



## Family Ties

Post Adoption Services is proud to offer support, information, counseling and referrals through our new Family Ties Program to families whose adoptions are finalized.

Parenting children in today's world can be very challenging. In our work with children and families, we are aware that there are many issues which impact today's families. Adoptive families have an added component as they struggle to assist their children through their growing-up years by attempting to address additional issues such as "Who Am I?" and "Why Did My Birthparents Place Me for Adoption?"

Family Ties is specifically tailored for families working through the issues of adoption and how they relate to a child's behavior and adjustment.

Listed below are some of the components which make the Family Ties program comprehensive in its outreach:

- Intervention Counseling
- Consultation
- Weekly Phone Counseling
- Support Groups
- Updated Social/Medical Histories
- Monitored Contact with Birthfamilies
- Family Day Training Sessions (held quarterly)
- Quarterly Training Newsletters
- Resources (books, periodicals, articles on specific subjects)
- Referrals in your area
- ...and a listening ear.



We encourage you to call Marywood when you need solutions to your problems. We truly believe that "adoption is a lifelong experience" and we are here to serve and support your family.

Should you wish to talk with one of our Post Adoption Counselors, ask for our Intake Coordinator, and let us assist you with ways to keep your family happy and healthy.

## Two Little Alarm Clocks!

by a Marywood Adoptive Father

Never again, it seems will we have to rely on our alarm clock to begin another day. You see, God has blessed us with two beautiful Marywood babies which now provide us with our morning wake-up call.

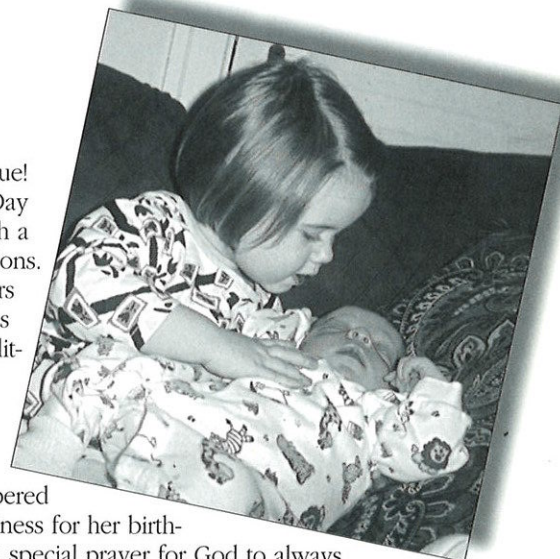
When we married, we knew that adoption would be our only option to have the family we both hoped and prayed for. We had heard about Marywood through a friend and we were fortunate to be selected to begin the quest for our family through their Infant Adoption Program. Throughout the guidance and counseling process we were continually impressed by the professional, yet personal and caring advice and assistance we received. It was apparent that the staff really takes a special interest in all of its clients, not only prospective adoptive parents and adoptees, but birth families as well.

We will never forget the joy we experienced the day we received that exciting call from Marywood. After months of waiting (it always seems longer when you are waiting for a dream to come true), our counselor called to inform us we had been chosen by Holly's birthmother. Our dreams were really

starting to come true!

On Placement Day we were filled with a multitude of emotions. A lot of happy tears were shed by all as we held beautiful little Holly in our arms in Marywood's chapel. These

feelings were tempered by thoughts of sadness for her birthmother. We said a special prayer for God to always bless her and the sacrifice she made, and to be with her during this difficult time. That afternoon we held a celebration with friends and family to honor Holly as the newest member of our family. The best part of that day, however, was after the guests



*continued on page 2*

# POTPOURRI

## From The Executive Director:



*"No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the human spirit. - Helen Keller*

Well, we certainly are trying to stay as optimistic as possible in light of our changed status as a United Way agency. On May 1st, we received news from the United Way that we would not be funded under the "New Community Investment Strategy". According to Gary Godsey, of the United Way, in his letter to us, "this decision in no way reflects on the quality of your agency. Rather, our new outcomes-based funding process called for some very tough decisions about the best possible way to meet community needs with a limited number of dollars."

