

Adoptive Family Group

ADOPTION SUPPORT CENTER

3251 Poplar Avenue

Suite 230

Memphis, TN 38111

(901)323-3600

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Summer Bash!**
Look for information on our Fun Day at Malco Theater. Coming in July!

WE WANT YOUR IN- PUT!!!

We want this to be **YOUR** group! If you have ideas for activities, topics of discussion, or anything else, **PLEASE** let us know! Call our Family Advocate, Kris Bowen, at (901) 634.8199 or email her at kris.bowen@theadoptioncenter.org.

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Melinda

This

poem is an excerpt from *Connections*. In "Melinda," author Daniel Hughes captures the story of a child moving from shame, rage, loneliness and fear to connection, happiness and love through the restorative powers of empathy, patience and acceptance.

For so long I was sure that I was bad.

I don't know how many times I was kicked, or screamed at in a certain way that was worse than the kicks.

I don't know how many times these things happened until I knew that I was bad.

I learned to deal with being bad. I learned to not need much. I learned to act like nothing bothered me.

But when they sent me to the next foster mother, Melinda, my earth began to quake.

I want to tell you how Melinda made my earth quake.

She saw me with new eyes. When she looked at me she saw me in a way that no one else had seen me before.

She never said that I was *not* bad. No, she never did. It would have been easy for me to mock those words. She never gave me the chance.

My earth would quake when I showed her with all the force that I had the bad that was in me. But she kept seeing something different.



hers made me feel that she was so sure about it all.

I'll never know how she knew who I was and who I might yet be. She just stayed with me in my sadness and in my shame and she became smaller and softer. Other parts of me started to emerge—no, actually to *burst*—from me: joy, laughter, happiness, silliness, love.

Something else is happening, too. I find my little brother's tears in my eyes.

She still says "no". But what a soft "no" it is. I don't understand how she does that: how she holds me in her heart and in her mind when she says it.

There are so many new things in my mind and heart now. The old ones are still there but the are new, too. The kicks and screams of my past no longer scare me or make me feel that I'm bad.

So much new to understand—things that Melinda understands. These things she teaches me without books or lectures but just with her eyes, her voice, her touch.

My earth no longer quakes. It's solid and green, windy and warm, with birds and books and Melinda.

She saw sadness, fear, shame, loneliness.

These were parts of me that I did not know were there. She saw those parts pushing up into what I did and she did not name them "bad".

More than that she was *with* me as she saw me. Her earth was safe, strong, warm. It steadied me.

And then, there were those moments when I saw *my* tears in *her* eyes, and I felt *her* tears in *my* eyes.

Her being with me brought calm to my earth.

The word "bad" left me. The sadness, the fear, the shame, the loneliness, and the anger came and went, came and went.

Somehow those eyes of hers, that voice of hers, that touch of

Meet the ASC Staff



Caption describing picture or graphic.

Jennifer began at the Adoption Support Center as a Masters level Social Work intern in August 2007. In November 2007, Jennifer became part of Agape's staff as a Family Therapist for Adoption Support

and Preservation (ASAP). Jennifer serves in both the Pre-Adopt and Post Adopt services offered by the agency. Jennifer received her Bachelor of Social Work degree from Mississippi State University and her Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Tennessee—Memphis. Jennifer has worked as an intern at the Department of Children and Family Services in West Point, Mississippi

and at Pathways in Jackson, TN.

Fun Facts About Jennifer:

1. She played softball and basketball in high school.
2. Her favorite food is chocolate!
3. She loves to watch movies—not necessarily the girly stuff, either. She likes a good action or drama.
4. She believes Michael Jack-

“Somehow, destiny comes into play. These children end up with you and you end up with them. It’s something quite magical.”

**-Nicole Kidman
Adoptive Parent**

Resources

- **Adoptive Learning Partners: An Online Adoption Education Community**

www.adoptionlearningpartners.org

This site offers online training courses for adoptive parents, addressing issues of



Caption describing picture or graphic.