

Unsung Heroes: Ordinary People Doing the Extraordinary

By

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We frequently hear the term “unsung hero” and apply various meanings. For example, this could mean someone who consistently volunteers at a homeless shelter or someone who works several jobs to provide for his or her family. Unsung heroes are those who go beyond without expecting accolades. This brief piece describes unsung heroes who changed their lives 365 degrees.

The unsung heroes to which I refer are two well-educated professionals who married later in life and desired to create a difference in the lives of others. They passed up what one could term the “good life.” How so? By adopting a sibling group of three orphans, internationally.

Anyone who has experienced the adoption process comprehends the complicated bureaucratic see-saw in terms of various factors such as interminable waiting periods, countries abruptly changing course and shuttering the doors to name a few. By way of illustration, intercountry adoptions are *not* currently possible between Russia and the United States. Russian Federal law No 272-FZ remains in place banning the adoption of Russian children by U.S. citizens. This law entered into force on January 1, 2013. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/Intercountry-Adoption-Country-Information/RussianFederation.html> (last accessed May 26, 2022).

These individuals gave up a well-earned life as a couple to add children to their lives and create a family of five. After being approved to adopt in the state where they reside, actively pursuing¹ possible adoptive placements, then waiting years to adopt from the United States child welfare system, they were encouraged to pursue the international adoption route. They decided

to give true orphans, children living in orphanages and whose parental rights had been severed by the court in a developing country the opportunity to forge a new life in the United States. One day they had a life where they could do as they wished and travel where they wanted. The next set them on a journey of twists and turns that they could not have imagined.

That decision markedly changed in a sense overnight. They travelled over 5,000 miles to meet their new children. They were hoping to adopt two children simultaneously. Instead, they accepted the responsibility of adopting three siblings all under age five all at the same time. That, in and of itself, is so selfless. They walked the talk, rather than donating money for a cause. In essence, they shouldered the enormous challenges of adopting three children from a foreign country sight unseen.

When one adopts, there are many unknowns and this rings true with this couple. Besides the unknown physical and mental health issues of all three children, there were also undisclosed traumatic experiences the children had experienced in their biological family, educational challenges, and other unknowns. Yet these determined parents pursued every possible avenue for the betterment of their children. Yes, there are unsung heroes all around us. To find them we must look at others with “empathetic understanding,”² to see beyond what *appears to be* going on in their lives.

One person certainly can make a difference as this essay demonstrates. Here, undoubtedly two selfless human beings, gave up a comfortable lifestyle to create a forever family for not just one life but three children. These parents have been “there” for their children through the bumps and twists of their lives as a family for nearly three decades. They continue to do

¹While they were waiting to adopt, this couple also trained to become foster parents and actually fostered two sets of siblings likely to have early life experiences, issues and needs similar to many children available for adoption in the United States public foster care system.

²Sociologists use the term empathetic understanding to make sense of another person's experience, or behavior, in a social context, by imagining oneself in that other person's situation or “shoes.”

so. Undoubtedly, there are others who have toiled to do the same. That is a heartening thought during our troubled times. Focusing on these often-unacknowledged, benevolent people-- the “unsung heroes” of everyday life, affords a positive perspective on what it really means to “walk the talk.”

About the Author: Roseann B. Termini has a B.S., Consumer Science & Human Behavior, with High Honors, an M.Ed., and a Juris Doctor. Attorney Termini adopted each of her children from a developing country as a single parent. She teaches Food and Drug Law and Legal Writing and Problem-Solving courses at Delaware Law School. Attorney Termini has published on a broad array of topics. Her most recent publication is a comprehensive book titled: *Food and Drug Law: Federal Regulation of Drugs, Biologics, Medical Devices, Foods, Dietary Supplements, Personal Care, Veterinary and Tobacco Products* due to COVID-19, evolving law, novel cases and updated regulations (2022). Here is the direct link to her book www.fortipublications.com and you can contact the author through the url website link.