

The Morrin Family

Sue and Kevin Morrin vividly remember getting the call from Child Services: a three-month-old infant needed a home. Her mother had badly neglected the baby, and was going into treatment for drug and alcohol addiction.

Sue went to pick up the baby girl and instantly fell in love. "I remember wondering how someone could neglect their baby, and also how awful it would be to have a baby taken," says Sue. Although they loved the child as their own, Sue and Kevin knew it would be best if the mother could reunite with her daughter.

Initially, the baby had trouble sleeping and cried often, common problems for infants affected by neglect. After several days of loving attention and physical contact, the baby girl responded. She began sleeping through the night, cooing, smiling, and interacting with the family.

Meanwhile, her birth mother Kristy* was getting treatment. She actively participated in her recovery and started seeing her baby girl during weekly supervised visits. After four months, Sue met Kristy for the first time. "I got to see the baby sit with her mom and be okay without me," says Sue. "It was a bit awkward, but my heart went out to this young woman. She was really trying."

Sue and Kristy bonded over their shared love for the baby. Kristy attended church with the Morrins on her first Mother's Day, which was also the first time she met the rest of the family. "The entire dynamic was very humbling and sweet," Sue remembers. Her sons were particularly touched. "It was a great character building experience for them," she says. "They saw this woman transforming her life, and realized that it's not all about sports and their cozy little life."

After that, Kristy attended church every week while she finished treatment. This gave her more time to spend with her daughter, and allowed Sue to mentor Kristy as a new mother. "I was careful to let her be the mom and only gave her direction when she asked for it," says Sue. "She was never once defensive or resentful." Six months after the Morrins opened their home to this little baby, she went home with her mother. "This was one of the hardest things I have ever done," says Sue. "It was so bittersweet."

The Morrins remain close to the daughter they treated like their own for six months. Kristy and her baby live just five minutes away, and they often get together to attend baseball games, go to church, or relax at the Morrin home. They're all going camping together over the summer.

The mentoring continues as well. Sue and Kristy recently attended Parenting Education and Self-Advocacy (PESA) training through the Casey Foundation, which focuses on birth parents, foster parents, and social workers. Kevin and the boys babysat while they were gone. Although people laud Sue and her family for opening their home, Sue shrugs off the praise. "I really just feel like I am doing what comes naturally, loving this baby and my new friend."

*Name has been changed.

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