

# Heart finds a home

**'Forever' family offers love that is unconditional**

Liz Hipes  
*Column*



It is the middle of August. A baby girl -- no older than three months -- sits in her car seat in a car parked on the side of the road. All the doors are locked.

About two hours before, her mother was in the car also. She drove, parked, got out and left.

She had gone to sell her blood to support her drug addiction to heroin. She left the baby by herself, locked up in a car. She left me.

The police took me away. By the time I was three months old, I had been in four different foster homes. I am too young to remember, but I still think about the feeling of being left. It sends chills up my spine and raises the hair on the back of my neck.

Then I came to my fifth foster home. And everything changed.

I used to blame myself.

It must have been something that I did, something that made them not love me.

It is all my fault.

I used to think I was being punished. I thought I had no real parents.

That's before I became a Hipes.

There were kids everywhere when I first arrived. No really...everywhere. But the foster parents were so nice and loving to me. They gave me something my birth parents could have never given me.

They gave me unconditional love.

I ended up staying with them for two years as their foster child. Then I remember sitting in a courtroom, with the foster parents that last took me in that fateful night. They didn't have as many kids as they did when I first arrived. But one kid had been there my whole time in the house. Her name was Brooke. I didn't know it at the time, but on that day in the courtroom, I was going to be her new little sister.

That day, I was adopted.

That day, I had a new future with Mike and Margie Hipes.

I think a lot about what my life would have been like if I had not been adopted.

I do not remember my birth parents.

I don't remember what they look like.

I don't even know if I want to meet them some day or not. Actually, I would be terrified to meet them. I think to myself a lot, "Would it be worth my time to meet the people who gave me up?"

My biological father only showed up to see me one time;

and it wasn't even to see me -- it was to sign release papers to give me up for adoption.

Would my birth mother even care?

I often wonder about where they are now or whether they are even alive. My mom was addicted to heroin to the point where she didn't care about my safety or anyone else's for that matter; I doubt if she's doing very well right now, no matter how much I hope that statement isn't true.

I do think about my birth mother a lot. I wonder if she thinks about me. I wonder if she did anything to change her life around. It makes me angry at times to think of her giving me up. It makes me angry thinking that she was so selfish as to not try and get a stable job and actually pay her rent. I am furious. I am sad.

When I was younger, there were times I felt lonely. There were times I would get so angry that I wanted to find her just so I could tell her how great I was doing since she wasn't in my life anymore.

But through it all, I learned to love and to forgive. I forgave my birth mother and I learned to love her.

And trust me, I do love her immensely, but for only one reason: I love her because she made the decisions that she did. Because if she didn't make those decisions, I wouldn't have the life that I have today.

I think it was all a part of God's perfect plan for me to fall into this kind of situation so that I could learn and become stronger.

The people who adopted me are my parents. I don't think of them as caretakers, guardians, step-parents or anything else.

They raised me. They gave me a home and I have a future with them. They fed me and made sure that I had a wonderful education and they did, above and beyond times a million, what a parent could do for a child. They still do.

But most of all, they brought me to Christ. They showed me that Jesus is my one and only Savior and that he died to save me from my sins. Of everyone's sins. Even my birth mother's sins.

It's sometimes scary to think about where I would be and what I would be doing if I wasn't adopted by the Hipes family.

I don't know if I would be as smart as I strive to be now. Or if I would want to take the initiative like I try to do every day. And I highly doubt that I would be in a wonderful community like Wando High School. I probably wouldn't be a Christian today if it wasn't for them.

And I know for a fact that I'm not the only one who has gone through such a difficult time. There are lots of people who don't have loving parents like the ones who found me.

I am forever and eternally grateful to have found people that love me and surround me. I can't even tell them how much I love them.

I am theirs, and they are mine.

I pray for the safety of my birth mother often.

But not nearly as often as I thank God for the mom that I have now.

**"I am theirs, and they are mine."**

*Sophomore  
Liz Hipes*

## Outside of the *tribe*

### Winter Storm Jonas

The storm that shook the mid-South has already claimed at least 37 lives. This snow storm has dumped three feet alone of snow in areas along the east coast. New York City and other metropolitan areas have had to close all transportation because of the heavy snowfall.

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### Panthers and Broncos prepare for Super Bowl

In two back-to-back games Sunday on Jan. 24, the Broncos won the AFC championship against the New England Patriots, 20-18. Right after, the Carolina Panthers beat the Arizona Cardinals with 49-15 in the NFC championship. The two teams are headed off to Super Bowl 50 in San Francisco on Feb. 7.

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### Hundreds die in India flooding

In early December South East India was hit with the worst rainfall in over a century. While flooding has receded, around 300 people have been reported dead and thousands have been displaced by the storms. The severity of the floods is thought to have been increased by incorrect building practices and government actions.

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### Flint water causes uproar

Flint, Michigan switched from purchasing Detroit's water supply to using water from the Flint River to save money. The move, however, has been disastrous, with lead contaminating the water. Findings of lead were ignored by officials and caused an uproar in the Flint community for the damage lead poisoning to children.

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