

Building Forever Families



David and Terri Bright and their children Jessalyn, Summer, Landen, Esther, Joshua, and Jennica

Katy Adoptive Parents Share Inspiring Stories of Love

Written by Kelly Isenberger

Photography by Suzanne Box

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As soon as a new baby is on the way, soon-to-be grandmas and great-aunts begin knitting little booties and blankets to welcome the new baby. Moms and dads pick out names, decorate nurseries, and buy the latest products in baby care. They read new books and prepare tirelessly until the day their little bundle of joy enters their home. Many Katy families have experienced the joy of their newest addition through the process of adoption. Families who have adopted have a unique experience, and one that many Katy families today are choosing.

A Loving Home

Parents may choose to adopt for many reasons. Some desire a family, but are not physically able to have a child. Others desire to provide a home, family, and love to the millions of orphans in the world. Plenty of families want more children and see adoption as a way to grow their family. Whatever the reason, Katy families have opened their homes and their arms to those who need love and security.



An International Family

Craig and Tonya LaTorre brought the newest member of their family home from Uganda in January. Kirabo, or Kira as they call her, is 1 year old, and she has four big brothers, Donny, Jordan, Kevin, and Jack. The entire family prepared for her for a total of 13 months. When they started the process, Kira had not been born yet, but Tonya had gone to Uganda on a mission trip. It was then that she knew she was ready to adopt and fell in love with the children of Uganda. She came home, and they began the long process of international adoption.

They quickly found an adoption agency that specialized in adoption in Uganda. They got their paperwork completed and then had to wait. They received a referral for Kira when she was 10 weeks old. Tonya shares, "From that moment on, she was our baby. The love we had, that need for protection and striving to get her felt like a pregnancy. We were consumed by it, and it felt like a pregnancy without a due date."

The day after Thanksgiving, after nine months and much work, they received the call that their court date to adopt Kira in Uganda

had been set for the following Wednesday. The whole family went to Uganda to adopt baby Kira. While they were there, they chose to do mission work, and they stayed for six weeks. In that time, Kira blossomed. Tonya explains, "The baby home was great. She was so spoiled, but at 9 months, she couldn't even sit up by herself. Six weeks later, after some one-on-one mommy time, she had started talking, crawling, pulling up, and sitting up on her own."

They brought Kira home ready to start their new family, but she was irritable and everything in her new Katy home was unfamiliar to her. It took a few weeks for her to adjust. Tonya explains, "Being here at first was difficult for her, because she hated her car seat and her high chair, and she was scared to death of our big dog for the first few days. Her nights and days were opposite, so she was cranky and tired until she adjusted. She needed me and didn't want me all at the same time. It was a difficult transition, but we let everything else in our life go so we could just be there for her. We felt after the initial two weeks we were through the worst of it."



