



STORIES FROM THE STREETS AND BEYOND



Our journey with Loving Houston actually began about eleven years ago when my husband was spending a semester of college here in Houston.

He witnessed the rescue of an incredibly brave and tiny street baby who is now his strong 12-year-old godson. When we were faced with infertility, we chose adoption with Loving Houston instead of undergoing fertility treatments. On an absolute leap of faith, we flew 4,000 miles from Dublin, Ireland, to Houston for our adoption. We weren't fully aware how very infrequently Loving Houston deals with straight infant adoption, but our naiveté was God's opportunity to demonstrate just how big and powerful He is.

## A FAMILY FOR MAYA

Five weeks after we arrived in Houston (with only two suitcases of our most summery clothes!), and not long after we completed our license to foster and adopt, we received a call about a baby waiting for us in the NICU. I knew in my bones that she was ours from that very minute. And she was. And she is. Maya was in the NICU because she was born with drugs in her system and no prenatal care. She had some withdrawal symptoms and extreme irritability during her first few days, and my heart breaks that we weren't there. Once we were with her, the nurses were so kind. They called us Mommy and Daddy from the moment we walked into her room. They told us they had prayed for a family for her in her first hard days. They said she cried until we came.

## EXTRA LOVE TO GIVE

A few months later, as we were just getting the hang of being parents, Kim Dale, LHAA Director, called to ask if we could take another baby short-term - two hours later. With a relatively new baby at home, it wasn't exactly convenient, but we figured we could handle two infants for a few weeks. The baby arrived late at night, dehydrated, hungry, and severely underweight for her age. Her eyes were swollen like a newborn, despite being over a month old, and she had a herniated belly button - both from excessive crying due to hunger. She reeked of cigarette smoke and for some odd reason had tiny, sticky red glitter in all her dirty creases. This was our first experience with a "rescue baby," and I buzzed with enthusiasm that we got to be part of such an experience. We not only had Maya, for whom we've never been more grateful, but we also were able to play a role in another baby's rescue. We were reminded that we have extra love to give. What an incredible privilege!



## WILL IT BREAK ME?

Over the course of Maya's first year, we had three other placements. When we said yes to what was supposed to be a week-long foster placement in May of last year, we had no idea that somehow it would turn into two months and the expectation that we would be able to adopt her, too. But one court date in mid-July turned that plan upside down. We found out she would be returning to her biological grandmother within 48 hours. I knew that God would just have to give me the grace to hand this foster child over because she wasn't going back to the best situation. I thought we would worry about her forever. But, from the morning I dropped her off with the caseworker, God covered our hearts in a supernatural and inexplicable peace. You think giving a baby back will break you, but it doesn't.

## FOSTER CARE GREW OUR HEARTS

It's strange to say that the simple, straightforward, and obviously life-changing adoption of our daughter was somehow not the most monumental thing that has happened to our family in the last two years, but foster care truly was at least an equal gift and journey. Adoption grew our family, but foster care grew our hearts.

## NEVER THE SAME

We moved to Houston two years ago with two suitcases and very nervous hearts, too scared to fully believe we would ever become a family of three. Now we have a gorgeous two-year-old and places in our hearts for four babies whom we loved as though they were our own for as long as they were in our home. While we set out to adopt, Loving Houston is the sole reason we became foster parents, and while Maya was obviously the miracle of a lifetime, foster care changed our lives, made us more faithful in our big, big God, and very much changed the fabric of who we are as people. It solidified the value that will lead our family in the years to come: our home will always be open to those who need extra love.

*"Rescue those being led away to death, hold back those staggering towards the slaughter."  
- Proverbs 24:11*

