

# Grise Family

Ali and Chris Grise are flexible and unflappable. Those are helpful qualities for parents, especially when their family planning takes on a life of its own.

When faced with infertility, the Grises chose foster parenting as the best match for their social consciousness because, “There are so many children right here in our area looking for a home.” Ali laughingly explains, “We decide to foster with the hope of adopting eventually. We envisioned a family of two children.” The pair had never imagined they might become parents to four children, all within three years.

*“Adoption has meant everything to me! It has completed me and has filled my heart with love.”*

Their first assignment was to be a “temporary respite provider” for two young sisters, Carmen, age three, and Sammi, age one. The girls had been in foster care for two months.

After a week, the

Grises learned that the girls would not be able to return to the previous foster home. Less than eighteen months later – a speedy time frame in the child welfare system, the Grises adopted Carmen and Sammi.

The day after their adoption of the girls, the couple was asked if they could consider fostering a fourteen-month-old, for whom adoption might become the plan. The Grises agreed, and indeed they adopted Jeremiah just a year after he joined their household.

After adopting three young children within a twelve month time span, most couples would have considered their family complete. But Ali and Chris are not like most couples. As soon as they learned that Jeremiah’s birth mother was carrying another child, they lovingly reached out. Jeremiah’s baby brother Zeke came to the family as a newborn. Ali refers to Zeke as “our Christmas angel”

because the family adopted him on Christmas Eve, when he was eight months old.

When asked about the challenges of adoption, the Grises cite the rapid growth of their family.

(“We went from a husband and wife and two dogs to four children in a matter of three years!”) Additional challenges were the children’s developmental delays due to prenatal drug exposure and neglect early in life. Two of the children had lead poisoning; another was born severely drug addicted.

Ali and Chris use available resources such as play therapy to advance their children’s growth and recovery. They also give and receive support through a local a non-profit organization, Building Forever Families of the Quad Cities.

The Grises thank members of Congress for the Federal Adoption Tax Credit, which they found “extremely helpful.” They want Congress to be aware of the need for more funding to foster care and adoption programs. “Funds keep getting cut and the DHS workers are completely overworked.” Unaware of adult concerns such as funding, the Grise children, now ages eight, six, five, and two, are well adjusted and thriving. Ali and Chris are so proud of the “amazing progress” all the children have made in overcoming struggles.

In reflecting upon their family, Ali states, “Adoption has meant everything to me! It has completed me and has filled my heart with love.”



There are 964 children in foster care in Iowa waiting to be adopted.

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), Preliminary FY2013, Estimates as of July 2014