

## ADOPTTEES:

especially when they are unable to voice it themselves.

The fourth lesson my students would like to teach may be more for other adoptees than for parents. While working through their issues of loss and rejection, they have come to realize that they were not “given up” because they were not loved; they were adopted into another family because their birth parents wanted something good for them. Their birth parents wanted to give these kids something they could not provide. For those that were removed from their home, they have recognized that the state believed they were in danger and was trying to provide a place of safety for them. They all think about and wonder how their birth parents are doing. And they all wonder what their lives would be like if they were with their biological parents. This is a normal process and does not necessarily mean that they wish they were not adopted by their family.

The fifth lesson the students taught by sharing their stories was that they are grateful they were adopted. Despite all their questions, anger, sadness and crazy-making behavior, they are happy to be a part of their family. They recognize that they would likely have been in a tough situation had they not been adopted by their family. Either they would remain in foster care or they would be raised by someone not prepared to be a parent. Since the actual outcome if they had not been adopted is unknown, many fantasize a very positive scenario. However, these students came to the conclusion through their own conversations in group that they are grateful to be adopted.

Finally, the last lesson about adoption is that after all the struggles and hard work, it all works out in the end. Whether their challenges take them to a therapeutic boarding school or they are able to handle their issues at home with parents, the struggles do get resolved and the kids are better for having been adopted; many even get closer to family through the process of working through their issues.

The students seemed to want to leave adults with a sense of hope: that after all the trouble they caused as kids, things will work out the best they can, and the kids will be as close as they can to their families. At the same time I write this optimistic statement, I recognize that not all situations will “work out” and many kids will not “get closer” to their families in later years. Some of the issues of adoption may be too big for kids and their families to overcome easily and may take them beyond the years they live at home. Though there are no guarantees to how children will turn out when dealing with tough issues, these lessons can remind us that after the trial of our kids’ struggles come many sweet blessings. Thank you my young friends for sharing with us these glimpses of all that we desire.

## **IT TAKES A VILLAGE**

By: Mari Allman

A few weeks ago I attended the graduation of my youngest child! While thinking about how I could possibly be that old...my mind wandered to all of the schools and the teachers and counselors that had been a part of all four of my kids’ educations. It is true that it “takes a village.”

Discovery Academy is, for all intents and purposes, a little village of its own. We offer a tailored approach based on what is best for the student, not what is easiest for the school system. Each student has their own Individual Academic Plan in place when they arrive. Our superior teachers meet frequently with each of the students’ therapist to discuss progress and needs of the individual. Also, each classroom has a residential mentor present to help support the teacher. In this way, all areas of our program are aware of each student’s academic progression and understand better how they can encourage and support them.

Our program is such that students work at a pace that is comfortable to them while at the same time being challenged by our extensive curriculum. We offer teacher driven classes and also one-on-one time providing opportunities for teachers to give remedial assistance or to challenge students with a more rigorous curriculum. Our year round schedule provides an opportunity for students who may have fallen behind to catch up or even move beyond where they should be.

Our in-house Counselors help students prepare for further education by helping them with ACT and SAT testing prep which has given us the reputation of higher scores on these tests than those of the national average. They also guide them in looking into and applying for higher education in colleges all around the states.

Our beautiful new academic center allows us to do all this in state of the art classrooms holding no more than 12 students each. With computers in every room, students can do research or compose papers without having to move to a computer lab.

Our commitment to experiential learning seeps into our school environment. Once a week the students participate in activities, either on or off campus, using sensory skills that help learning come to life. These may be at a museum, state park or even a local business. They may be here on campus with an invited guest giving a hands-on lecture of some kind. With these experiential activities, we hope to open minds to the many possibilities for higher learning or vocations.

Discovery Academy is the leader in pioneering best practices for educational excellence. This commitment is reflected in our faculty, mentors, therapists and counselors. It truly does “take a village.”

**About the Author:** *Mari Allman handles Admissions for Discovery Academy. For more information, she can be contacted at 801-374-2121*