The "outcomes" Marywood continues to strive towards involve long term change in people's lives. We are proud of the work we do, such as recently finding a permanent home for a young teenage girl who had been in the care of the state for over six years.

We want to assure those who care about Marywood and support the work we do, that you can be optimistic about our future. United Way funding was only 6% of our total budget. Even though, as of July 1, we will not be directly supported by United Way, your continued support through designated donations during each UW campaign is very beneficial. In fact, Marywood received its highest amount of donor designations through the United Way this past campaign.

For many, particularly our clients who are directly affected by the changes in the new welfare laws, the path ahead is uncharted, but we will continue to help them "reach their dreams" and elevate their human spirit with counseling support, shelter, and guidance.

Speaking of "reaching your dreams", I would like to add my personal thanks to the people at **Texas Monthly** and the talented creative folks, **Debbi Smith, Ed Bradfield, Walt Stoneham, Jr.** and **Kim Brill** who helped make our ad in the June issue possible. I would also like to thank the following foundations who have provided very generous financial support to Marywood this year: **James R. Dougherty, Jr. Foundation, Raskob Foundation, Burkitt Foundation, Scanlan, and Turner Foundations.**


**Jean Keas,**  
Executive Director



## Two Little Alarm Clocks! *continued from page 1*

departed and we were finally alone with Holly. We just held and gazed at her, marveling at her beauty and how wonderful God had been to us. We both experienced that certain satisfaction of being a family. It was then our lives felt complete.

God again utilized Marywood to place our son Zach into our lives and bestow upon Holly the title of "big sister". Though we did not believe it was possible to duplicate the joy and emotions of Holly's Placement Day, the feelings and emotions were just as intense. We welcomed Zach into our lives in the Marywood chapel ("Jesus' House" as Holly refers to it) and thanked God for his wonderful gift. As a smiling Holly affectionately patted her new brother, we again felt completeness as a family.

Since Holly and Zach do not yet know the difference between weekdays and weekends, we fear that our babies will never again allow us to experience the simple pleasure of "sleeping in" on a weekend morning. It is a very small price to pay, however, to be able to experience the unabashed and unconditional love that a little child brings to their parents. Without adoption none of this would have been possible for us. Thank you, Marywood, for our precious little "alarm clocks" and for making our dreams come true. 



**MARYWOOD**  
*"Miracles Happen on 26th Street"*

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## Board News

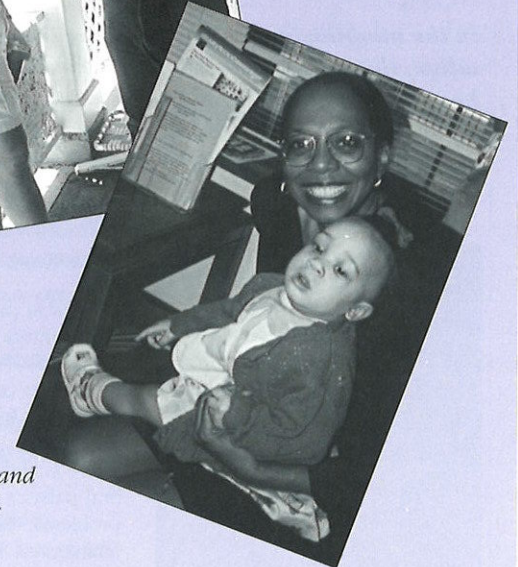
Members of the Marywood Board of Directors gathered in April for a retreat at Carrington's Bluff in Austin. Mary Birnbaum facilitated the meeting and Becky Prince, development officer for the UT School of Nursing provided expertise on fundraising. The day's activities were very productive as members outlined plans for the future and clarified our mission and vision.

**MARYWOOD MISSION:**  
*to provide shelter and support to children, while we seek to build nurturing families for a lifetime, through maternity, adoption and foster care services.*

Ted Scardamalia, former President of the Board, is taking a leave of absence, as his job keeps him in the Chicago area. We have just added two new members recently: Rosoline Craig, owner of KIW Engineering and a Marywood adoptive parent; also, Justice Gregory Abbott of the Texas Supreme Court. Rosoline has already taken an active role on our African American Adoption Committee and the Marketing and Development Committee. 



