

Reunion

High Point Student Reunites with His Birth mother After Years of Separation

By Lewis Pifer

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The bond between a mother and her child is like no other. After more than 18 years of separation, this bond has been resealed between High Point sophomore, Dietrich "Dietr" Getz and his birth mother, Rae Meland Bryant. Getz and Bryant reunited with each other on Sept. 20, 2011 in Winston-Salem, N.C, but the story of this reunion began more than 18 years ago.

Getz was born Troy William Meland on Dec. 11, 1992 to the then single Bryant.

"I was 28 [years old] when I had Dietr. I didn't have a good job. I was single. Living at my parents. Just no[t] ready to be a mom," said Bryant.

After Getz was born, he lived in a Pennsylvania foster home until a judge approved the adoption, since his adoptive parents lived in Virginia. The adoption was carried out by Catholic Social Services (CSS), and the last time they were together was in a CSS office in Scranton, Pa. when Getz was about a month old. At that time, Bryant met his adoptive parents, Kathy and Gary Getz. They renamed him Dietrich.

Bryant asked Getz's parents to keep some promises.

“One of the promises my [adoptive] parents made upon my adoption... was that they will raise me telling me that I was adopted,” said Getz.

Bryant also wanted to make sure that Getz knew why she gave him up for adoption.

“She gave me a letter explaining things to me. She gave it to my parents when they adopted me... [They made a] promise to give me the letter from her when I turn 18,” said Getz.

And that was the last time Getz and Bryant saw each other for 18 years.

On Dec. 11, 2010, his 18th birthday, Getz opened the letter from his birth mother.

“She knew that she could not take care of me properly at that time. So did her mother,” said Getz. “They realized that the best possible chance for me to live a happy successful life is to be given to people who were financially able to take care of me.”

After reading the letter, Getz contacted CSS to try and arrange a meeting with his birth mother. The adoption agency worked with both of them to find a suitable date to meet. More than six months after his 18th birthday, they settled to meet on Sept. 20, 2011 in a CSS office in Winston-Salem, N.C.

On the day of the meeting, Getz was with his father, Gary Getz. His mother, Kathy Getz, was not able to attend, due to her new job at Loyola University in Chicago, IL. Bryant was with her mother. Both Getz and Bryant were initially nervous, but it turned into joy.

For Getz, he felt natural sitting there. Even though he expected that he would cry, he did not.

“The emotions. They are so many of them and they’re so complicated [that] trying to put them into words,” said Getz, “The best poet in the world probably couldn’t do it.”

“It was probably the scariest thing I ever done in my entire life... but after the scariness went away, it’s been amazing, almost unreal,” said Bryant.

Bryant’s mother, Janet Meland, describes that it was hard for her daughter.

“It was the hardest thing she ever done before or since then, but this was the universe coming around to her because of the sacrifice she made for him,” said Meland.

During the meeting, they started to learn about each other’s lives. Getz learned that Bryant is now happily married and living in Orlando, Fla. He also learned that he has a half-sister a couple of years younger than him. They soon learned of their similarities with each other and with his biological family. They share a love for science fiction, TV shows like “Doctor Who,” chorus, and theater. They found even more similarities with his half-sister and the rest of his biological family, such as similar personalities and a talent in singing. “That entire family was proof of nature in the nature vs. nurture debate,” said Getz describing his similarities with Bryant’s family.

After the initial meeting at the CSS office, they drove to High Point University. Since Getz is a sophomore at the school, they wanted to tour the campus so they can learn about each other more. After that, Bryant and Meland returned to Orlando. Getz’s father, Gary, returned to his new home in Chicago, IL. Getz stayed at the university.

Even though the meeting is over, they are continuing to learn about each other through Facebook such as likes, dislikes, or anything else that comes to mind.

They are also planning to see each other over winter break. Getz will be able to meet his half-sister and the rest of Bryant's family.

Getz's mother, Kathy, thinks it is great that Getz is visiting Bryant.

"It's fine for Dietr to visit Rae," said Kathy Getz. "It's good for both of them to have an ongoing relationship."

Bryant's husband, Rick, plans to welcome Getz into his home, and family, with open arms.

"I think that it will be good to get to know Dietr and hopefully become friends. Dietr ... always will be welcome in our home," said Rick Bryant. "I consider him a member of the family. I am hoping that he will be comfortable here and that he thinks of this as his second home.

According to Getz, this story is still in the making. Through the help of his biological family, they are currently finding information about his biological father, Mark Cochran.