

Arvada mom helps families adopt

One-of-a-kind firm reviews adoption profiles

BY STEVE GRAHAM
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Gretchen Robinson had been waiting for more than a year to adopt a baby when she called Arvada resident Lori Dowd.

After phone calls and an e-mail exchange with Dowd, Robinson soon adopted a baby girl.

"I give her a lot of credit for the reason we have our beautiful, beautiful daughter," Robinson said.

Robinson, who lives outside Omaha, Neb., was the first client—and first success story—for Dowd's home-based business, BestLight Adoption Profile Review.

Dowd started the business about a year ago.

Dowd, a former marketing director for adult education programs, adopted two children after waiting fewer than six months each time she and her husband registered at adoption agencies.

However, she consistently heard sad stories of long, unsuccessful waits in the unpredictable maze of domestic adoption.

Those seeking to adopt infants typically fill out detailed questionnaires, undergo background checks and meet with social workers.

After all these hurdles are leapt, the remaining wild card is an adoption profile. The profiles are lengthy autobiographical letters that help birth mothers choose a new family for their baby.

"In this process, you feel pretty out of control, but the one thing you can control is your profile," Dowd said.

Dowd realized many couples that might make excellent adoptive parents didn't present themselves well in their profiles.

She thought she could help. "My background is marketing ... and I do well with written words," she said.

However, she was uncomfortable writing profiles for parents because the issues are so sensitive and personal.

"It really needs to come from people for it to work, so I thought what I could do is review them," she said.

She was looking for a home-based business to run while caring for her children, and she happened upon an unexplored niche business that she said helps families fulfill their dreams.

She discovered the joy of adoptive children, and now she's helping others share that joy.

"It can turn out to be so right," Dowd said. "Situations that lead a lot of people to adoption seem



Photo by JUSTIN SAGARSEE

Lori Dowd holds back her laughter as she receives a makeover from her daughter on Friday, Jan. 19. Dowd owns and operates BestLight Adoption Profile Review. The company helps individuals who are considering adoption prepare their profiles for the selection process.

so wrong and then to find yourself at the place where you were meant to be all along is so affirming. It's almost like there's a bridge and you can't see that until you're on the other side of the bridge."

Robinson, her first client, had already adopted one boy but was struggling to adopt a second child when she found an ad for Dowd's business. For professional reasons, Robinson's family moved after registering with an adoption agency in Sioux Falls, S.D. She believes birth mothers were reluctant to give their babies up to parents who live three hours away.

But Dowd put a positive spin on the move, she said.

"She helped us minimize the distance factor," Robinson said. "She helped me key up things in Omaha that they might not have in South Dakota. Helped me accent the positive and de-emphasize the negative."

Dowd has since worked with seven other couples, and each case has been unique. She has common advice for all prospective parents, though.

"I try to make it real clear to people that this is not slicking it up like a Superbowl ad," Dowd said. "... It's a hard thing to do, to write about yourself. It's showing people how to reveal themselves in the best light."

Dowd also works to accentuate unique aspects of a couple's life, even when a parent's instinct is to keep a profile very broad.

"Somebody who is making the most important decision of her life wants to make sure she is seeing someone genuine and not

someone who is slicking it up or being generic," Dowd said.

Her first four profiles all resulted in birth mothers selecting the parents, although one mother changed her mind and kept her baby after birth.

Amy Goehring of Canton, Ohio, said Dowd improved her profile and her attitude, helping her adopt after several months with no responses to her profile.

"We had 3 biological children and we needed to show we had space in our lives," Goehring said. "She directed our minds in the right place of showing a need and trying to fulfill the birth parents' needs."

Goehring said Dowd's advice also carried over into her interview with the birth mother, and would help any adoptive parent.

"She was almost like a men-

LORI DOWD

WHO: owner, BestLight Adoption Profile Review

WHAT: Dowd helps adoptive families upgrade the profiles they write for birth parents.

PHONE: 303-437-6614

WEBSITE: www.profilethatgotpicked.com

LEARN MORE: Dowd also runs workshops on adoption profiles every other month at Colorado Free University.

tor," she said. "... Anyone who is trying to adopt and is getting discouraged should call her."

Steve Graham can be reached at business@milehighnews.com or 720-940-7551.

CALENDAR

ONGOING BUSINESS GROUPS IN JEFFCO

The Work-at-Home Parents Alliance, a network and support group for parents with home-based businesses meets at 10 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at the Bear Valley Church, 10001 W. Jewell Ave., Lakewood. Call 303-980-9562

The Arvada division of LeTip International meets Wednesdays at 7:01 a.m. at La Dolce Vita coffeehouse, 5756 Olde Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada. 303-235-0606 or www.letip.com

Small-business owners can gather at a weekly meeting with the non-profit Westside Business Builders, which meets from 7:45 to 9 a.m. Wednesdays. Contact Janet Meyer at janetdmeyer@comcast.net or 303-480-6800, ext 31.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Two businesses up for Business of the Year

Two businesses have been selected for the Arvada Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Year award.

Creative Advertising and Printing Inc. and Flori di Flavio were recently nominated for the award by a committee of past Business of the Year winners.

The winner will be announced at the chamber's Annual Dinner on Jan. 26 at the Arvada Center.

Creative Advertising and Printing in Olde Town Arvada was founded 16 years ago by **Linda Davis**.

The advertising business offers several unique services, from balloon bouquets to computerized art.

Flori di Flavio, a flower shop in Olde Town Arvada, is run by **Larry and Kathy Luciano**.

The Lucianos have fundraised for the Denver Rescue Mission, Lost & Found and the Arvada Food Bank.

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