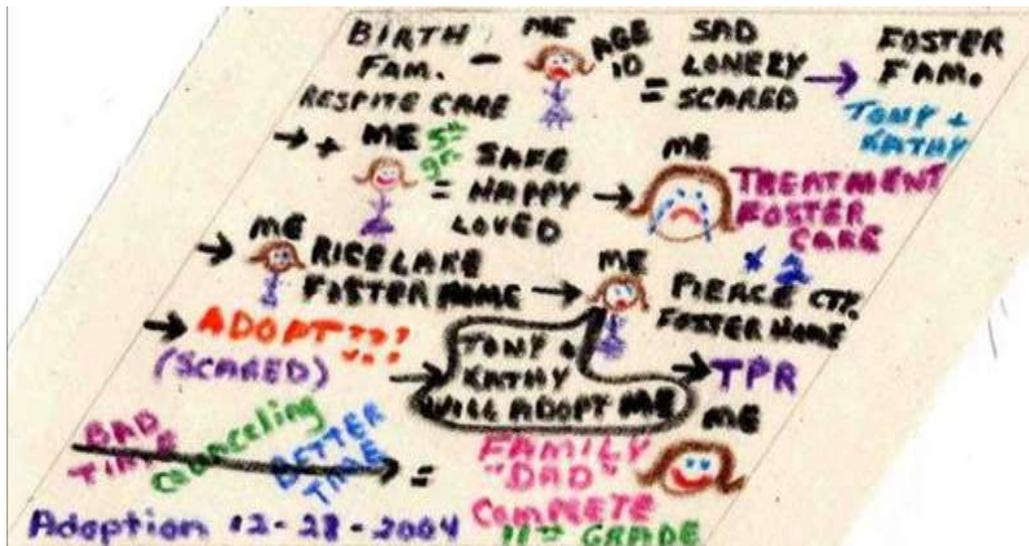


CASSIE'S STORY



Cassie came to me at age 8 with 2 of her birth siblings for respite foster care. We did many fun things during respite weekends, allowing her to experience things she never had before. At age 10, Cassie came to live with us full-time during the 5th grade. She lived with us for about 4 months until they removed her to be placed in Treatment foster care, first in Fredrich at Northwest Passages and then to Sunburst in Nielsville. This was a very sad and emotional time for our family as well as for Cassie. Cassie's birth mother forbade us to see her as she was feeling parentally threatened. Cassie was very sad and lonely without us, nor did her mother visit. Eventually she was placed in a foster home in Rice Lake. This stay lasted for about 6 months until she was moved again for the 2nd half of her 6th grade year. During this time Cassie arrange to come to a garage sale that I was having with her foster family. Adoption had apparently been mentioned from her social worker and Cassie quickly said "Tony and Kathy would adopt me!!" I was asked that day at the garage sale and said we would. I should have discussed this with my husband to be. What was I thinking? What if I said something that was impossible?

It wasn't long and we received a call for social services to be Cassie's foster parents again. Eventually the termination of parental rights (TPR) took place. This was an exciting time for us all. Soon she would be our daughter. Cassie was glad and at the same time she went through a very difficult and abusive stage. Looking back on it, we now know it was because of the TPR. On one hand she was happy but on the other hand she felt like her birth mother had let her down and didn't love her enough to keep her.

When the terrible stage passed we decided it was time to adopt our daughter. On December 28, 2004, Cassie became a legal member of our family, though as far as we were concerned, she was always our Daughter. There's just something about the permanency however, that really does make a

difference, especially for Cassie. She now feels complete and has the “Dad” she never had. She calls us mom and dad and how wonderful that feels. At age 17 Cassie is now happy, has a family to call her own, and still shares a relationship with her birth mom.