

# QUARTERLY

SECOND Quarter 2021a



A publication for Gift of Adoption Investor Board members. Please pass along to others who may be interested in this cause. Send comments and feedback to [pdewereux@giftofadoption.org](mailto:pdewereux@giftofadoption.org)

## 1 2 3 4 news

*Gift of Adoption provides grants to complete the adoptions of vulnerable children - giving them a permanent family and the chance to thrive*

*Jack Salzwedel is a new member of the Gift of Adoption Investor Board. He currently serves as the Chairman and CEO of American Family Insurance. Gift of Adoption recently spoke with Jack about his personal experience with adoption, why he decided to become an investor and to learn more about how he has made diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives a core component of the American Family culture.*

I joined American Family Insurance at a time of upheaval for the company. We were sued for redlining in Milwaukee. We had, quite honestly, some practices going on at that time that shouldn't have been happening. The company entered a consent decree in 1995, and in June of that year, they appointed me as the new sales director. My first job coming in was to not only deal with all the sales and normal aspects of the business, but to also implement this consent decree, not just to the letter of the law, but also to the spirit of the law.

I remember going to my first meeting with the private plaintiffs who had sued the company with the federal government. I walked out of that first meeting and I clearly realized that this isn't about people being on one side of the table or the other; it's about building a round table, and it's about how we fill needs in a community that has been misrepresented and



disenfranchised for a long time. I vowed that if I ever ran the place, I was going to do it differently.

Now, diversity, equity and inclusion are in the fiber of who we are. Part of it is because we want to be a good corporate citizen and we want community investment, but we've done enough proprietary and non-proprietary work to understand that having a diverse workforce and serving diverse customers provides greater efficiency, greater effectiveness, more engagement and better bottom-line results. It's become really central to who we are as a company, and we believe that our results have been really good.

### **My Connection to Adoption**

Adoption has always been a very normal part of our family. In fact, I'm here because of adoption. My parents

were told they couldn't have kids, so they adopted my brother and then proceeded to have four biological kids, including myself. When my adopted brother became very ill with a kidney disease, I was, strangely enough, a perfect match for him. I donated a kidney to him about 25-years-ago and he's doing great. He's actually sheltering with us during the pandemic, and we have a close relationship.

When my daughter and son-in-law were looking to grow their family, they also went through adoption, and brought home a beautiful baby girl this past April. It's an unbelievable process.

I haven't found or become aware of another organization that is like Gift of Adoption. Gift of Adoption is very distinctive in what it stands for and how it operates; by definition, Gift of Adoption is helping the most disenfranchised and disadvantaged. I see a really strong connection between DEI work and the work that Gift of Adoption does on a daily basis.

What's most compelling to me about Gift of Adoption is that it helps people who may not have the means to complete an adoption on their own, and a child who may be in a disadvantaged circumstance, and brings them together in a very meaningful and impactful way – as family.

### **Did You Know?**

Consider making your Investor Board donation with a gift of appreciated stock. Please contact Pam Dewereux for more information. Gift of Adoption has an account with **Charles Schwab**; account#: 5328-4989 DTC#: 0164