

Meet Jade, a charming, articulate 7th grader. Her moms, Sandra and Amanda, proudly list Jade's achievements: an emerging talent for drawing, excellence at playing softball, and above grade-level scores in all her academic subjects. In many ways Jade is a typical 13-year-old. Outgoing and friendly, she enjoys time with peers and family. Favorite weekend activities include shopping, movies, community fairs, and occasional camping trips.

Jade's life was not always so rosy. She entered foster care at age 8, and was placed in 3 different homes over a period of just 2 months. Fortunately, Sandra and Amanda's home was to become her last placement. Sandra explains, "We didn't initially intend to adopt. We became foster parents to give kids a safe home. But when Jade became available for adoption at age 10, we knew that we wanted to be her forever family."

These moms recall the obstacles they faced in those earlier years. When Jade came to them, she was well below grade level, and exhibited some extreme behaviors due to her traumatic early childhood. With "a lot of hard work," Jade eventually caught up academically to her peers.

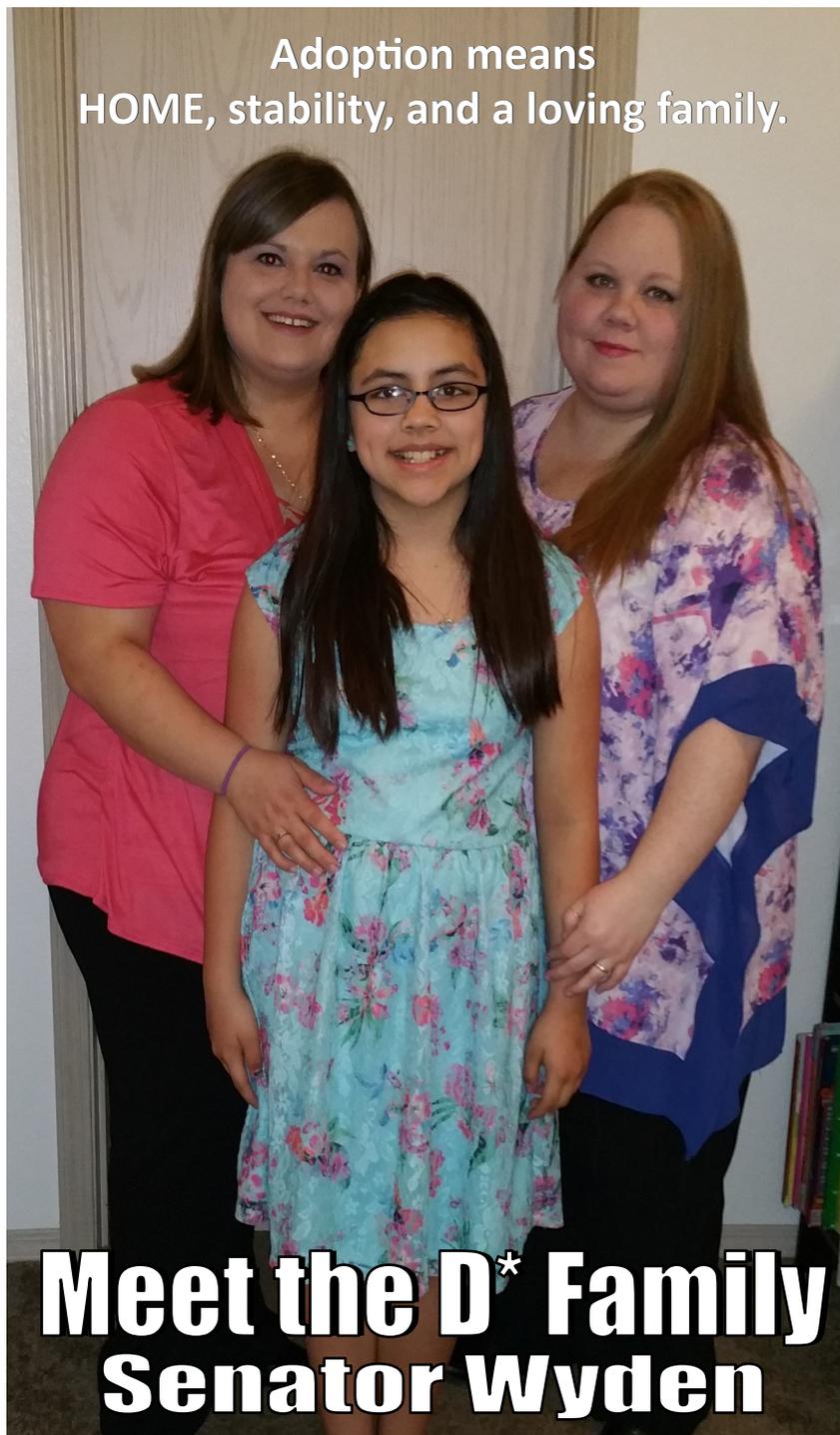
The Ds made good use of post adoption services. Family therapy and 'attachment parenting therapy' helped Sandra and Amanda to learn how to look beyond behaviors to form a strong connection with their child. Sandra recalls, "Therapy gave us tools and tips to help us through the hard times." Appropriate therapy, paired with her parents' diligence and Jade's own inner strength, has helped the three congeal into a cohesive, close-knit family.

Jade has many good memories of coming to live with the Ds. She writes, "One of my earliest memories was eating out with my moms at Panda Express the night I moved in as a foster child." Jade also recalls the special day when her adoption was finalized. "I gave the judge a big hug and thanked him. Then we went to the park for family photos, and afterward we ate pizza with family and friends. That was the first time I realized I was *home!* Adoption means HOME, stability, and a loving family that will always be there no matter what!"

Amanda and Sandra thank members of Congress for the Federal Adoption Tax Credit, which helped them purchase their first home. They respectfully ask policy-makers to please develop procedures to ensure faster placements for children, and faster resolution when reunification with birth families is possible.

With Jade well settled into their home, the Ds continue to provide foster care. Sandra's expertise as an Educational Assistant and Amanda's role as an at-home mom contribute to the children's well-being. One of the greatest benefits is Jade herself, whom foster children look to as a role model. Jade tells children awaiting adoption, "Adoption makes you feel SAFE. Your parents aren't going anywhere, you are loved, and don't have to worry anymore about ADULT worries. You get to be a kid."

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**Meet the D* Family
Senator Wyden**