

Worrell family Tracy Worell

Hello we are the Worrell Family. We have 7 children. Six of whom are still living at home. My husband is an incredible deaf man and I am a sign language interpreter and our 3 biological children all know sign language. I knew since I was a young teenager I wanted to adopt.

We started our adoption journey after we already had three children of our own and as they were older. Our oldest son is Aaron who is now 29 years old. Our son Tommy, who is now 20 years old still living at home with us. Also our daughter Paige who is 15, the same age as Emma.

We set out to adopt our first son, Fu Xin Hai, who was 10 years old at that time and Deaf from Jinan, Shandong, China. I would say we went into the process educated, but naïve. We trusted that what was in our child's file was true and accurate. His file said he was Deaf and we know Deafness, so that was something we were prepared for and that did not concern us. So to prepare for his adoption we learned whatever we could about adoption, about older child adoption, and about special needs adoption. We read, we studied, we spoke to others who had adopted, we took classes, and we read even more. We went in his adoption with open hearts and minds. Our file had said that our son could read and write Chinese and he knew Chinese sign language. That he could walk, run, jump etc basically do everything a 10 year old boy could do. We ended up meeting a 10-year-old boy that didn't even know he had a name, could not tell us he had to go to the bathroom, he had no language or education at all. He was 10 years old. He couldn't walk downstairs, could not run, he didn't realize the cars in the streets could hit him and kill him, oh I could on and on. We had a long long road ahead of us and it was a very hard first journey. He was basically a 10 year old toddler. We had a few good early years and then a several really really hard horrible years. It was during those years that I'm still not even sure how we ever adopted again... but we did. We lived a nightmare for a while. Thankfully those tough years have ended and times have improved. Our Fu Xin Hai, His name is now Luke, is now 21 years old, he is now finished his freshman year of college where he attended a college for the Deaf. He was a straight A student while there. He is now working at Amazon and taking classes there to work in the software and design department. He might go back to college if Covid slows down. He's not the easiest person to be around as he has a lot of brain damage from different things that happened to him in the beginning of his life, but he has such a good heart and he longs to be such a good person. He is a good young man and he will be a a very independent and productive man.

We were in the process of adopting Luke and our adoption agency had shown us a picture of a little boy. He was deaf and six years old, he was just the cutest little boy with this huge



smile. We were already in the process of adopting our son Luke at that time when we saw Elias' picture so we told our agency that we would pray for him to find his family and that we would spread the word about him needing a family. We hoped that his family would soon find him. Two years had passed and I had not heard anything about that little boy when suddenly an email came into my mailbox and a picture of that same little boy showed up. But that radiant smile was gone, he looked emotionless, lost, so vulnerable, so in need of someone to protect him. My husband and I started praying hard and we realized that we were the family that we have been praying for two years for. So now we were going to set out to add a fifth child, a little boy named Guan Yue Sheng. His agency name was Elias.

In the beginning before we told any of our kids that we were going to adopt, a miracle happened. One night when we were at dinner our three year old daughter Paige, was saying her nightly dinner prayers. She started by saying "dear God thank you for the sun and the day. Thank you for my doggy and then her prayers changed to something that we've never heard her say with words that we knew she didn't have. She said, and I quote "I'm praying for my my sister Emma, she is very sick and in the hospital, but the doctors are taking care of her. God will send her to me on an airplane when the time is right." My husband and I looked each other and thought, what does this little girl know that we do not know? We had no plans to adopt more than one child, this boy were starting the process for. Secondly Paige did not have a sister and we were in no way adopting again. But every night Paige kept praying for her sister Emma, saying God take care of her and that God would bring her to us on a plane when the time was right. Then Paige started asking to see pictures of the girls in China that were needing families. She would look at the pictures of little girls that were deaf waiting to be adopted and she would say, "nope that's not my sister". We kept moving forward with our adoption of our son Elias and thinking that Paige just had an imaginary sister she had named Emma. We were about a month away from flying to get Elias from Guangzhou when my adoption agency called saying, Tracy we believe we found Paige's sister Emma. They told me the story of a little deaf girl in Jiamusi, Heilongjiang China. They asked if they could send her picture and file over. I said sure, but that we not adopting again, but that we would pass along her information to others who were looking to adopt. I opened the email and my daughter, Paige walked by and dropped to her knees and said, "Mom that is my sister Emma, you found her, you found her!!!" She started sobbing just repeating "that's her, you found her!" My husband and I looked at each other with tears in our eyes and knew we were now adding another daughter to our family. We raced to get her paperwork done and brought home both Emma and Elias at the same time. Both children are Deaf. Emma was 6 years old at adoption and Elias was 9. Both children had no real language or education at the time we came home. Elias is now 18 years old, he graduated high school and also simultaneously finished his Freshman year of college at the same time. His goal is to become a Deaf missionary and travel throughout The Asian Pacific spreading God's love. Emma is now 15 years old and has not had life so easy. After being with us a year she had a 5 hour seizure and suffered severe brain damage. Yet she is currently a freshman in high school and an insanely hard worker doing amazing things. She is very artistic and loves to make things. She is a beautiful young lady.

We were basically living our life as a family of 6 moving forward. When one day out of nowhere I was contacted about a Chinese teenager that had been adopted by another family already and was in California. She had only been home 2 days in the United States. She was Deaf, 14 years old, from Shenzhen China, curly haired, gorgeous and very angry. She knew no English or American Sign Language. I knew a few Chinese signs and offered to talk with her in video to see if I could help give her a friendly face and calm her down. We spent the next month meeting on video teaching each other our languages. We started really looking forward to talking to each other daily and I found out she was soon going to be out in the foster system. My husband and I

prayed yet again and decided to move forward and adopt Fu Ling and make her our 7th child. Mia Fuling is now 21 years old. She was in the process of filling out paperwork to move back to China when Covid started as she misses her country and culture. She is now working at Amazon and doing very well there. She is working towards getting her drivers license and will now quite possibly just go visit China for 6 months when the borders open back up again. She is unsure if she will permanently move back. Mia is our social butterfly she loves people and is the most artistic and talented young lady. We cannot wait to see what her future holds.

Our family has had a few rough years as I have been battling stage 4 breast cancer, but it has brought us closer together in some ways and further apart in others. We have been so blessed by our beautiful 4 Chinese blessings. We are and will forever be grateful that we were allowed to adopt from China. Adopting our children was the biggest blessing of our lives. It has been an amazing journey full of happiness, heartache, laughter, adventure, many firsts, lots of tears and lots of joy. Adoption is not an easy journey, but it is most definitely worth it. We are so thankful for our big beautiful family.

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