*Marywood Board members, Daniel Garza, Jeff Hubenak and Joseph Halbach, Jr. at our retreat.*



*Rosoline Craig, new Marywood Board member and adoptive parent.*

# THE Perfect DAD

By a Marywood Birthmother

When I was a little girl  
 I dreamed of the "perfect" father.  
 I dreamed of how he looked, how  
 he laughed and who he was,  
 but I didn't know him.

At the age of nine I said "yes"  
 to the "perfect" Heavenly Father.  
 He was not the one I was looking for,  
 but he was the one I needed.

At the age of thirteen I stopped  
 dreaming of the "perfect" father  
 but the image never left my mind.


At the age of fifteen I tried to look  
 for the "perfect" father for my  
 unborn child, but I looked in all  
 the wrong places. I should have  
 been looking to the Heavenly Father.

At the age of sixteen I stopped  
 searching because I found the  
 "perfect" father for me. He didn't  
 look like I thought he would but  
 his laugh and who he is happens  
 to be just the way I pictured him.

Now I have the perfect Heavenly  
 Father and earthly Father.  
 My Heavenly Father  
 helps me in time of need even  
 when I don't think I need Him.  
 When I stray, He always guides  
 me back to the right path.  
 He encourages me and never puts me  
 down. He heals me and teaches me  
 how to forgive.  
 He has blessed me with so much,  
 a loving family and a beautiful son.

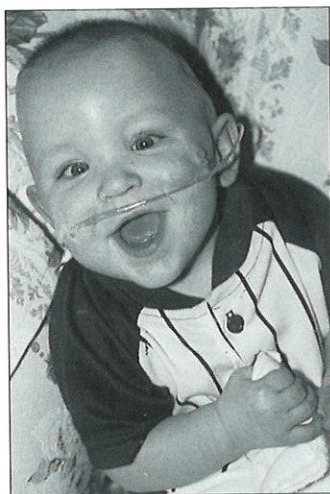
You may know Him. He is known as  
 the Lord of Lords.

My "perfect" earthly father  
 is not without faults or mistakes.  
 He is the one who helped me with  
 my son in a Godly way. He protects me  
 and watches out for me. He stands  
 up for me. He encourages me and  
 never puts me down. He prays for me  
 and teaches me to trust God and to  
 respect myself. He encourages me acad-  
 emically. You may know him.  
 He is my Foster Father.

Dad, you are the first man who  
 understands what I'm going through,  
 I feel safe with you. I trust you  
 to minister to me and support  
 me. I Love you! 

## Waiting Patiently

*In the adoption arena, we often use the term "healthy infant" because that is what so many families are seeking to adopt, those children with minor medical needs and a brief medical history. Although there are certainly many healthy infants who come into Marywood's care and are placed with adoptive parents, let us take a moment to consider other children, children who are not so healthy or whose histories are not so brief. Yet, they are children who are in need of loving families just the same. This is the story of one of those children.*



Baby Andrew

One summer day in a small county hospital, a baby boy was born by emergency C-section at 24 weeks gestation. Weighing a mere one pound and nine ounces and measuring 12 inches long, the hospital staff urgently worked to stabilize the baby so that he could be transferred by medical evac to Brackenridge Emergency Room. For Baby Andrew, the Brackenridge Neonatal unit was to be his home for the first five and a half months of his life. He was living from day to day with many crisis moments and a very bleak future. His head at birth was the size of a tennis ball, his lungs and digestive system were extremely immature, and his retinas had not fully developed. Andrew's condition resulted in his being on his back in an incubator for months. He lay in a hospital waiting to get bigger and

stronger, and waiting for a family.

