

## **My Favorite MO Place**

The best day of my life can easily be described in three words, but this story is a little longer. Some people may be writing about some historical event that happened here in Missouri. Or maybe they are writing about a beautiful location that everyone knows about. But today I am here to tell a story about a little town that no one has ever heard about. This town has nothing special to anyone on the outside, no historical events and no important people to spread its name, but Maysville has been reserved as my favorite place because it is where I spent the best day of my life.

The day was November 24th 2015, I had been in foster care for four years already but I had had a caseworker visiting me from the age of two up until I was 10 almost monthly. But all of this was about to change. Early that morning, on the biggest day of my entire life, my mom and dad came into the living room where all of us kids were sleeping, to wake us up. We had stayed at my grandparents house the night before, because after spending a week up in Nebraska for a cousin's wedding we had gotten home later than 2 a.m. Every one of us dragged a little from the tiredness.

Our whole family rushed around getting the perfect curl and straightening ties just right. Shoes were pulled on and there was a train leading up to dad so he could tie them for each of us. After a quick breakfast of grandma's famous cinnamon rolls, everyone piled into the cars for what felt like the longest car ride of my life. It really turned out to be five minutes but my ten year old mind didn't think so. I began imagining all the ways the adoption could be stopped. Since I had never seen an adoption, I imagined it a little like a wedding. As I am sure you remember, at the end the Priest asks if anyone has any objections, well I thought someone might stand up and ruin the day. My imagination got the best of me as I thought up every way possible for it to end wrong.

My emotions were overflowing. I wanted to cry, yell, and laugh because that special day had finally arrived! I now had a family who loved me for who I was. They wanted me even though I was definitely not perfect, as they would learn very quickly. I would never have to change to meet their standards or become a different person to fit in with this family. They loved me for who I truly was and nothing could ever change that, as I would learn over the next several years. As we pulled up to the court house, in Dekalb County Missouri, we were all told to be on our best behavior. We all got out of the car and the last minute touch ups were done. Bows were straightened and stray crumbs brushed away. Then we prayed, asking God to be with us as we officially became a new family.

When we got inside our Guardian Ad Litem asked if we really wanted to be adopted and become a part of the Murphy family. They asked if we truly felt that this was the right home for us. All of us including 3 year old Isaiah said yes with so much passion that all of the adults started laughing. In the five years since that happened, I have never once regretted that moment. Now more than ever, I am glad that my parents are who they are!

As soon as we had given our final answers, we were ushered into the courtroom, where our Bailiff asked us to stay quiet and remain seated during the official adoption. You will never

believe how hard it would be for us to follow that one rule, oh boy were we a sight. First, my three year old brother was squirmy. He decided he wanted to be up at the front with mom and dad instead of sitting in grandma's lap. Of course he had to remain seated on his behind until the process was final. After a few minutes the Judge called out each of our current names. My youngest sister at the time stood up when her previous name was called. "My name is not Tommy, it's Ruby!" she shouted as if horrified at the idea of someone getting it wrong. The Bailiff promptly came over and reminded us that we were to sit down and stay quiet for the third time that morning. This time though he could barely suppress his smile as he walked back up to his place.

Soon the whole thing was over and we were officially Murphys! It is so hard to explain the feelings I felt in that moment. The tears that streamed down my face were happy ones, I was finally a part of a family. They could never send me back, I was theirs forever. Of course I had no clue that at that point they were very committed. Plus I had their last name, a sure sign that they were my parents. After taking several pictures with all of the people who had come to share our special day, we thanked everyone for coming and left. We arrived at my grandparents house famished and ready to eat a hearty lunch. But there were still more pictures to be had. We took several more pictures of the perfect family, or so we thought.

Later that week, we had a huge adoption party. We rollerbladed, rocked out with a Dj and had everyone we knew over to celebrate such an incredible day! All six of us stood up in front of the crowd and said a bible verse that we felt spoke to our hearts. I read Isaiah 40:28-31. I stood up in front of all of my friends and read with as much confidence as I could muster "Do you not know, have you not heard? The Lord is the Everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow weary and tired and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will rise up and soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not grow faint." It honestly brought tears to my eyes, to know that God would give strength to the weary, because that was me. That bible verse still holds my heart. It has continued to be my favorite verse since that day.

Now five years later we have gotten four more beautiful girls bringing our total to ten. Seven of us are adopted, two are biological and we are hoping to adopt our final girl in a few months. We are homeschooled and love each other just as much as if God had put us together right away. We have been through our share of ups and downs but no matter what I know everyone in this family will be there for each other.

I'm not sure that anyone will ever understand how much that day meant to me then and will continue to mean for the rest of my life. I still tend to cry as I remember that incredible day. I still feel that love everyday and hope that sometime in the future I can share that incredible love with some other child who needs it. I hope to make their best day even better. As I said before, the best day of my life could be described with three simple words, but where is the fun in that? The best day of my life, My Adoption Day, will be there forever!