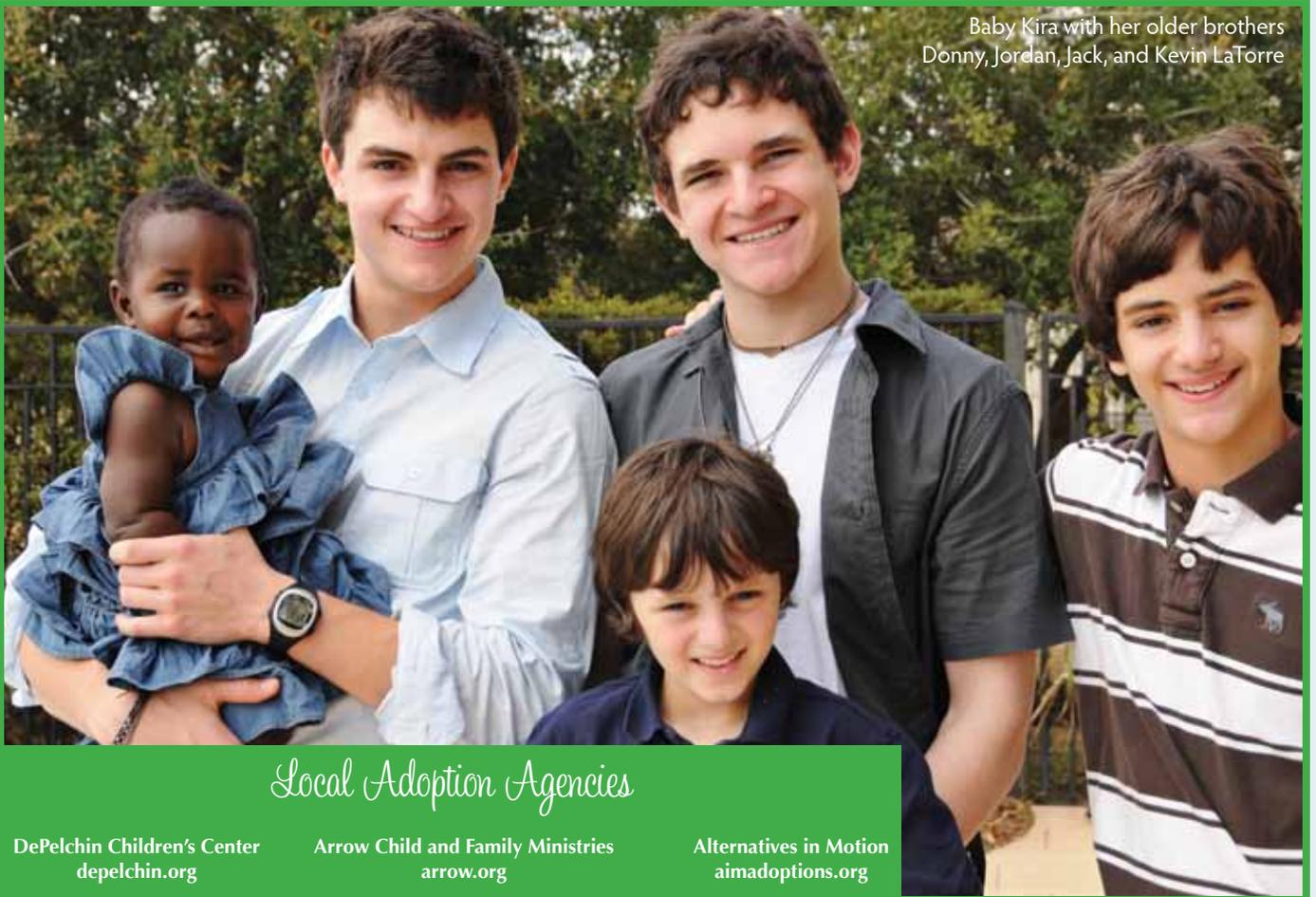
Craig and Tonya love their daughter, just as if she were one of the boys. "She is an explosive jolt of new energy, delight, entertainment, and especially love in our home," Tonya shares. "Mostly, what I love is that all four of our sons feel it is quite natural to want to grow their own family some day with adoption. To leave a legacy of adoption and see it spread through the future generations is the greatest reward for me."

Welcoming Home Summer & Esther

David and Terri Bright are a blended family with two teenage daughters, Jessalyn and Jennica. The couple also has two boys, Landen and Joshua. The Bright family was interested in adoption for many years, but it became a reality for them approximately five years ago when they adopted their first child Summer. Now, Summer is 5 years old, and the Bright family recently adopted again, naming their new baby girl Esther. The Brights enjoy having a big family, and saw adoption as a great way to make that happen.

When David and Terri first became serious about adoption, they looked into different adoption avenues. Eventually, they called the

Baby Kira with her older brothers
Donny, Jordan, Jack, and Kevin LaTorre



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depelchin.org

Arrow Child and Family Ministries
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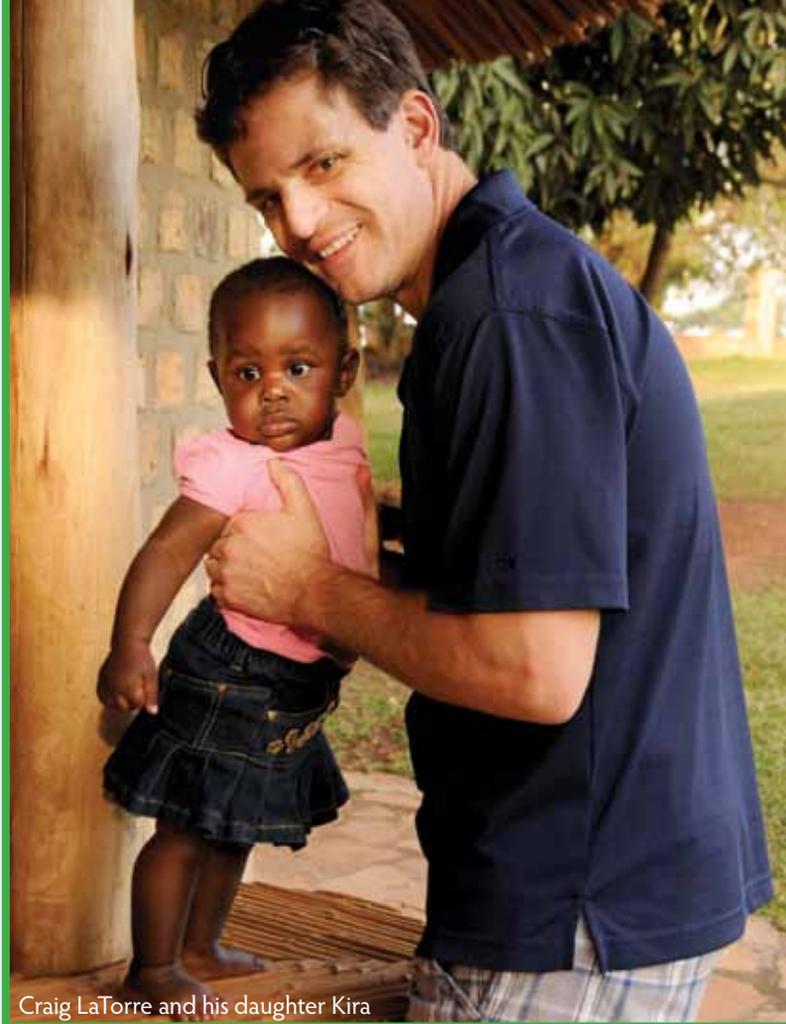
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Pregnancy Help Center of West Houston. They connected them to a Christian-based adoption service called Alternatives in Motion. It took five months to adopt Summer, from the time they began their paperwork until they brought her home. With Esther, it only took two and a half weeks. David advises those seeking private adoption, "Be ready, because they don't mess around." Placement through a private agency can be quick, because parents do not have to go through some of the steps required when adopting a child through Child Protective Services. Also, if the parents are willing to adopt a child, no matter the child's ethnicity, then a placement can be made sooner.

