



"We were delighted that our son and his wife were able to have a child after years of trying," Bill, the current vice chairman of the board, said.

Carmen, who will be 14 this October, is a feisty, busy 8th grader at Annunciation School in South Minneapolis. Carmen is a beautiful visual reminder to Bill and his wife, Roxanne, of how Children's Home helps complete the dream of family for so many. And yet they know the change in climate for international adoptions would make Carmen's adoption much more difficult today. The year-long process in 2002 would be greatly extended today because there are significantly fewer infants available for adoption.

That dynamic has financial implications for Children's Home, which motivates Bill and Roxanne to support the organization through ongoing contributions. While Children's Home derives more of its income today from domestic adoptions of waiting children, older children, siblings and those with identified needs, it relies significantly on support from donors.

"Children's Home is a well-run organization," Bill said. "It has done this since 1889. It's highly recommended, and has all the qualifications nationally and statewide to do adoptions and do them properly and safely, which helps minimize heartbreak for families and adoptees alike."

## Love in Action

### Spunky granddaughter inspires Soths' commitment to Children's Home

After retiring from a 35-year career as a real estate attorney, Bill Soth had time and expertise that would benefit Children's Home when Maureen Warren invited him to join the CH Board of Directors in 2002. More influential in his acceptance of her invitation, however, was the adoption of his granddaughter, Carmen, from Colombia, facilitated through Children's Home.

## Planned Giving

### Giving extends beyond financial contributions for Steve and Joanne Zenz

Steve Zenz has a strong personal connection to Children's Home Society – he and his sister were both adopted through Children's Home. His commitment to the organization has deepened through more than 18 years as a member of the Children's Home Board of Directors. Currently serving as secretary and treasurer, Steve has generously shared his time and expertise amassed through his 34-year career with KMPG, an accounting and business consulting firm.

The Twin Cities-native has helped the organization navigate financial difficulties, the drop in international adoptions, the affiliation with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota,

and the construction of the new headquarters building. Overseeing construction of the new building, he was also a key player in the capital campaign that would bring it to reality.

Giving time, talents and financial resources is a philosophy Steve shares with his wife, Joanne. She volunteered for many years in the office at Children's Home.

Steve and Joanne appreciate CH's low administrative expenses, knowing that much of their ongoing financial contributions directly fund adoption and family support services. "Adoption can be expensive," Steve explained. "There are a lot of couples out there who will make great parents but can't always afford it. Donations to Children's Home subsidize those great families so they can adopt."

We define family as two or more people,  
whether living together or apart, related by blood,  
marriage, adoption or commitment to care for one another.

1605 Eustis Street, Saint Paul, MN 55108 | phone 651.646.7771 toll free 800.952.9302



more info at  
**chlss.org**

# Today's Child & Family



FALL 2016

## Humble Beginnings, Beautiful Families



Tammy Makram's and Liz Kellner's first days of life garnered headlines in the 1960s as they would today. The full biological sisters were both abandoned during the holiday season, four years apart, stowed in a cardboard box and left for someone to find.

Fifty years later, the sisters are again attracting attention, this time with the moving story of their 2015 reunion. People Magazine highlighted their successful searches aided by genetic testing services 23andme.com and Ancestry.com, and Children's Home Society of Minnesota.

Often untold in these stories is the beautiful tapestry of multiple families woven together through Children's Home, which placed both sisters, as well as another full sister and older half-sister, Abbie Greene, into loving adoptive homes. Tammy is one of four children her parents adopted through Children's Home. Liz is close to her younger sister, her adoptive parents' biological daughter. Abbie also has one adoptive sibling placed through Children's Home.

### Independent paths converge

While Tammy and Liz tend to share the spotlight, all four sisters' reunion hinged upon Abbie. In 1981, she attempted to find their common birth mother through Children's Home. Because she was not abandoned, the adoption worker was able to provide helpful information, but no contact was made then. Years later, their other sister who had also been placed through Children's Home, contacted the organization for search assistance, which facilitated an introduction.

Abbie recalled, "Our first meeting was at Children's Home with an adoption worker since she was uncertain about meeting."

Abbie continued to trace her genetic history through 23andme.com and Ancestry.com following that meeting. Liz also contacted Children's Home for help but little was known because she had been abandoned. In 2014, she was given a 23andme DNA/saliva test kit. Upon submission, she began receiving daily notices of far-distant cousins. She was dumbfounded the day she received notice of a connection to Abbie. Emails, phone calls and ultimately, face-to-face meetings ensued.

Tammy's search began in her 30s. Following a Saint Paul Pioneer Press story, Children's Home staff fielded calls from readers but no one knew anything about Tammy's birth and family. Discouraged, she suspended her search until 2015, when the television series "Unsolved Mysteries" aired her story. A viewer referred her to Ancestry.com's genetic testing, which connected her to Abbie and circuitously to Liz.

"When I got the first emails, I wasn't sure it was real," she recalled cheerfully. "I knew it was real when I saw pictures of Liz and discovered our stories were almost identical."

*(continued on page 2)*

### OUR CORE PURPOSE

Children's Home works to give every child security, opportunity, and a loving family.



# Thank You



Liz Kellner and Tammy Makram's reunion with their biological family is a celebration of reclamation. Despite being abandoned as newborns, both have thrived in their loving, adoptive families made possible through Children's Home

Society of Minnesota, and now are enjoying fun-filled relationships with their biological sisters.

