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Adoption: a gift from God

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For Les and Connie Schofer, the longest sermon they ever heard was on Sunday, Dec. 16, 1984. It wasn't because the preacher was going over his time or that he was boring — it was because they were antsy, waiting out the last hours before they could call themselves parents.

The Schofers picked up their 5-week-old daughter later that day, “Homecoming Day” as they call it. It was made possible by an adoption through Liberty Godparent Home (then called Save a Baby).

The bond was immediate, Connie Schofer said.

“The second I saw her, I knew she was mine. It was instantaneous.”

Les Schofer said he remembers the drive home.

“I remember having the feeling that there was something in the car right then that was more important than my own life,” he said. “And I sort of had the thought, ‘Yep, if I had to trade my own life right now, I would.’”

The Schofers, who have both worked for Liberty University since the college's early years and are members at Thomas Road Baptist Church, named their baby Stacy Beth.

Now at age 23, Stacy is a Liberty University graduate with degrees in Biblical Studies and Social Sciences

She is currently taking Seminary classes at LU, with hopes to teach at the college level.

The Schofers have another momentous day that will stick in their memories forever — Stacy's wedding day on Jan. 5 this year. She was married in Pate Chapel at TRBC.

“I just thought she looked like an angel,” her mother said. “That’s exactly what I thought. God gave me an angel. It amazes me that God entrusted her to me.”

And it all started with the Liberty Godparent Home.

There is no doubt the home has played a major role in the family’s lives, but their involvement with that ministry didn’t stop after the adoption. Stacy had her rehearsal dinner there and the Godparent Home’s new flower shop did the flowers for her wedding. Les and Connie Schofer have talked at workshops there and have helped to counsel couples on adoption. Stacy is a regular volunteer, doing everything from mopping floors to cooking, running errands and helping with fundraisers. But what she likes most is interacting with the residents, sharing her testimony and counseling the girls.

“Usually the best way for this to happen is to have them get to know me first just as the person who comes and helps them dry dishes. ... The best thing to do is let them get to know me, then they are very comfortable asking questions about very deep things, like ‘How do you feel towards your birth mother? I’m afraid that if I give my child up, he or she will feel unwanted.’”

She said God is using her experience in a big way.

“It’s very unique being older and saying this [the Godparent Home] is someplace I came from. Most people think of it as [just] saving a baby — well these babies grow up and they do things with their lives.”

The ministry, she said, has given her “a sense of activism.” She wants to stay involved with the home and work with at-risk teenagers in other settings as well.

“If somebody didn’t do something, I might not be here. So am I going to be quiet and not speak up and do something with my life? How ungrateful would that be to do nothing when you’ve been given a gift? I think being adopted makes you realize very quickly that you’re here for a purpose.”

Les and Connie Schofer said the Godparent Home holds a special place in their hearts.

“When I think of that ministry, what they do for all the girls and their families, it’s an awesome service ... but to me all I can think of is how thankful I am for Dr. [Jerry] Falwell because if he didn’t have that vision to have that GH, then we wouldn’t have been able to adopt our little girl from there. It’s very close to home for me,” she said.