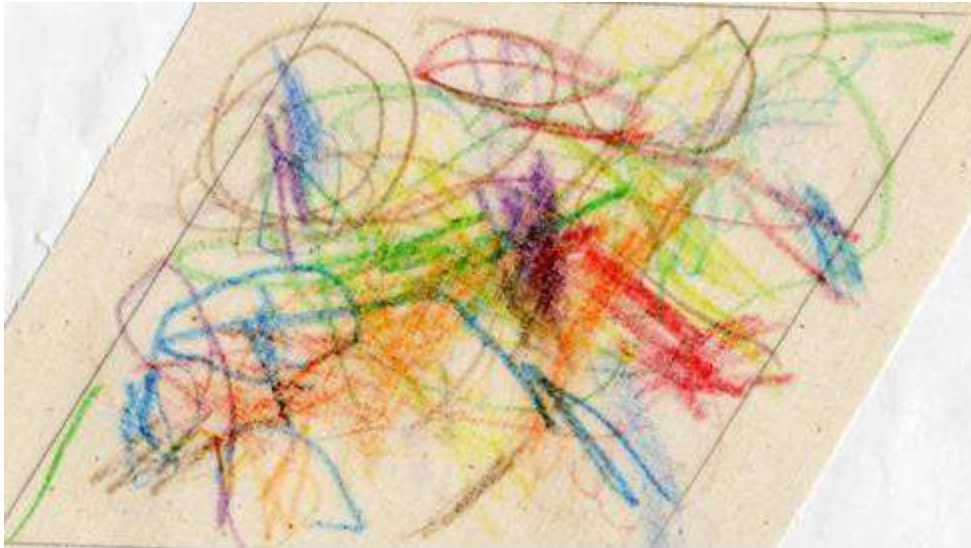


KALLIE'S STORY



Kallie came to us from the receiving home when she was two weeks old. Her father is African–American and her mother Native American from two tribes. Her parents were both into doing cocaine and continued to use through her fifth month of pregnancy when she was apprehended by police. Her mother gave birth to her while incarcerated and contacted Human Services to care for her child until she was able. She herself had been a product of the system and assumed that she would get the necessary help for her daughter until she was out of prison. However, the length of her sentence did not allow this to happen.

During the first three months with Kallie, we were continually being educated on how the process of being a foster family worked. Emotionally, we had begun to wonder what we had gotten ourselves and our two sons involved in. Kallie's father was not incarcerated yet and was contacted by Human Services several times, but did not return calls and did not show up for scheduled paternity tests. Kallie's mother however, was determined to fight for her rights to parent even behind prison walls. At the end of six months, Christmas was nearing and her mother had made some bad choices which pushed her parole date and her ability to get the court ordered services she needed to parent Kallie delayed. Kallie celebrated her 1st birthday and was now emotionally and physically attached to us and our families. At the start of summer, the motion to follow through with a court termination trial had begun. Due to delays of substituting judges and lawyers as well as coordinating the schedule of all parties involved, the trial date for possible termination of rights did not come until January of the next year. We had to undergo a deposition with the lawyers of both parties in November just prior to the trial. Our emotions were on a constant roller coaster and we celebrated each holiday with our Kallie as if it may be our last.

In the midst of all this turmoil, Kallie's father decided we wanted to parent his daughter. Of course, he now was in prison for prior convictions and serving his sentence as well. The trial started the day before her mother was released from prison and we all held our breath until the fourth day when the jury decided that grounds did exist to consider terminating her mother's rights as a parent. We now

had to wait 30 days until the judge would determine whether he would terminate parental rights or give her mother one year to make a difference with her life. During the thirty days, her mother was to start visitation with Kallie once a week.

Kallie was never so confused about her whereabouts. We separated into two different mammas and were called separately by each. Kallie always had a lost look in her eyes before and after visits as well as waking in the middle of the night confused. Thirty days past and due to schedule conflicts the date was pushed back eight weeks. We were all devastated and began to try to separate from our feelings in preparation of her leaving our home.

We were blessed with a phone call the morning of her last visit before the disposition hearing when her mother's lawyer informed us that her mother was charged for the same crimes she had been incarcerated for again. The rights of her mother were then terminated. A week later was the father's trial and he decided he would voluntarily terminate his parental rights. We were then given the opportunity to adopt Kallie as a permanent member of our family and we were excited. Kallie was 2 and a half when we finalized her adoption.