



THE MONROE FAMILY celebrates how their lives are touched by adoption.

# Finding Help & Hope for the Journey

By Michael  
& Amy Monroe

**I**t began simply enough. We had welcomed our son home less than a year earlier, and we were on our way home from a small gathering of adoptive families at a local church. That evening was spent listening to a couple of stories shared by other adoptive families, and telling the basics of our own story over and over as people bounced from one conversation to another before and after.

But for everything this gathering lacked — organization, intentional purpose, polished speakers — it offered the one thing we needed most — connections to those who “got it.” Never mind few of the families came together and looked just like our family; they were all adoptive families and that counted for a lot. It meant we were familiar and understood. It meant we belonged.

Fast forward three years and the leaders of this small church group asked us if we would consider taking the group over and leading it. What had started as a support group for families that had adopted older children from Russia in the late 1990’s, had dwindled to only a small handful of families that met every other month.

Honestly, there was not much to “take over” but we had what seemed like a crazy idea at the time. The idea was that maybe other families needed what we needed — connection, encouragement and help. And maybe, just maybe a church was the perfect place for us to offer it and for others to find it.

So in September 2005, Tapestry began as the adoption and foster care ministry at Irving

Bible Church. Our first event was less than impressive. We had a whopping 22 people attend. But that mattered little as the focus was on building relationships. As a ministry, we had little to offer — no materials, no expertise, no elaborately planned events or high-quality seminars or conferences; just friendship and the promise that we would be honest about our journey and would be open to the honesty of others.

In fact, at the first event we first set out what has become known at Tapestry as the “three things.” We told the group gathered that evening the three things that we believe are absolutely true about the adoption and foster care journey. The “three things” are: the adoption/foster care journey won’t be easy; it will be worth it; and you should not go it alone.

These realities continue to guide Tapestry today.

During the past seven years Tapestry has been blessed to walk alongside literally thousands of adoptive and foster families. Tapestry is privileged to serve hundreds of families face-to-face through a variety of activities and events, including discussion-based small groups, large groups educational events, parent training courses, family-to-family mentoring, outreach events, summer family camp, and the annual Tapestry Conference.

And thousands more families are served via Tapestry's website, through the distribution of its resources and materials, and by Empowered To Connect ([www.empoweredtoconnect.org](http://www.empoweredtoconnect.org)), its collaborative effort with Dr. Karyn Purvis, author of "The Connected Child."

Yet even as Tapestry has grown to become one of the largest church-based adoption and foster care ministries in the nation, it remains unique in many ways. For example, while Tapestry is a local church ministry of Irving Bible Church, nearly 85 percent of the estimated 1,400 people that we serve face-to-face each year do not attend our church.

In fact, many of those connected to Tapestry do not regularly attend or identify with a church at all. In that sense, Tapestry has truly become a community-wide resource that openly welcomes everyone desiring to get connected and find encouragement for the adoption or foster care journey.



In addition, Tapestry's work is led and carried out by an incredible group of volunteers, many of whom benefitted from the ministry in some way and now serve as a way to "give back" to help other families. And rather than charging participants to get involved, Tapestry continues to offer nearly all of its events and activities, including its annual day-long conference, as well as most of its resources completely free-of-charge.

Yet despite all of the growth and impact that Tapestry has had during the past seven plus years, the heart of the ministry remains the same. Annie McClellan, a young adoptive mom that Tapestry began supporting five years ago and who now serves with her husband Scott on the Tapestry leadership team, puts it this way: "Tapestry is a ministry committed to meeting the real needs of adoptive

and foster families, being in community with them, and supporting them through the highs and lows of the journey. Wherever the adoption or foster care journey leads, Tapestry will be there."

Throughout the years Tapestry has been blessed to walk alongside countless families. Along the way we have seen miracle after miracle as families have been formed and lives have been transformed. What began as a simple idea and a dream has grown into a reality that offers real help and true hope to families traveling the adoption and foster care journey.

*Michael and Amy Monroe founded and lead Tapestry. Visit [www.tapestryministry.org](http://www.tapestryministry.org) for more information and access to a wide range of free resources.*



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For more details about her retreats, conferences and books, contact Sally directly at [sallymiller@ameritech.net](mailto:sallymiller@ameritech.net) or write her Director of Public Relations, Julie MacManus, by visiting [www.sallymillergirltalk.blogspot.com](http://www.sallymillergirltalk.blogspot.com)