

"I can finally start to heal from all the hurt in my life."

- Jeramy, age 13

**Representative
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Meet the A* Family

On her last birthday, Julie happily reflected, "I've had a life full of adventures and world travel, but our recent adoption of two siblings has surpassed everything. At age 51, I feel as if my life has just begun!"

Julie and husband David's new son and daughter are Jeramy, age 13, and Jadee, age 10. After having lived in five different foster homes over the previous five years, this brother and sister are relieved to be settled into a calm, consistent home environment. Their proud parents write, "Both children are smart, charismatic, and outgoing. They make friends wherever they go and they are well-liked in school and on sports teams."

Jeramy has a sense of humor similar to his new Dad's – both are verbally witty and talented at creating good-natured puns. Sports-oriented, Jeramy plays football and basketball at school. Creative Jadee is often found drawing, crafting, and building fairies' homes from cardboard boxes. Soccer team, gymnastics, and Girl Scouts keep Jadee happily occupied.

Many factors influenced the family's decision to adopt: the encouragement of friends, David's experience raising his three daughters, personnel at local agencies, and PSA campaigns. Julie was especially taken with the AdoptUsKids' campaign slogan: *You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent!* David writes, "We wanted to have more kids in our lives. We knew we could provide a supportive foundation and a well-rounded life full of experiences and adventures."

The couple decided to adopt siblings because they believe that children who have endured so much loss should not also lose each other. To this end, Julie and David assure that Jeramy and Jadee maintain regular contact with their five other biological siblings from whom they were separated in foster care. Two of these have been adopted by two different families.

Based upon their children's experiences in some over-crowded, abusive foster homes, the family ask policy-makers to develop better selection, education and support for foster families, and more accountability for DHS.

Julie and David appreciate the professionalism and expertise they have encountered at local agencies: their county's Department of Human Services, Boys and Girls Aid Society, Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center (ORPARC), and Kinship House, where they attend weekly post-adoption therapy. The greatest obstacle the family has overcome in their adoption process has been "Waiting." These parents waited 2.5 years to be matched with their children. Jeramy and Jadee waited 5 years in foster care to find their "forever family." After they were identified as a potential "match," they all had to wait an additional six months for DHS to hold the required Adoption Placement Decision Committee.

Now with all that uncertainty behind them, the four are proceeding with the business of becoming a family. Jeramy recently told his new parents, "I feel like I can finally start to heal from all the hurt in my life." Julie reflects, "The 2.5 years David and I spent preparing for our children to join us in our home has all been worth it."