Medical personnel were initially pessimistic about Andrew's prognosis. An MRI showed that he had no cerebellum, the control center for the body's gross motor skills and coordination. There was the possibility of cerebral palsy, a lifetime of breathing problems, and a world full of limitations. Unable to care for Andrew's special needs, his birth mother chose to place him for adoption. Marywood was then faced with what seemed to be an overwhelming task: Can we find a family for Andrew? Is there a family who will look at this baby's history of surgeries and crises, listen as doctors list his areas of limited potential, and yet still want to take him into their home?

While taking the necessary steps toward accomplishing that task, Marywood chose a foster family for Andrew. Visits to the hospital commenced, and it is safe to say that a love affair began. Andrew's foster parents fell in love with him and went to the hospital daily to check on this baby with so little hope. Finally he could be held and loved as he needed and deserved. When the time for discharge came, a devoted and caring medical staff saw Andrew leave with tears in their eyes. A little miracle, that is what he was called. From his one pound nine ounce beginning, Andrew was leaving Brackenridge bigger and stronger. More importantly, Andrew was leaving Brackenridge with a family who loved him and was ready to care for him.

Despite the love of his foster family, the ultimate goal, as always, was to find a permanent home for Andrew. Children with special needs may require a great deal more than healthy children. In finding a family for Andrew, Marywood needed to keep in mind a family's relative proximity to advanced medical care, specialists, and emergency care. Because of Andrew's breathing problems and chronic lung disease, day care would not be an option, so the family would need to have either a stay-at-home mom or an exceptionally well-trained in-home care provider. Financially the family would need to be prepared for the potential services and special education Andrew might require. Taking all of this into consideration, Marywood continued the search for Andrew's home.

In December 1996, soon after Andrew's discharge from Brackenridge, a prospective adoptive family was located. Yes, they had read his pages and pages of medical history. Yes, they were aware of his limited potential and on-going medical needs. Yes, they were still interested in bringing him into their family. They began their home study process with Andrew in mind.

What we at Marywood who worked with Andrew found and learned may be a lesson to all. Andrew's family lives in a small community which is a fair distance from any major city. Financially they are middle-class people who know

the value of a dollar, how to manage a budget, and how to prioritize their expenses. Much of what may have been Marywood's "biggest concerns" in finding a family for Andrew became somewhat less-important in comparison to the true goal of any special-needs adoption: love. The question was not of finances or resources or education, but of love for a child. This family loves Andrew, and from the time they first saw his picture they expressed their desire to do "whatever it takes" to care for him. His needs may be great, but their love is greater.

If you are considering a special-needs adoption and feel that for any reason you are not up to the task, please think again. There are subsidies available to help financially. There are other families with valuable experience who will be more than willing to visit with you and help alleviate some of your fears or concerns. The category of special-needs children does not limit itself to infants like Andrew who have medical problems. They may be older children or sibling groups, children with behavioral problems, or children who have suffered a great deal of pain and suffering in their short lives. However, one definition does fit them all: They are waiting. They are waiting for families just like Andrew's who have homes and hearts full of love to offer and who truly will do "whatever it takes" to give children the life they each deserve.

Krista Moss  
Marywood MSSW intern  
January - April 1997



# B

# IRTH PARENTS

## Sharing With Your Child's Birthfamily:

*"I Promised to do What?!"*

Cindee Segal

### "Dear Birthparents..."

**T**hese words have crossed the minds of most adoptive parents at one time or another, especially if they've raised their families in the last decade or two. Adoptive families blessed with offspring in the 1990s often begin the process by actually writing those two words—and many more—to express their hopes and desires to the young woman and young man who may one day make their dreams of parenthood come true.

But once that letter is turned over to the teenager or young adult who subsequently seeks to meet them, what happens?

While professionals over the years have come up with theories of why a closed adoption system should or should not have worked, it has been the triad members themselves who have pushed to have the healthy contact which permits an adoption to thrive.

The 1990s have produced a major milestone in the trend toward open adoption practices. Birthparents and prospective adoptive couples often meet each other prior to delivery. A second meeting may occur on the day of placement, which includes the opportunity for the birthmother to physically place her son or daughter in the arms of the new parents. Once everyone settles in and the adoptive family begins to meet the requirements of agency supervision, birthfamilies often receive letters and photos addressed to them, as well as information gleaned from the monthly progress reports required for the file for six months following placement.

