

*Alison Gutterman is CEO of Jelmar and a new member of Gift of Adoption's National Board. She recently shared with us why she supports Gift of Adoption.*

Alison Gutterman describes a beautiful, blended family childhood experience. Her biological father died when she was just a baby and her mother remarried when Alison was three years old. Alison was adopted by her new father and would eventually take over as CEO of his company, Jelmar.

At the age of 13, Alison decided she would adopt children when it came time to start a family. "My biological father suffered from a hereditary disease of which I am a carrier. I have this distinct memory of being in middle school and realizing that the only way to ensure my own children would not have the disease would be to go through intense medical treatments," Gutterman said. "I was so young, but I felt deeply that there were already kids in this world that needed a parent. My decision to pursue adoption remained with me from that moment on."

Gutterman adopted both of her daughters, Michaela and Eliza. Michaela was adopted from Guatemala in 2006, and Eliza was adopted from Houston, Texas in 2010. Both girls were diagnosed with learning differences. Alison invested in understanding their unique needs, taking the time to ensure new information was being processed correctly by her daughters. She has advocated for the resources they need while still

challenging them to work to the level of peers who do not struggle with learning differences.

This year, Gift of Adoption received a generous donation specifically to help single women complete the adoptions of their children. When asked about advice for single parents who are adopting, Alison suggests connecting with a community of single parents. "Being a single parent can be lonely at times. I would not have been successful in adoption without the support of family and friends."



Gutterman is the third-generation family owner and CEO of Jelmar, a leading cleaning products manufacturer. Her company consists of 20 employees, and it aims to produce more environmentally friendly products for everyday use. "As an environmentally friendly company, you are limited in the materials you can use in the cleaning products. The challenge is to revolutionize cleaning methodology. For example, we just introduced an everyday

cleaner that uses probiotics to eat bacteria instead of killing the bacteria with harsh ingredients."

"I sell cleaning products for a living and I don't even like to clean! Being single, a woman and a parent all converge, and I think those roles have helped me in this industry," Gutterman said. "Adoption has certainly made me a better person and CEO. Since my daughters are from different races from each other and from me, I am aware of perspectives that I had not considered before. It has made me more open to ideas and experiences, beyond those I had before I had the privilege of raising my daughters."

Philanthropy has always been a big part of Gutterman's family. Now that Michaela and Eliza are older, Gutterman is at a point in life where she has more time to give. She joined Gift of Adoption's National Board of Directors to help improve adoption access for children in-need.

*"Adoption is a gift, but there are significant costs involved. When thinking about my legacy and what I can do to better society, I chose to use my skills to further Gift of Adoption's mission and help more children come home,"*

*- Alison Gutterman*

## *Did you know?*

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Just write in **Gift of Adoption (FEIN 39-1863217)**  
on your pledge card.

Federal or state employees can make payroll gifts through the CFC. Simply complete a pledge card indicating **Gift of Adoption (CFC #95108)** as your designee.

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

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 [devereux@giftofadoption.org](mailto:devereux@giftofadoption.org)