. He was brought to the house by a social worker without any notice. My grandfather was the first to hold him in his arms, and I was the next one home to see him.

Because he was brought directly from his abusive home, he only arrived with a blue blanket and several bottles and diapers. He smelled like cigarettes and was extremely small and undernourished. My family fell in love instantly. We knew he was the one we were going to keep forever.

For a few months, he slept in my parent’s room and then later took my room. I had to move out and share a room with my sister, but that did not end up going well, so I moved into my playroom and slept on a futon couch. My parents decided to look for a bigger house so I wouldn’t have to be crammed into a room with no windows and no bed. It worked out perfectly, and we found a house that was big enough for all six of us.



This baby boy had a birth name that we would soon be able to legally change when we adopted him, but that wouldn’t be until January 9, 2012.

Growing up, Will has faced a few problems when it comes to his identity. People on the streets would ask questions to see if he was really our brother, and would be shocked when we told them he was.

At age 5, he had started to realize that he was different from the rest of us. He had noticed that his skin color was different, his hair was different and his physical features were different from ours. At age 7, we told Will that he was adopted at a young age. He didn’t quite understand the meaning of adoption, but we told him that he was from another family that couldn’t support him, so his parents gave him away to a family that could.

Now, Will is eight years old and happier and healthier than he could ever be. People always ask us why we chose to adopt, and it is because we wanted to help anyone we can for them to have a better life. Will has changed our lives and brought true bliss and happiness to our family. This whole journey has taught me a great lesson and that is to never take your family for granted, and be thankful for what they do for you in life. Do not be quick to judge anyone, because you never know what their story is.