While most adoptive parents raising their children today have had the opportunity to have contact either indirectly or directly with their child's birthfamily, questions frequently crop up regarding types of contact, frequency of contact, and limit-setting so that everyone involved is comfortable with the relationship.

Because adoptive parents are legally responsible for the adoptee's well-being, they often feel they must set the terms for contact. Birthparents are strongly urged to make their communication needs known at the initial meeting, while maintaining realistic expectations. Logically, contact at or around the child's birthday and during the holiday season is a good starting point. This agency sees a tremendous volume of Christmas gifts and correspondence shuttled between clients during the months of November through February. This contact is encouraged and supported by both adoption workers and maternity counselors and Post Adoption Services, after finalization.

While sharing has historically consisted of correspondence routed through the agency, Marywood often facilitates face-to-face meetings between birth and adoptive families. These meetings, arranged at the agency, usually include both recently-placed babies and children old enough to have a limited understanding of the adoption process. While there has been concern about confusing young adoptees by introducing them to the people who gave them life, it appears that adoptive parents who promote adoption as a positive experience in their families and who are equally excited about contact with their child's birthfamily usually enjoy face-to-face meetings with few repercussions.

Occasionally, clients will contact us to request a telephone conference call. Not everyone is a great letter writer so offering this service encourages contact which might not otherwise occur or be sporadic at best. Being able to hear a voice and receive an immediate response certainly enhances the bonding process.

With the advent of the internet, Marywood just recently began facilitating e-mail correspondence between a birth and adoptive mother of a sixteen-year old.

A number of adoptive parents with children old enough to express themselves have encouraged their children to begin their own correspondence. Children may share their accomplishments,



Cindee Segal

*While the trend in adoption is toward openness, some clients still prefer the support and anonymity agency intervention alone provides.*

*Marywood strives to provide services which are innovative and comprehensive in our placement and post adoption programs.*

*continued on page 7*





# IN MEMORY OF

## “Friendship, Davis Grant-style” by Gary McNeil, *Marywood Board Member*

**O**n March 17, 1997, Marywood and I lost a great friend with the death of Davis Grant. Davis was my first boss in a “real world” job when I went to work for him at the State Bar of Texas in 1973. That was the start of a wonderful friendship with Davis, Ann and all the Grant family that continues today. Davis also recruited me to serve on the Marywood Board.

Davis used to joke that he was “even tempered - always onery.” That was the surface image that he often projected but I found beneath that image a person of great intellect, wit and warmth. Perhaps nowhere is that better demonstrated than in his association with Marywood. I’m not certain exactly when Davis began his affiliation with the agency but it was his strong conviction that Marywood provides a positive alternative to young women in need of help. He also believed that the family unit was the most important part of a child’s development and “adoption done the Marywood way” was a winning proposition for all involved, especially the innocent young.

Davis’s participation on the Board of Directors was only a part of his relationship with Marywood. He developed a friendship with Sister Annalee Faherty, the former administrator of Marywood and Carolyn Chamberlain, the Program Director. He sang their praises at every opportunity. His greatest rewards from Marywood, however, came in two packages each weighing less than ten pounds - his grandson and another infant adopted by very close friends. I can only begin to describe the pride and gratitude with which Davis spoke of these “offspring” of Marywood, their adoptive families and the agency itself. Davis had witnessed first hand that




**ANDREW DAVIS GRANT**  
8/14/14 -3/17/97

“Miracles Happen on 26th Street.”

Years ago Davis began to provide legal advice to the Kenedy Foundation. The foundation has given several gifts to Marywood in honor of Davis...another “miracle on 26th Street” which would allow many other miracles to follow. See attached footnote\*

At his funeral, his son Davis, Jr., remarked that he viewed all the people there as pearls who were bound together in a necklace by the “string” which was his father. These words rang so true and the outpouring of love and respect from those in attendance was a remarkable sight. Of course, there were many other people (pearls) who were not able to attend, whose lives had been touched by Davis. All those people, Marywood and I experienced the interest, loyalty, caring advice and support that were characteristic of “friendship, Davis Grant-style”. Thank you, Davis, for having shared your life with us.

