

Volume 2, Issue 1

January 2011



# BECOMING YOUR BEST

## Stories Of Hope And Encouragement About Individuals With Disabilities

# Becoming Your Best Newsletter

Greetings and Happy New Year!

As we begin a new year, many folks are well underway with their new year's resolutions and goals. I trust you are doing well with yours. If not, tomorrow is a new day.

I recently read a great definition for a goal. "A goal is a specific, measurable, and time-bound end toward which you direct specific effort until achieved!" Some keys to accomplishing your goals include planning thoroughly, staying focused, and involving others.

I believe persistence is the glue that binds all the parts to achieving and accomplishing your endeavors. Robert Half said it his way, "Persistence is what makes the impossible possible, the possible likely, and the likely definite."

Therefore, don't let yourself fall short of the goals you would like to achieve. Make your plan, stay focused on what you want to accomplish, involve others in helping you to accomplish your plan, AND be persistent.

Our story this month is an excellent example of these keys in operation. It is a wonderful story about a family with a worthy goal of adopting a child from Eastern Europe who has Down syndrome.

The family has a plan, they are staying focused, and they need your help and involvement. Read their story, check out their blog, and do what you can to help them to accomplish their goal. At the very least, share their story with others who may be inspired to assist in some small way.

George Matthew Adams said, "He climbs highest who helps another up."

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Submit your inspirational stories to the following e-mail address:

[stories@becomingyourbest.com](mailto:stories@becomingyourbest.com).

Subscribe to our FREE newsletter by sending an e-mail to:

[newsletter@becomingyourbest.com](mailto:newsletter@becomingyourbest.com).

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The photograph is by Bob Sumners—see more at [www.shootthebeach.com](http://www.shootthebeach.com).

[WE ARE NOW ON FACEBOOK—BECOME A FAN AT BECOMING YOUR BEST.](#)

Mission:

We are dedicated to presenting inspiring stories of hope and encouragement about individuals with disabilities.

These stories of success are meant to provide support and the keys to "Becoming Your Best!"

Thank you for your stories and your support!

George M. Graham Jr.

## "OUR STORY" BY KECIA AND KRIS COX

My husband and I have been married for 11 years. We have 3 beautiful daughters. Our youngest was born with Down syndrome and has forever changed our lives for the better. When she was born, we were sad when we learned she had Down syndrome, but all that QUICKLY changed as we realized how wonderful this is that we were given "a little something extra." We also quickly came to realize that she was more alike than different and that our lives were still going to be wonderful.

When talking with my sister in law (after she had her little baby girl with Down Syndrome just 10 months ago) I told her how quickly my tears changed from tears of sadness, loss and what was supposed to be...into tears of the overwhelming beauty of things the way they are! I told her that since Bree came into my life I now shed these tears, the good ones, all too often. My heart swells and the tears come often...every time she learns a new word, or understands a new conversation, or discovers a new skill, or lights up when she hears music, or follows an instruction, or wraps her arms around my neck. Having someone so close to heaven in my midst is a true blessing and I am thankful every day for her.



Kareen's forever family (left to right): Bree, Kris, Kyra, Kecia, and Adrie.

I have so many instances when I cry tears of joy, or my heart bursts with pride in the fact that I have a child with special needs...it truly occurs daily, sometimes big instances, sometimes small. In her world little achievements are BIG achievements! In her world, putting a cheerio in a small hole is a BIG achievement, or drawing a line on a paper, or taking a drink from a regular glass without dumping it down her chest, and because of her, these rather small achievements have taught me that no achievement is small!

Watching Bree grow and learn, I have often thought of something I read about the bumblebee. According to the law of aerodynamics, the bumblebee can't fly, but the bumblebee doesn't know that. So it flies. Like the bumblebee, Bree doesn't know that she is not "supposed" to fly...so she does. And by so doing she is teaching me, my husband, my children and many who know her that we can all fly, even if we are not "supposed" to.



Bree Cox— "try to understand her because she certainly holds hands with God."

Now 4 years later, we are "choosing" Down syndrome. We are adopting a little 4 year old girl from an orphanage in Eastern Europe. She also has Down syndrome and she and Bree will basically be twins, as they are only one month apart. We NEVER thought we would be on this journey but here we are and we are so glad to be here.

It has been a very unexpected surprise that we are on this journey, but it has been nothing short of miraculous so far, and I am sure it will only continue to be more so as we go on.

I started following a family (<http://bridgets-light.blogspot.com/>) on their adoption journey, and then found another family (<http://bridgets-light.blogspot.com/>) had also traveled this road, and then I recently followed a third family (<http://jaxsonsfight.blogspot.com/>), and I would often joke to my husband and friends and family that "if I keep reading these blogs, I am going to do this."

Well, I was completely joking, but I now know that it was all to prepare me for this! I have wanted another baby for a long time now (we have been trying for almost 3 years), and then after my awful miscarriage last summer, I was devastated and just kept wondering "why?" "What does the Lord have in store for our family right now if it is not this?" Well, little did I know that it was Kareen that he had in store for our family. The way every step of this process has unfolded so far is nothing short of a miracle and nothing short of the Lord's hand guiding our path!



