

Ann Dowd is an Emmy-award winning actress and adoptive mother. She sat down with Gift of Adoption to talk about what adoption means to her.

Ann Dowd's journey toward becoming an adoptive mother was full of surprises. The Emmy-award winning actress, known for roles in shows like "Handmaid's Tale" and films including "Philadelphia" and "Hereditary" already had two children when she began considering adoption with her husband, Lawrence Arancio.

"I'm one of seven myself, and my husband is one of two. We had two beautiful children, and I was ready to keep going, but my husband said, 'Oh no, we're good,' Dowd recounts. "We met in the middle and agreed to move forward with becoming foster parents."

Dowd and Arancio began fostering their now-son as an infant. When they got the call to pick him up, they were already en-route to a family gathering. They turned right around and went to meet their child. They later returned to the family gathering, where their extended family was waiting and eager to meet him. That is when they saw their son's first real smile. It was breathtaking.



"He was sitting on his grandpa's lap, who looked at him and said, 'Oh, I love you too much.' And he smiled," Dowd says. "From the beginning, what this family, his family, means to him is indescribable."

After several years in the foster care system and a challenging adoption journey, Dowd and Arancio permanently welcomed their son home at the age of 9.

While she sees adoption as both beautiful and deeply important, Dowd recognizes that the beauty of adoption is born of a tremendous loss.

"When we were celebrating the day of his adoption - which was a beautiful day - somewhere in him, he was grieving the loss of his mother," Dowd says.

Dowd sees adoption as something more significant than simply providing children with a safe place to live.

"What is fundamental for every single human being on this earth is to be loved and heard and understood on a consistent, every-day basis," she says. "To be able to provide a home in which love is the main source of breathing and living is an extraordinary thing."

While she understands that personally adopting a child is not an option for everybody, it's still possible to help children join permanent families by supporting organizations like Gift of Adoption.

"I don't know how to describe with enough joy what happens when you recognize what loving a child can mean," says Dowd. "If that means financially supporting an organization that supports these children, on whatever level you can, it touches you in a way that I don't think anything else does. It is saying: 'I hear you. and I see you. You will be all right.'"

Did you know?

As part of Gift of Adoption's 25th Anniversary Celebration, we are creating a Legacy Society. To learn more about planned giving and endowment opportunities, please contact Julie Pendell (jpendell@giftofadoption.org) or Sharon Komlofske (skomlofske@giftofadoption.org).

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

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