

# Rx

## For Happiness

by  
Judy  
Hammett



I was sitting at my trusty computer around 2:30 a.m., which is my usual time to catch up on the mounds of paperwork each day (not to mention my E-Mail), when I saw the flag for new mail go up. I immediately went in to see who had written and found a plea from Rich Wampler asking if I would consider writing a column for The Seeker for the four issues each year. I thought about it and talked with my husband, Ken, about it and then decided that I really wanted to do this.

What a neat thing to have happen to me. I love to talk and to write and my favorite subjects are babies, fostering, adoption and being an advocate for children. I have a chance to "talk" with other foster/adoptive parents four times a year.

This first column will be an introduction of my family and myself. In the Summer issue of The Seeker, Rich wrote a column about us. For those of you who missed it, I will try and give you a picture of us. Ken and I married August 20, 1994 and I moved here from Mobile, Alabama where I was born and had lived for the first 51 years of my life. Everyone asks how we met with him living in Atlanta and I was in Mobile. It was easy, we had dated over thirty years previously when he lived in Mobile for a couple of years. After we both married other people our families kept in touch. Somehow we lost contact with each other for several years and then suddenly I heard from him again and we discovered we were both divorced and we started running up many long distance phone bills and the rest, as they say, is history. We joked that we "had to get married"...we could no longer afford the \$300.00 a month bills with BellSouth.

I had been a foster parent in Mobile for five years fostering 22 infants. When I moved to Stone Mountain I knew that I could not just stay at home so I started looking for volunteer opportunities. The faces of the infants I had fostered kept coming into my mind and I knew that God was trying to tell me something. He wanted me to foster again. I talked with my

wonderful husband about the prospect and his first thought was "baby, I haven't changed a diaper in nineteen years." I told him it was like riding a bicycle and that it would all come back to him. Together we decided to look into the foster parenting program in the Atlanta area and see if there was a need for us. As I look back now, that had to be the dumbest question we ever asked. Was there a need? Boy, was there! We contacted several agencies and felt led to The United Methodist Children's Home. After our first meeting with Ms. Jane Garman, Foster Care Worker, we looked no further. One of her first questions was "Have you considered fostering medically fragile infants?" We told her that we would foster whoever needed us the most. That was in November, 1994 and on April 18, 1995 we brought our first little Angel into our home. We called her "Miss B". She was not too fragile but she was certainly hand picked by God to let us know that we had indeed made the right decision. Seventeen days later we were on a 3,000 mile business trip to Kentucky, Washington, D.C., and many points in between. "Miss B" was a traveler. She loved it. She even tasted her first strained foods in a beautiful park in Kentucky. She liked the park better than she liked the bananas.

In July, 1995, Ms. Garman called and asked if we thought we could take another medically fragile infant. We asked about the baby and found that we had already met her when we picked up "Miss B" at the hospital. She was in the next bed. We spent several weeks visiting her and training on her breathing treatments, G-Tube feedings, medications, everything that would help us be the best care givers we could be. Labor Day, 1995 we brought the Jazz into our home. She was nearly eleven months old but could be left on the sofa and she would never move. A few months later she rolled off the sofa to follow "B" and she has not stopped since. Today both these little girls are healthy, happy and, intelligence wise, off the charts. Let me add here that Jazz was a 23 week preemie who weighed in at a whopping 20 ounces at birth. No one who meets her today believes she is the same little girl we carried into our home that sunny Labor Day five years ago. After the Jazz came Q-Man who was the reflux King of the World. He could hit a target across the room after each bottle. He was the one with the big smile and now at the ripe old age of five, he is still smiling. His adoptive parents, who by the way, adopted the Jazz too, always wonder what he is up to with that big smile. Next came Shawnee who decided right off that he might be tiny and fragile but he knew that he did not ever want to leave us. He is now our son, officially adopted.

The next to arrive in order were Angel and The Judge. Then the call came about Kimberly. "We don't know how long she will live but she needs a good home" We fought to get the waiver to bring a third medically fragile child into our home....we wanted her more than anything. And she, too, came to stay. She is now our officially adopted daughter. Then we were blessed with a healthy infant, only because there were no empty foster beds in DeKalb County when she was ready to be discharged at two days of age. The "Tot" has been a joy to us. She is my shadow. The next call brought little "Nique" who had a very short life on this old earth but brought us so much love that we feel blessed to have been given the opportunity to know and love him for even those few short days. He is now my new Guardian Angel and really has his work cut out for him. His death was the hardest thing I have ever had to face and handle. I questioned whether to continue fostering these special babies. Every time we bring one into our home we know that we risk losing them. They come with so many medical problems and needs that their life expectancy is always in question. But after much prayer I knew that even those who have only a few weeks here deserve the best home with parents who will love and cherish them. So, when the calls came for "monie" and "Kira" we said yes.

Right now we have five special little Angels in our home ranging in age from six months to four years. We have 2 feeding pumps, Oxygen, Breathing machines, Pulse Oximeters, at least \$40,000 worth of therapy equipment (all loaned or given to us) and enough toys to restock Toys-R-Us. We travel in a 37-foot Motor Home that we named "The Hammett's Rx." We often have to pull an 8-foot trailer just to carry all the wheel chairs and assorted equipment that is needed. We take the children on several vacations a year some of which are a combination of business and pleasure. Our favorite spot is Walt Disney World and we always stay in the Ft. Wilderness Campground since we have our moving home with us. We also take them with us to the Grand Ole Opry a couple of times a year. In fact, the latest strip was on October 13 and 14 to attend the 75th birthday celebration of the Opry. On December 5 we will, once again, check into Disney World for a week of fun and relaxation to enjoy the sights and sounds of Christmas. We are not sure who enjoys it the most, the babies or mom and dad!

I have always believed that God puts each of us here for a specific purpose. I think mine is to care for the little ones who are unable to care for themselves and who have no one else. What a  
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# Misty

**My name is Misty. I am but three. My eyes are swollen. I cannot see. I must be stupid, I must be bad. What else could have made my daddy so mad? I wish I were better. I wish I weren't ugly. Then maybe my mommy would still want to hug me. I can't speak at all, I can't do a wrong, or else I'm locked up all the day long. When I awake I'm all alone. The house is dark. My folks aren't home. When my mommy does come I'll try and be nice, so maybe I'll get just one whipping tonight. Don't make a sound! I just heard a car. My daddy is back from Charlie's Bar. I hear him curse, my name he calls, I press myself against the cold wall. I try and hide from his evil eyes. I'm so afraid now that I'm starting to cry. He finds me weeping. He shouts ugly words. He says it's my fault that he suffers at work. He slaps me and hits me and yells at me more. I finally get free and I run for the door. He's already locked it and I start to bawl. He takes me and throws me against the hard wall. I fall to the floor with my bones nearly broken, and my daddy continues with more bad words spoken. "I'm sorry!", I scream, but it's now much too late. His face has been twisted into unimaginable hate. The hurt and the pain, again and again. Oh please God, have mercy! Oh please let it end! And he finally stops and heads for the door, while I lay there motionless sprawled on the floor. My name is Misty and I am but three. Tonight my daddy murdered me.**



**There are thousands of kids out there just like Misty. You can help spot this problem. For more info go to: [preventchildabuse.com](http://preventchildabuse.com)**



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