I have looked at the little ones on Reece's Rainbow (an International Down syndrome orphan ministry—see more at <http://www.reecesrainbow.com/>) on and off over the last year or two, but although, of course, I felt bad that these children were orphans, and theoretically wished I could save them all, I never felt "drawn" to one of them, or even felt like I should pursue this for that matter.....until about a month ago.

At Christmas time Reece's Rainbow does an angel tree and tries to raise funds for these angels (since the cost of international adoption is a lot.) So many of my friends had links and posts about the kids on Reece's Rainbow. As I looked at them, I started to feel like maybe I needed to pursue this.

So I started looking at what the process really entails and read more details about other's journeys. I started to look at individual kids and tried to feel "drawn" to certain ones. To tell you the truth, because I wanted another baby, I tried really hard to be "drawn" to a baby, and it just didn't happen.

As Kris and I were looking over the website one night, he actually saw Kareen and we noticed how close in age she was to Bree...only one month apart. But we kept browsing and that was that. But soon after that I came upon Lily's blog (<http://babynumber10.blogspot.com/>) and out of the goodness of her heart, this amazing woman was doing fundraising for two angels on Reece's Rainbow, Olga and Kareen. As I scrolled down the page, Kareen's face came on my screen, and I was completely overcome with emotion!

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## WIN A COPY OF THE 2011 BECOMING YOUR BEST CALENDAR

### TWO WAYS TO WIN

1. Sign up to receive our Becoming Your Best Newsletter at [www.becomingyourbest.com](http://www.becomingyourbest.com). Two winners will be selected in a random drawing from those who sign up by February 28th. Each winner will receive a copy of the 2011 Becoming Your Best calendar.
2. Recommend someone to sign up for our Becoming Your Best Newsletter (at [www.becomingyourbest.com](http://www.becomingyourbest.com)) and ask that individual to list you as the person who made the referral. The two individuals with the most referrals by February 28th will receive a copy of the 2011 Becoming Your Best calendar.

Winners will be selected on March 1, 2011 and will be notified through their e-mail address.

## "OUR STORY"...CONTINUED

I was sobbing and I thought "Oh my goodness, I think she might be mine!" Of course I kind of freaked out because I wasn't looking for this. I wasn't looking to adopt, and so I tried to move on..... but I could not think about one other thing! Kareen completely consumed me and my thoughts...day and night! From then on every time I saw her picture, I cried. Then I started picturing her with my other girls and it fit. But it was still scary, because there were (and are) so many unknowns.

Well after MANY hours of prayer, fasting, and soul searching. Kris and I knew that we were supposed to do this! Kareen was supposed to be part of our family! We both admitted that we had been dragging our feet a little because we were scared and we knew the easier answer would have been no, but we knew that we could not deny the incredible feelings we had felt about this little girl.

The last few weeks as I have been deciding this and pondering, I have felt closer to the Lord's spirit than I can even explain. I KNOW he has led us to this girl and that we are meant to be her forever family!

Kareen is a 4 year old little girl with Down syndrome who was given up at birth and has lived in an orphanage in Eastern Europe ever since. In her country a child with special needs is only held in an orphanage until the age of 4 or 5 and is then transferred to an institution where conditions are bleak and offer little hope for living a fulfilling life. Kareen's story has touched our family, and we are committed to bring her home. The cost of international adoption is very high, and we could use your help!



Kareen's soon to be sisters—Kyra, Bree, and Adrie.



### iPad giveaway for Kareen! Help Kris and Kecia adopt Kareen!

Go to <http://www.kareensjourneyhome.blogspot.com/> to donate and get entered to win an iPad. Or, you can go to <http://reecesrainbow.org/sponsorcox> and make a donation on Reece's Rainbow International Down Syndrome Orphan Ministry.

Bree opened our eyes to the beauty of these angels, and our other two girls have shown us that we can share this love with another child who needs it.

When people wonder why we would want to adopt another child with special needs, I say why would we not want more of what Bree has brought to our family? She teaches us more acceptance, more patience, more unconditional love, more understanding, more kindness, more about not judging others, more about perseverance, more about watching out for others, the list goes on and on.

Since Bree's birth I have always had a quote in our home that reads "Life doesn't have to be perfect to be wonderful."

My life was wonderful before I had Bree. I had 2 beautiful girls and a wonderful husband, and when Bree was born and I was told she had Down syndrome, I thought my "perfect" was gone. Yet I quickly learned and continue to learn that my life is still wonderful, maybe even more so now that it is not "perfect." Now we are looking forward to the opportunity to bring another angel into our family and show her what life can be like with someone to love you.

Follow Kareen's story on Kecia's blog at <http://www.kareensjourneyhome.blogspot.com/>. You can find out more about the latest developments in Kareen's journey home.

I would like to thank Kris and Kecia for sharing their wonderful story with our readers and wish them well in their endeavors.

For more stories like this, visit our website at <http://www.becomingyourbest.com/>.

Become a friend and follow us on Facebook at Becoming Your Best.