

## The Newton Tab

<http://www2.townonline.com/newton/> (no web version available)

Wednesday, November 24, 2004

Newton Life

Write from the heart

By Brittany Oat

Correspondent

Adopted children may not be born under a mother's heart, but they are certainly born into the hearts of the entire adoptive family, according to an anonymous poem about adoption.

With this sentiment in mind, Alliance for Children Executive Director Filis Casey and her adopted daughter, Marisa Casey, have compiled, "Born in Our Hearts," an anthology of adoption stories from more than 5,000 adoptive families they have served since 1974.

"The agency started getting big, and I wanted a way we could all stay connected to each other," Filis Casey said.

The book includes stories from every member of the family affected by adoption — children, parents, grandparents and siblings — to show how every adoption is different but, at the same time, similar.

Each of Filis' three children contributed a piece for the book. Her son, Matt Casey of Jamaica Plain, said he hoped to help biological children cope with the adoption of a new sibling by sharing his joy getting the "gift" of his sister.

"[My mom] was so familiar with the process that she was able to explain it to us so well," Casey said.

Children whose parents know little about adoption can look to his story for comfort.

Adopted children often struggle to make sense of their past and integrate it with their new life, said Marisa Casey, who wrote a story about her own quest to explore her Latin American roots.

Casey said his goal in writing the story was that children with language barriers and unknown pasts will realize that others share their struggles.

“I was hoping that other adopted kids would see that there is some kind of peace in sight,” she said.

Through communication, Casey said she will continue to help adopted children gain strength in numbers and educate parents on the joys of adoption.

Currently, she is working on the documentary film, “The Colombia Project: Two Stories of Adoption” that chronicles both her own adoption story and a friend’s quest to find his Colombian birth parents — a quest that Casey feels no drive to undertake.

“I’m just very content where I am in my life,” Casey said. “I’m not interested in unearthing that past.”

Writing “Born in Our Hearts” helped the Caseys form a better mother-daughter relationship, both said.

At age 17, Marisa Casey left home to attend college and has not been back, aside from holidays, since. Now 25, Casey said she and her mother are closer than ever because of the 2 ½ years they spent compiling the book.

“Mothers and daughters sometimes have a few little issues in life with their children,” Filis Casey said. “One of the unexpected consequences of the book is that it has drawn us so close together.”

In the future, Marisa Casey says she hopes to collaborate on a series of adoption books with her mom. Each book, she said, will be targeted at different family members addressed in the original anthology.

*All proceeds from “Born in Our Hearts” and the books to follow will go to the Alliance for Children Foundation. For more information on Born in Our Hearts, visit [www.allforchildren.org](http://www.allforchildren.org).*