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Forever Families Through Adoption Helps Local Couple Adopt Son in Record Time

Rye's own Lisa McKiernan and husband, Brendan, welcome the arrival of son Dylan Joseph

Rye Brook, November 25, 2007. 2007 will be remembered by restaurateur Lisa McKiernan as a year of great additions to the town of Rye. In May, McKiernan and her partners in the Pearl Management Group opened Morgans Fish House, which was chosen as one of the area's 10 Best Restaurants of 2007 by *inTown* magazine and praised by the *Rye Record* as "a great addition to the local dining scene." Then, in late September, she and husband, Brendan, welcomed an addition of their own: an adopted son, Dylan Joseph.

If you live in Rye or have patronized any of a number of local restaurants – Ruby's Oyster Bar, Rye Bar and Grill or, now, Morgans – you've probably met Lisa McKiernan. Born, raised, baptized and married here, Lisa is a fixture in the Rye community. For the last several years, she's been the President of the Rye Merchants' Association and is often teasingly called the town's unofficial "Mayor" by customers and friends, alike. "Lisa knows everyone in town, and everyone knows her," offered husband Brendan. "I've been told that her mother, Dorothy, was incredible – that she was an enormously influential person in Rye. Everyone knew her, everyone liked her, and everyone respected her. In many ways, Lisa is just like her mother."

So, in a town as small as Rye, it was no secret that Lisa and Brendan were anxious to have a baby – nor was it a secret that they had been trying for almost ten years with no success. Last year, after a last failed attempt at in vitro fertilization, they resigned themselves to the fact that they'd never have children. And although they'd frequently discussed adoption, it took local adoption experts Joy and Michael Goldstein to encourage them to pursue it further.

"Frankly, I was the one who was most dead set against it," admitted Brendan. "The bureaucracies surrounding domestic and international adoptions were difficult to understand. I firmly believe that there is an unfounded paranoia amongst couples seeking to adopt domestically."

Still, they completed the paperwork required to begin the adoption process in early September, never suspecting that, just two days later, a birth mother would express interest in meeting them. "When Joy called," remembers Brendan, "my legs got weak." "We had no time to mentally prepare," admits Lisa. "Penny was already 33 weeks pregnant. Three days after we got the call, Brendan and I were on our way to Maryland to meet her, and three weeks after that, I was in the delivery room with her cutting Dylan's umbilical cord."

"Apparently this was meant to be," mused Brendan. "Lisa and I were really ready. We were mentally in the same place at the same time. And we immediately bonded with Dylan's birth parents – everything that happened, happened out of love on both sides."

The town of Rye has poured out its love, as well. "People couldn't be happier for us," said Brendan. "We've gotten so many notes, so many calls, so many gifts. It seems like everyone knew of our struggles, and now everyone is elated by our success."

Lisa and Brendan's pediatrician suggested that Dylan is a lucky boy – he's now got a chance at a life filled with love and opportunity. But Lisa says that she and Brendan are the lucky ones. "There are no words to describe our joy, no words to describe our gratitude. Dylan was meant to be ours. I might as well have given birth to him – I couldn't love him any more than I do."

Lisa's words inspired the Goldsteins to present the new parents with a picture of the happy family framed side by side with a well known adoption poem in DJ's birth announcement: *'Not flesh of my flesh, nor bone of my bone, but still miraculously my own. Don't forget for a single minute, you didn't grow under my heart, but in it.'*

"My feet haven't touched the ground since we brought Dylan Joseph home," said Brendan with a grin. "Michael and Joy are miracle workers."

About Forever Families Through Adoption: *FFTA is a New York and Connecticut-authorized, not-for-profit, adoption placement agency founded on the belief that every child has the right to grow up in a loving, nurturing, secure, and forever home. Joy Goldstein is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who counsels birth and adoptive parents and frequently lectures on adoption topics. Michael is an attorney and social worker and assists clients with adoptions both domestically and internationally. After more than 25 years and over 2,500 successful placements, the Goldsteins founded FFTA this year.*