



Foster mom discovers God’s plan for her family

By Amanda Mansfield
Press Reporter

Melissa Farlow never imagined herself as a foster mom; the thought of fostering seemed crazy and far-fetched. How can someone foster and not become attached, she wondered. But, after a conversation with a co-worker, who dreamed of fostering and eventually adopting, Melissa saw how happy the thought made her feel.

“After this talk, I thought about fostering daily,” says Melissa. “It consumed my thoughts and prayers.”

After researching the fostering process, Melissa says she learned how desperately our area is in need of foster parents.

After further research and many discussions with her husband, Dustin, the Farlows started attending fostering classes together.

Melissa says the timing was perfect because within one week of completing the classes, she learned that a family member’s child was in need of a foster family. “It was no doubt God’s plan all along,” Melissa says.

After a trip to Nashville, and attending a court hearing, the Farlows came back home with a seven-year old girl named Cheyenne. The next few weeks were filled with doctors’ appointments, court hearings and meetings.

During the whirlwind of the process, Melissa learned that Cheyenne experienced some trauma during her first few years of life. “It took us over a year to get some sort of routine down, work through the trauma and feel like a family,” Melissa says. “Everyone is still adjusting to being a family of five; our family has been tested.”

The Farlows also have two biological children, Brynzlee (also age seven) and Bryson (age 12). Melissa says both children initially had issues accepting another child staying in the family long-term. But now, Brynzlee loves that she gained a sister, and Cheyenne is her best friend. They even often dress alike!

“Cheyenne is not biologically ours, but to her we are mom and dad, and to us she is our daughter,” Melissa says.

She also notes, “Fostering has been the hardest thing I believe I have ever experienced. Having a child come to you hurting and lost is the most heart-breaking experience.”

Melissa also candidly says, “Fostering sucks some days. I prayed so many prayers for Cheyenne’s biological parents, the same people who hurt the child that I now raise and love. I prayed for recovery so their family could return to normal.”

Melissa also recalls crying herself to sleep some nights, thinking she is failing all three of her kids. She questioned whether or not she can help Cheyenne get past the trauma that will eventually hit her as she gets older.

She admits they are not the type of parents who have it all together. “We wing it, but some how everything just works.”

Melissa says that one day Cheyenne will likely become a Farlow, as adoption is most definitely a plan for the future. “She started asking us to adopt her about six months ago. But we have let her know this is a big decision and one that does not have to be rushed.”

Melissa never thought



The Farlow family (front from left) Cheyenne and Brynzlee, (back from left) Dustin, Melissa and Bryson

their first foster placement would be their last. But she says there is no doubt in her mind that her path was already laid out. “Cheyenne completed our family, and everything worked out with perfect timing,” she says.

To learn more about becoming a foster parent in Tennessee, you can visit <https://www.tn.gov/tnfosters> or speak with you local Department of Human Services.

According to the website, “A foster parent is just like any other parent. Their job is to love, protect and nurture children to help them reach their full potential. Being a foster parent requires a great deal of patience and sacrifice. It requires empathy and understanding.

“Fostering does not come without its difficulties, yet many say it is the best, most rewarding thing they have ever done.”

I think Melissa, as well as other area foster moms, would say the same thing.

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