

A generous community must respond in the crisis of the other, not in its own convenience.

F and M, the couple for whom All Saints recently threw a shower, did have their child, a little boy. He had a minor cleft palate, which was known ahead of time by means of ultrasound. On that basis F decided to give the child up for adoption, as she had no means to care for a special needs child. From the beginning she wanted to have an open adoption. The adoptive parents agreed — until on F's final day in the hospital, July 16th, the final papers were signed, after which the adoptive father refused to give F their address. F, feeling completely betrayed, became very angry, and someone at the hospital overreacted and called CPS.

CPS came out about 11:00 PM the next day, July 17th. F and M were cooperative, if stunned, and things went reasonably well until F's roommate became hostile and refused a drug test. Because of that the CPS worker decided to remove K, the 2 year old, from the environment that same night. If F and M could find a place to go with K they could remain together, otherwise K would be placed in foster care immediately. F called us at 11:45 PM, frantic that K was going to be taken away. Because of prior history there were no family or friends that would have been acceptable to CPS.

We made a quick decision to take them into our home, not knowing how that would go or just how long it would last. Chris was scheduled to leave for a reunion with her parents early the next day, July 18th, and that had to be cancelled at the last minute.

During their stay M's car broke down several times and had to be placed in the shop. Once we had to tow it a few miles, done in cooperation with L and T, friends with a large truck. Chris took F many different places over the course of the weeks, even staying home from the office a couple of days early on to help stabilize F. I had to deal with a totally clogged sink one night when I came in about 9:15, disassembling the drain to unblock it. There were always considerations of refrigerator space, K trying to take food out of the kitchen, even a broken diaper on the carpet. Yet, with grace toward them we continued to extend them our welcome and we all survived quite well.

They were released with the case fully closed by CPS last Wednesday, August 2nd. They had found and set up an apartment pending the case resolution, so we were able to move them to their own place that same evening. We told them that we had given them that time with us because we believed in them, and that we felt that K being taken away was the worst thing that could happen to her. K has already had far too much upheaval in her young life. Both F and M were in tears, unable to fully express their gratitude.

F and M staying with us was not a situation without controversy for some. They are not married, but they have been together about a year and consider themselves a couple. These two have essentially no church background at all, so they do not have the same moral structures that we hold for ourselves. Had we rejected M because they are not married, neither of them would have understood that. In particular, F is Caucasian and M is Hispanic, and our rejection of him for whatever moral reasons almost certainly could not have been understood without some degree of racial overtone.

It is in these sorts of crisis times that we find ourselves most stretched and challenged to respond

generously, without counting the cost to our time, our property or our space. We are glad we kept them with us. We will never know what might have been otherwise had we not taken them in, but we do know that they were touched in many ways which could not have happened had we not done so.

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