Both Summer and Esther are greatly loved by their parents and their siblings. They were brought home as babies, so the girls do not know anything different. Terri shares, "Moms sometimes fear that they won't be able to love this child like they would their own blood, but you love them as if you birthed them. God takes care of it, and there is no difference." She adds, "I love having babies, and I love that we have had an opportunity to bless them. The girls have much better lives now."

Faithfully Waiting for Their Son

Matt and Sarah Carlson have four children, Chase, Kinley, Rylie, and Cade. The couple went to a Steven Curtis Chapman concert years ago where adoption was promoted. They talked about adoption, but they felt like it was too expensive for them at the time. Years later, their church started a ministry called Tapestry, which educates and supports families who want to adopt. The Carlsons learned it was possible, and their dream became a reality when they were able to bring home their son Cade in May of 2010.



Craig LaTorre and his daughter Kira

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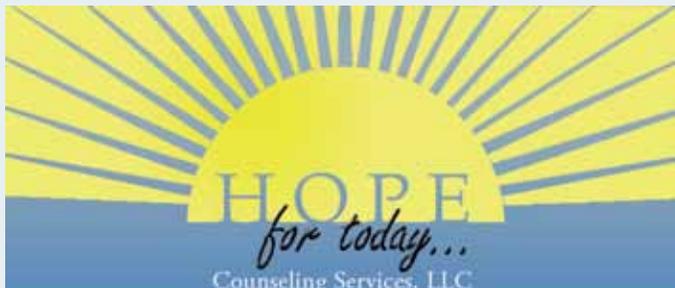
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Adoption Advice

Adapted by Robin Epsey with Tapestry Ministry at Kingsland Baptist Church

- 1 Discuss adoption with your spouse and make sure everyone is in agreement.
- 2 Look into the different types of adoptions such as international, domestic agency placement, and state placement through the foster care system.
- 3 Investigate different adoption agencies and get referrals on them.
- 4 Attend informational meetings.
- 5 Find a local support group in your area.



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While the couple was going through the application and training process required for a CPS adoption, they had a unique experience. At their son's baseball game, there was a mom who was a therapist for an adoption placement agency. She had a little boy with her who needed to be adopted. Sarah told the mom in passing that she would be willing to take him home in a heartbeat. The other mom replied that most likely, by the time the Carlsons were done with their paperwork, the little boy would already be adopted.

Months later, when the Carlson family was ready for a placement, they applied for a little boy and got him. It was the child from the baseball park. Sarah shares, "It was all in God's timing. Cade was born my son. God just didn't decide to give him to me until he was 2 ½. We loved him unconditionally before he even had a face. It was exciting to get to put a face to our new child."

Cade fits right into the Carlson family, but at first, he had a bit of adjusting to do. He had to learn his limits and what was accepted and allowed in his new family. The bonding process took a little time, but after two or three months, Cade meshed into his family and is now doing well. Sarah encourages other families to adopt. "If you feel called to adopt and that you still have another child out there, do not give up," she says. "It takes a lot of work, but God will place the perfect child in your family."

A Close-Knit Family

Adoption can be a natural and joyous way to build a family. The newest additions to these Katy families have brought so many blessings, along with much happiness and joy. These children became knitted into their new families through patience and love, and have become one of the threads that make up their family. **KM**

KELLY ISENBERGER is a Katy mom and freelance writer. She enjoys writing about people who do inspiring things.





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