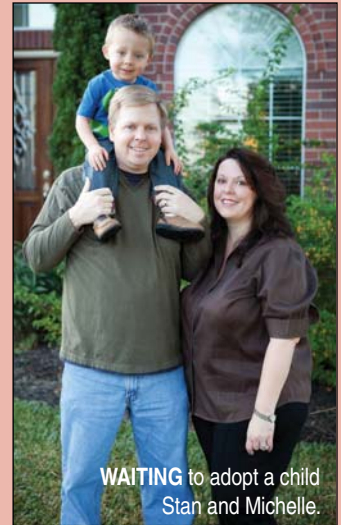


PROSPECTIVE adoptive parents Al and Karyn enjoy a vacation while waiting to adopt.



WAITING to adopt are Whitney and Leann.



WAITING to adopt a child Stan and Michelle.

Another Holiday Waiting to Adopt

By Mardie Caldwell

“I don’t look forward to holiday parties or family traditions because some loved ones are not sensitive about our adoption wait. How do we get through the holidays and stay positive about our adoption?”

Emotions and hopes run high during any adoption wait, however during the holiday season many adopting parents experience additional pressure from family who wonder about their adoption progress. Adopting parents may also experience a greater longing for a child, as they move through traditions and get-togethers, still waiting to adopt.

Here are some tips other families have used to manage potential “holiday blues” while waiting to adopt:

- Get away or get out of town. It’s likely you’ll want to stay close to home and family once you adopt. Take this holiday season and spend it somewhere you may not get to experience again soon, once you add a child. You’ll also be able to take a break from thinking about your adoption when you get away from your everyday life. Many adopting couples also benefit from this chance to reconnect and spend time one-on-one together.
- Do for others. One of the best ways to get a break from any emotional struggle is to help or give to another. You can bake cookies for local servicemen or firefighters, help a neighbor with holiday decorations, visit a retirement home, make gifts for loved ones, or ask a friend what you could do for them to relieve some of their own burdens. Putting a focus on others’ needs, even for an hour, will relieve you of some of the stress of thinking about your own worries.
- Give yourself permission to decline invitations and experience your emotions. Be aware of your need for boundaries during this time in your life when you’re waiting for a child. It’s reasonable to go through a temporary time where you tend to your own emotional needs. Sometimes

forcing a smile at a party, or spending time with people who are not understanding of your current emotional needs can do more harm than good. Listen to your body and mind and take time out from your regular holiday traditions.

- Cherish this time in waiting. Life as you know it today will forever be changed once you adopt. Create memories of the time while you prepared and waited for your child, because those memories are what will make you the parents you become.
- Take on side work. Rake leaves or help hang lights for neighbors, make crafts to sell online, use a hobby to make income (like photography or house painting), or start a part-time seasonal job to raise more funds for your adoption budget. Padding your budget will give you more flexibility and security when you are presented with an adoption opportunity.
- Live in gratitude. Make an effort to focus daily on the blessings you already have, or make an on-going list of the good things in your life. Focus on the adoption you’re moving closer to each day. Be grateful for the friends, family and professionals who have helped you get closer to your adoption.

This holiday, consider reforming how you spend your time, and redirect your energy to make a positive difference for your adoption process. Use the time you might spend worrying about or focusing on the waiting aspect of your adoption to instead make healthy choices that will allow you to experience the joy of this holiday season.

As author of “Called to Adoption,” a recognized adoption expert and certified professional, Mardie Caldwell, C.O.A.P., has helped thousands of birth parents and adoptive parents build families through adoption. After experiencing a challenging adoption with her son, she dedicated her life to assisting others interested in adoption by founding Lifetime Adoption Center in 1986.