

***[Goodbye letter from foster father]***

June 17, 2015

Dear Jamie:

When you came to our house just before Halloween last year you were a sad and scared little boy. You wanted to be with your mom and dad and were pretty mad and upset when you had to come and live with strangers. We were sorry to see how upset you were but happy we could give you a safe place to stay until things were better with your mom and dad.

We really liked having you live with us. Once you got used to us, we got along well. You were a great foster brother to Dane and Whitney and they will miss you now that you are moving in with your new adoptive family. Mrs. Steadman and I will miss you, too.

Jamie, you are a special boy. You are kind to others. You are so good at taking care of pets. Josie and Penny will really miss all the walks you gave them and the treats you used to sneak to them in the backyard. We will always remember your great smile (especially after you lost that front tooth!) and your silly jokes that made us all laugh at the dinner table.

Here is a picture of you with all of us. We kept a copy, too. We will always remember the time you lived with us and we hope we can see you or at least hear from you so we know how you are doing. You were a special part of our family and we will always care about you. But we are glad you will have a permanent, adoptive family.

With love,

*Charlie Steadman*

Your foster dad

***["After-the-fact" goodbye letter from a foster parent]***

Dear Robert,

This letter took me a long while to write. I was so angry with you when you left that I couldn't say the things I needed to say then. Now that some time has gone by I am ready to say the things I should have said when I asked that you leave my home.

First, Robert I feel very sad that you could not stay with me. Even though we had problems, I always thought you were a boy with good inside him, who needed lots of love to feel better about yourself. I know some real bad things happened to you before you came to live with me. I don't think I understood how hard those things made it for you to live in a family with other kids. I wish I had understood this better and could have helped you more.

When I learned about what you did with Richard I was very upset. I said some things I wish I hadn't. I also made you leave right away without saying goodbye to anyone. That wasn't fair to you and I am sorry.

Robert, there are so many good things about you. You are a brave young man and you want to do right. You have a lot of work to do to understand what has happened to you but you can learn and grow from the bad things as well as the good. But I know you will work hard Robert and that someday you will make sense of all these things and grow up to be a strong and loving man.

I know living at the group home is different than living in a family. I hope you will do well there and be able to live in a family again soon. You deserve a family Robert, a family that will love you and see what a good young man you are and will be proud of you and keep you safe. I am very sorry that my family could not do that for you. I will keep you in my prayers and if your worker says it's alright, I will write to you again.

May God bless you and keep you,

Joanne May (Mama Jo)

***[Letter from birth mother at surrender]***

April 16, 2007

Dear LaToya:

I love you. This is a real hard letter to write. I am writing it because I need to explain why you and me can't live together and why Aunt DeDe is adopting you.

I was so happy when you were born. You were a beautiful little baby, even though you was so small. You had to stay in the hospital quite a while. Back then I didn't know much about taking care of babies. We stayed with DeDe and she helped take care of you. I got mad at DeDe cause I was young and wanted to do things my friends did like staying out late and partying. So you and me moved in with Ronnie and then I had your little brother Marcus.

Ronnie had lots of problems and he wasn't good to us and he hurt you and me. So then the people from DCFS came and took you away. I needed to stay with Ronnie because I didn't have no place else to go. You wasn't safe there.

Latoya I am really sorry I didn't take better care of you. I tried but there was a lot going on and some things I didn't know how to do, maybe because I was so young. I really wanted to do the things I needed to do to get you back with me but I just couldn't seem to do all the things I needed to do, especially after I had to take care of your next little brother James.

This is hard for me because I love you. But I know that DeDe loves you, too and will take real good care of you. I will always think about you and I hope you will think about me. I want you to be happy with Dede and be a good girl. Do good in school and have lots of friends. I bet you would be a really good teacher someday, you are so smart.

Love forever, your mother,

*Ruth Jones*

*National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)*

*A Service of the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services*