*\* We at Marywood, wish to thank all those “pearls” who gave gifts in memory of Davis. In addition to several generous individuals, the John G. and Marie Stella Kenedy Memorial Foundation gave a substantial gift in memory of Davis. Each year, Marywood receives bequests in memory of friends and loved ones who held a special place in their hearts for the work we do here. Please think of Marywood when you wish to honor or remember someone. Also, talk to your attorney or financial advisor if you would like to make a lasting contribution to Marywood in your will. We welcome your inquiries about “planned gifts” or memorial bequests. *

## You’re Invited!!!!

Last year’s 75th Anniversary celebration was such a hit, we thought we’d do it again! Our traditional family picnic held in the hot Austin summer, will be replaced with an annual birthday party for Marywood in the, hopefully, cooler month of September.

Please mark your calendar for September 20th, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Marywood. There will be food, fun and activities for children, and “children at heart”. We will hold a raffle and auction for exciting family adventures, jewelry and romantic getaways.

Also, mark your calendar for the first weekend in December for a very exciting new social event for Marywood and the entire community!!! Do you like caroling, old-fashioned Christmas trees, twinkling lights and colorful, historic figures and places?



# h ELPING HANDS

## The Wild Irish Rose by Anne Murdock


**F**ew of us truly believe the adjective “wild” would ever be associated with Sister Rose Ann McNamee. However, there is a certain twinkle in her eyes and mischievous grin that sometimes makes you think that Sister Rose Ann is keeping certain details a mystery. She, is a mystery buff and it wouldn't surprise me if PBS developed a series about her to rival Miss Marple — just imagine the title and content!!

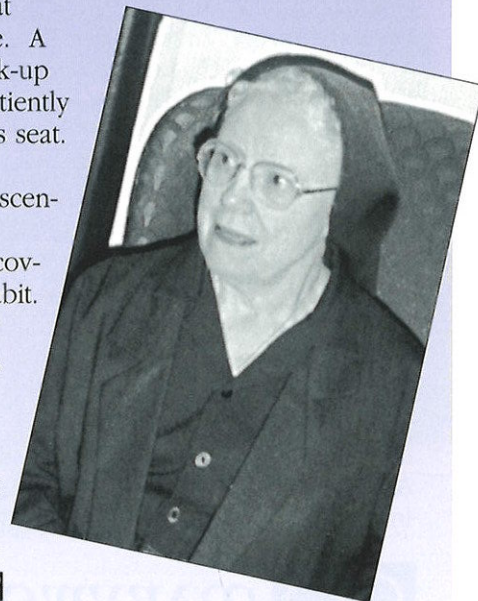
Well, Sister Rose Ann forbid us to use the “R” (retire) word with regard to her leaving Marywood. She will be devoting her afternoons in service to Seton. Mornings, I suspect, will be taken up with “sleeping late”, one of her great pleasures, and reading more mysteries.

Sister Rose Ann began at Marywood in 1981 and during that time she has instructed hundreds of girls and guided them towards higher academic goals. She diligently pursued missing transcripts, errant tutors, and delinquent birthfathers.

All of us have our favorite memories of Sister Rose Ann, but one that sticks in my mind was the morning

she was slowly exiting a car that dropped her off at Marywood's front gate. A young man in the pick-up stopped behind, impatiently fidgeted in the driver's seat. He readied himself to unleash a string of obscenities, beginning with “Hey...”, when he discovered her navy blue habit. This was immediately followed with...“Sister, how're you doing?!”

I know we will all miss her — that steady, calm presence in blue that assured us all was right in the world and above. 




## Sharing With Your Child's Birthfamily: *continued from page 5*

send school art, personal photos of themselves, and ask simple questions which only their birthfamilies can answer. In the not-too-distant future, we look forward to no longer receiving those heart-rending telephone calls from adoptive parents whose children want to know who they look like or if their birthparents are still alive and why they “gave them up.” Adoptive parents of teenagers with serious behavior problems will have access to the information that may enable their children's physicians and therapists provide better treatments for them.