Since they were abandoned, Liz and Tammy relied on DNA databases and genetic testing services to trace their family heritage. Those placed for adoption through Children's Home have the benefit of adoption records and our family search specialists to assist with their searches. Hundreds of adopted people contact us each year requesting our help. We're grateful for your financial support, which makes this service possible and gives adoptees a greater sense of identity by learning about their biological families.

We're also grateful to Liz and Tammy for generously sharing their story, which highlights the lasting impact abandonment has on babies, even after we place them with adoptive families. When they were abandoned in the 1960s, Baby Safe Haven laws didn't exist. Today, infants up to three days old can be left with care staff at any hospital in Minnesota, no questions asked. Another anonymous option, climate-controlled, secured Baby Boxes installed on the exterior of police and fire stations, were recently introduced to the United States. While we would discourage any woman from abandoning her newborn, we're thankful measures are in place today to ensure babies' wellbeing and their expedited placement with adoptive families.

Liz and Tammy's story also highlights how our work can turn humble beginnings into beautiful lives and families. With your continued commitment, we can support more families and children to lives filled with the love and stability of family.

Thank you for partnering with us to help children and families thrive through your support. **Thank You!**

*Maureen E. Warren*

Maureen Warren, President



Tammy Makram's and Liz Kellner's baby pictures

## Humble Beginnings, Beautiful Families

*(continued from page 1)*

Liz and Tammy have quickly become close. They talk and message almost daily, as if they've known each other their whole lives. The relationship has helped them understand how genetics shaped them into who they are today.

### Finding Balance

They're careful not to neglect their adoptive families, and to stress these new family members are an addition, not a replacement. "We were placed in these wonderful families, and love them very much," Liz explained. "We've learned to respect that our excitement doesn't always pass onto others."

"We are grateful to our birth mother," Liz said. "She gave our moms and dads the ultimate gifts – children. That had to be a hard decision but she did it for us." The sisters are also grateful to Children's Home Society and its donors for turning their humble beginnings into beautiful lives and families.

## Support Our Mission



**Our most important annual fundraiser is about to begin!**

The Little Red Stocking campaign has been helping children find forever families for more than a century.

**Make a gift to Little Red Stocking today.  
Your present is their future.**

[Littleredstocking.org](http://Littleredstocking.org)

## Reuniting Biological Families



More than 2,000 birth parents and people who were adopted have resolved questions surrounding the circumstances that led to adoption thanks to Linda Kuhlman and her 27-year career as a search specialist at Children's Home Society of Minnesota. Linda, who recently retired, joined her love for genealogical research with her experience as a social worker placing infants into adoptive homes in the 1960s.

In the 1960s, unplanned pregnancies carried societal stigma that shamed young women and their families into secrecy. Many girls were sent to "birth homes" or reform school until they delivered their babies.

Each year, Children's Home receives hundreds of requests for search assistance, both from biological parents and adoptees. DNA databases, such as 23andme.com and Ancestry.com, have helped many identify, and reunite with, biological family members. Oftentimes, people ask Children's Home for confirmation of information received from one of these services prior to contacting would-be relatives.

Even today, when Children's Home search specialists successfully locate a birth mother, they find the veil of secrecy often persists. Many women, now married, have not told their husbands or biological children of the child they placed for adoption. Some take their secret to the grave. Some provide a verbal medical history to help their children manage their own health but refuse additional contact. For Linda, telling adopted persons their biological mother did not want to be reunited was the most difficult part of her job.

"Every birth mother I contacted told me they thought of their child all the time," said the grandmother of four. "I always told the person who was adopted that they were not forgotten, regardless of how the search turned out." While many birth families and adoptive families today practice open adoption, closed adoptions of years' past result in questions that can linger for a lifetime.

"I loved my work so much that it kept me going," Linda recalls fondly. "I was the only one in the building who got paid to do my hobby. There isn't anything I could've done that I would have enjoyed as much."

## Giving methods to suit your needs

**We appreciate every gift and make the most of every dollar contributed.**

Your generosity has a direct impact on services, including post-adoption services such as family search support. Giving to Children's Home is easy and convenient.

- **One-time or automated giving:** One-time gifts or automated, recurring gifts can be made through our website, by mail or by calling our Development office. Becoming a Monthly Sustainer will help add predictability to Children's Home support.
- **Employer matching gifts:** Compound the impact of your personal giving through your employer's matching-gift program. Search the employer database on our website, or ask your hiring manager to learn if such a program is available to you.
- **Bequests:** You can give others the precious gift of family with an estate gift to Children's Home. Contact our Development office to discuss the details.
- **Stock:** A direct transfer of appreciated stock to Children's Home can reduce your personal tax burden and help us continue to unite and strengthen families. Contact our Development office.
- **Memorial or tribute gifts:** Honor or remember someone special by making a gift in his or her name today via our website.

You can be confident your gift will be used wisely, knowing that Children's Home meets the Charities Review Council's Accountability Standards – benchmarks for nonprofit governance, finance, fundraising, and public communication. Your generosity helps children and families thrive.

Children's Home Development office:

**651.969.2279**

[chlss.org/donate](http://chlss.org/donate)

