

## My Adoption Experience by Sareena (2008)

I met Joy and Michael Goldstein in early March 1996 through a woman named Ilene. In January 1996, I was waiting to decide what to do about being pregnant. I went to an adoption work shop at Borders because I had considered adoption. I had also contacted another New York located agency and was only at the paperwork level. The emotions of pregnancy wore strongly on my mind and body and I was somewhat confused. I had not been able to meet any of the prospective adoptive couples through this other agency and time was getting short. I was worried.

So I attended this meeting and we all introduced ourselves. When it came time for me to introduce myself, I started to cry, I could barely say a word. Finally, I stumbled, "I'm a birthmother to be." So I started to look around the room and one person came up to me and gave me a big hug. It was Ilene. We talked and she mentioned that she runs National Infertility Network Exchange and had helped other women like me before. I kept that in my mind and I wrote down all her information and well as Joy and Michael 's specific office information.

I continued thinking through the next two months and still, I was no more closer to placing my child with any one family. I really started to feel frustrated. It was close to the end of March 2006 when I had just taken off work for maternity leave. I had returned home to have my child. I called Ilene who in turn called Joy and Michael and their office. I was enlisted to meet one couple at first. At the time, I started to have pregnancy induced hypertension (toxemia). So I was off my feet and had to reduce stress in my life. I, at this time, concluded my business with the other adoption agency. (I still had not met one couple yet.) I decided to work with the Goldstein's. So Ilene introduced me to "Kathy" and "Joe." I liked them immediately. They came to visit me in the hospital where I was now being monitored for toxemia. They were financially secure, very sincere, very kind, gracious, loving, and they really cared how I was feeling and doing at that time. I immediately made a decision to place my child with them. In looking back, it was their energy and love which drew me to them. They had been involved in the adoption process for a while.

My life after placing my son was very difficult. I don't remember how many tears I cried that year or the year after. I was feeling so much guilt, grief, and loss. I quit my job and immediately got another job because I didn't want anyone to know what happened to me. Emotionally, I was devastated. The Goldstein's had arranged through the adoptive parents to offer me a year of psychotherapy and this really was the "X" factor that helped me. I really appreciated that therapy and am thankful for that. I had some dreams of my baby boy in the hospital and immediately "Kathy" and "Joe" started sending me photos and letters of my son. These photos and letters and letters have continued for the last eleven years which is truly hard to believe. I am never surprised by the dedication and loyalty that Michael and Joy have shown in their counsel. They are caring and knowledgeable individuals, and really understand the perception of a birthmother. I started to write "Kathy" and "Joe" through their office and these writings and photos have been sent to my son. I feel 100% this writing and letters have helped me immensely in getting on with my life. It is difficult enough to live with the

experience of being a birthmother but if you do not deal with your emotions it can really become a blockage in your life. I have really fought my demons over the past few years. And this process of working with Michael and Joy has helped me in a very productive way. They have had me speak at adoption conferences in New York which has made that process of letting go a little easier.

I have never had any difficulty in reaching FFTA, Michael or Joy. I have been consistent in sending photos and letters to the office knowing that my son would get them. There is a trust that I could never imagine which I have with Michael and Joy. I have been given a rare opportunity to share my feelings and thoughts about adoption through FFTA. I have come to the point of publishing many poems and writings about being a birthmother in the New York and Long Island area. And it is with the joy and support that I received from Michael, Joy and Ilene that I am now prepared to write and publish my own book. "Journey of a Birthmother – The Psychology of the Adoption Experience." I have fond thoughts of Michael and Joy and will continue to refer them in the future.