Even though everyone starts out with good intentions, some relationships lapse temporarily. Adoptive parents coping with a newborn may have overestimated the time and energy required to keep their own families apprised of “junior's” every new accomplishment, let alone eager and wistful birthparents. Some birthparents prefer to sever contact with the adoptive family when it hinders their ability to heal and to get on with their own lives, but they may follow-up with the agency every few years to be sure their child is doing well. Even when a sharing relationship doesn't get off the ground, adoptive parents who provide yearly updates and photos do a great deal for interested birthfamily members.

More and more, adoptive families who worked with Marywood prior to the time contact with birthparents was routinely offered are recontacting the agency for information. They are glad to discover that we provide intermediary services through monitored contact, beginning with an update provided by both parties. This may develop into occasional letters and yearly birthday greetings. Clients are strongly encouraged to seek counseling and support in this matter, particularly if ongoing discussion regarding possible contact was not broached early on in

their families.

While the trend in adoption is toward openness, some clients still prefer the support and anonymity agency intervention alone provides. Marywood strives to provide services which are innovative and comprehensive in our placement and post adoption programs. Client feedback is invaluable to provide the best services possible. When asked her opinion of our sharing program, one adoptive mother of two young daughters recently exclaimed, “I LOVE IT!” 



*Junior League of Austin volunteers plant a new vegetable/herb garden at Marywood.*

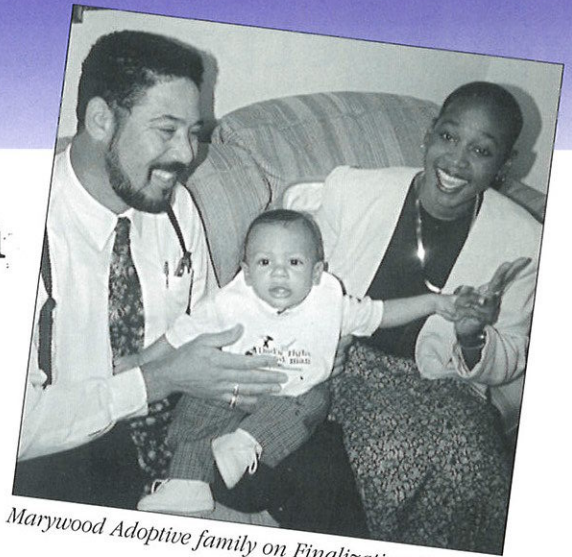
**Thank you,  
Junior League of Austin  
and Wayne Kamin of  
Troubadour Landscaping  
for your donation of  
time, labor and plants  
to help make a vegetable  
and herb garden  
available to the women  
and children in  
Annalee House!!!**

## African American Adoption Program

by Jamie E. Allen, Recruiter


The African American Adoption Committee participated in the second annual Black Expo in June. Many things have been accomplished by our committee and we continue to strive to do more. New faces in our active group are providing us with fresh ideas and energy. We have increased involvement in the community by attending the monthly AusNet meetings, sponsored by the Capitol City Chamber of Commerce. We are taking our "positive option, adoption" message to a variety of professional organizations and service sororities. Highlights of the past few months included having a full time intern from the UT School of Social Work, who was able to help coordinate volunteers and increase our community exposure.

We participated in the Juneteenth parade, by proudly carrying our new, colorful banner proclaiming African American Adoption. Marywood hosted an Adoption Information Meeting (AIM) on July 10, 1997 at the Carver



Marywood Adoptive family on Finalization Day.

Museum at 1165 Angelina Street, featuring Dr. Ruth McRoy, published author and expert in the field of adoption. We will hold another "brainstorming" session with interested community members during the month of August. Look for some exciting upcoming events in November (National Adoption Month) and in February (Black History Month).

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions. I look forward to hearing from you. 



**MARYWOOD**  
"Miracles Happen on 26th Street"  
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