

family

connections

Amara Family Story

David, Evette, Myaleah, and Savion

Myaleah is about to celebrate her third birthday. Her mom, Evette, laughs as Myaleah shows her a birthday piñata from a party catalogue—it's a giant nose with green streamers hanging from the nostrils.

When Evette asks Myaleah why she would want a giant nose piñata for her birthday, she giggles, "Because it's gross!"

Evette and David certainly have their hands full with Myaleah and her baby brother, Savion. And they couldn't be happier.

Four years ago when David and Evette decided to adopt, they researched adoption agencies in the area, and decided on Amara because of its reputation and eight decades of service to the community. Evette realized that "Amara's been around for so long, and they just made it so easy between the parenting classes and support from our social workers."

Baby Myaleah came to David and Evette from foster care when she was only four days old. Their lives changed instantly. Evette remembers, "We were on a cloud; we were so excited to have her in our lives." Still, the family dealt with much uncertainty and anxiety as it would be another two years before Myaleah's adoption was legally finalized. They also committed to a child who was prenatally exposed to drugs and may need additional support and resources as she grows up. But they knew Myaleah was their daughter and they would do whatever she needed.

Like Myaleah, more than half of the children from foster care placed in Amara adoptive homes will not be able to celebrate their adoption finalization for 6 months to 3 years following placement. During this time the State will fulfill all legally mandated responsibilities toward the child and the child's birth family. Throughout this period Amara's social workers are monitoring, supporting, and communicating with the family on a regular basis. Amara is committed to a high level of care and partnership, which means supporting our families as much as is needed in order to provide each child a stable, nurturing home with parents that can help them heal.



David, Myaleah & Evette

(continued from front page)

Mary Lingenfelter, their Amara Adoption and Foster Care Specialist, recalls, “Throughout the stressful time before finalization, the family took solace in their wonderful little girl, regardless of whether or not they had their adoption decree in hand.”

David and Evette received tremendous support from Amara, their family and Myaleah’s birth grandparents and uncles. They knew from the beginning they wanted an open adoption, where they would have open communication and contact with the extended birth family. Evette explains, “Spending time with them is so important to Myaleah. We wanted our children to know they’re loved as much as possible. Plus, Myaleah is so inquisitive that she would want to know her birth family anyway.” Evette and David believe open adoption might not work well for everyone, but in

their case, Myaleah’s birth family is truly an extension of their own.

They had such a positive experience with Myaleah that David and Evette discussed adopting a second child. Two weeks after speaking with their Amara social worker, they received a phone call. Myaleah’s birthmother had just gone into labor, and knew that she wanted her baby placed with David and Evette. Soon enough, the family welcomed Myaleah’s baby brother Savion into their home. “We were completely shocked,” Evette says. “We were so happy and so nervous at the same time.”

With Myaleah’s adoption now finalized and Savion’s close behind, David and Evette are thrilled to have been blessed with adopting birth siblings. Myaleah is especially



Myaleah

excited to have her baby brother at home, and her parents believe that both children will continue to thrive as they grow with each other.

When asked what she thought of having her little brother with her, Myaleah, who busies herself by pretending to be different animals, happily replied, “Woof woof!”

Successes in 2007

Thanks to our amazing foster and adoptive families, dedicated board and staff, and philanthropic partners, there were many reasons to celebrate in 2007.

- 38 children from foster care placed in adoptive homes*—an 81 percent increase from 2006—including these harder to place children:
 - 7 pairs of siblings placed in same home
 - 6 children ages 6–12
 - 15 children of color
- 13 at-risk relinquished infants placed in forever homes
- 35 adoptions finalized*
- 51 new families prepared for adoptive placements*
- 8 foster homes by year end able to care for 12 children in transition*

Amara counts on the generosity of the community, just as the children we serve count on us to find them forever families. Thank you to the many individuals, foundations, and corporations who support our work and join us in our vision of **A Home for Every Child**.

**Increase from 2006*

Join us for our Annual Luncheon

Amara's mission is all about finding loving, adoptive homes for children in foster care. This work is neither easy nor inexpensive, but it is powerful and transforming. And much more needs to be done because *for every child adopted out of foster care, there are 2 more waiting for a family of their own.*

In honor of National Foster Care Month,
Amara's Board of Directors invites you to our annual benefit luncheon:

A Home for Every Child

Thursday, May 1, 2008 | 11:30 am – 1:00 pm | Bell Harbor Conference Center

Emcee – Jean Enersen | *Honorary Chairs* – Paul and Linda Suzman

Keynote Speaker – Dee Wilson, director NW Institute for Children and Families

To RSVP or for more information, please call (206) 260-1700

A special thanks to our generous sponsors:



Seattle Post-Intelligencer

*Amara cannot accept donations from families whose adoptions are not yet finalized.

Community Support for Amara

BabyLegs has chosen Amara as their March “Good Works” partner! BabyLegs is a Seattle-based company that creates unique, playful legwarmers for babies and children. In addition to featuring Amara in their monthly newsletter to manufacturers and clients, they have donated 80 gift sets and 30 single pairs to Amara for our clients. For more information about BabyLegs’ products and generous work in our community, visit www.babylegs.net.

In December, the Seattle Sonics and Storm chose two Amara families for their annual “Holiday Assist” program. These families were accompanied on a shopping spree in Target by Sonics and Storm players and coaches. Parents chose cameras and household

items and the kids picked out their favorite toys, and all of the participating families were also given gift cards and Sonics tickets.

Elliott Bay Book Company chose Amara in November as the recipient of their “Books for a Change” program. Elliott Bay donated more than \$450 in proceeds from selected adoption-related books, and included Amara and our foster care and adoption information on their website and in their Pioneer Square store.

To all of our generous community supporters, thank you!



**Check out our new website at
[www.amaraparenting.org!](http://www.amaraparenting.org)**

Address Service Requested

www.amaraparenting.org
amarara@amaraparenting.org
(206) 260-1700

3300 East Union St
Seattle, WA 98122

A Home For Every Child
Amarara



Nonprofit Org.
PRSR1 STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO 1181
SEATTLE, WA