

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?

You can direct your United Way gift to Gift of Adoption!
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

Then and Now – Mathias

Mathias (Merko)* was born in 2005 in Serbia. His birth mother was still a teenager and he was born missing most of both legs. She chose to place him for adoption and he entered an orphanage as an infant. Mathias stayed in the orphanage for two years. He spent most of his days in a crib with a few toys. His food was soup and tea in a bottle. He did not know how to chew or speak. Because of his disability, he was not allowed outside to play and only received fresh air on a small rooftop area.



Mathias and Mom, Amanda

Amanda and Bryan of Cincinnati, OH felt called to adopt a child with limb differences as Amanda was experienced in working with children with physical disabilities. They were matched with

Mathias and thanks to a grant from Gift of Adoption traveled to Serbia just a couple months later, meeting Mathias (nearly two years old) on Valentine's Day 2007. They later found out that they had arrived just in time. At age 3 Mathias would have been moved to an institution where he would have faced neglect and isolation.

Amanda shared, "On our first day with Mathias, we were playing and he threw his head back in laughter. The staff at the orphanage said they had never seen him laugh before that. Since coming home, he has blossomed into an amazing young man. He is a leader, influencer, and an inspiration. As he has matured, he has come to value his physical disability. He plays and coaches adaptive sports. His wheelchair basketball team is currently National Champions with a perfect season! He aspires to join the National Paralympic tennis team! He is an incredible athlete but, more importantly, has a never-ending positive attitude. He always shows up early/stays late to help with the younger players in both tennis and basketball. I can't imagine a world without Mathias and anyone who has met him would say the same. I can't tell you how proud I am of him or how blessed I feel to be his mom."



Mathias Now

Mathias says, "I sometimes think of what would have happened to me if I hadn't been adopted. I wouldn't be in a very good place... if I were even still alive. I wouldn't be where I am today without the generosity of others."

**Mathias was named Merko at birth, which means miracle, but he generally goes by his middle name, Mathias.*

See all upcoming Gift of Adoption Events at
giftofadoption.org/upcoming-events

Investor Board members are invited to participate in events. If you would like to join in the fun, please email: hschwartz@giftofadoption.org.

Investor Board Members

** joined this quarter*

*** renewed this quarter*

Anonymous
 Ann G. Airey
 Andy and Janis Arno*
 Sol and Angela Bahng
 Barrette Family Fund
 James Bauman and Candace Moore
 Charles W. and Kimberly W. Bernard
 Robert and Maureen Bland
 Jerry James and Kitty Bliss
 Karen and Dan Brennan
 Meghan and Dan Burns
 Chris and Petey Butler
 James and Judith Callan
 Katie and Jake Carney
 Kath M. Carter
 Scott Carver and Teri McIntire*
 Stephen and Kim Chipman
 Kevin and Linda Coenen
 Ed and Carrie Del Hierro
 Pam Devereux and John Brassil
 Greg DiDomenico
 Siobhan Flynn and Alec Dike

Melanie and Mitch Dolloff
 Mr. and Mrs. Karl Frey*
 Randi Friedman
 Kate and Dan Gibbons
 Anne Gross
 Christine and William Guthrie
 Alison Guttermann
 Debbie K. Hogate
 Tom and Colleen Huffman
 Gary and Laura Hill
 Maureen and Ben Ivory
 Amanda Jacobowski
 Tatia Jones
 Doug and Carol Kelly
 Mr. Andrew P. Kerai, Sr.
 David and Amanda Knight
 Sharon and Gerry Komlofske
 Steve and Allison Koppel
 Glen Mangold
 Mr. and Mrs. Bill McClintic
 Mr. and Mrs. William McHenry, in honor of my parents, William and Jeanne McHenry

Keith and Judy McNiff
 Michele McVey
 The Morgret Family
 Steven Williams & Yvette Morrison
 Ed and Nancy Mulligan
 Parker, Gemma, Jack and Mariana
 Daniel and Tiffany Neely
 Elizabeth and Ben O'Connor
 Christopher and Linda Ohmacht
 Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Palmer
 Judith Pendell
 Michele and David Perlman
 ArLynn Presser
 Jonathan Pryor, In Loving Memory of Dr. Jan Huston Pryor
 Jeff Ramson and Kerry Corbit
 Meg & Mike Revord
 Jim and Laura Roth
 Patrick and Lydia Ryan
 Jack and Sarah Salzwedel
 Robert and Louise Sanborn
 Mike and Sheba Sands

Michele Scidl and Neil Shubin
 Linda Simon & family
 Pam Simons, Annie Simons, in loving memory of Rod Simons
 Mark and Mary Sliwkowski**
 Abby and Mike Smerklo
 Leslie Smith
 Cheryl & Bill Sorabella
 Gary and Lana Stachlowski
 Greg Stemler
 Tim and Sue Sullivan
 Tim Swett and Suzanne Burke
 Brian and Elizabeth Tenner
 Liz Van Horn
 Mr. and Mrs. James Vint
 Cindy L. Warner
 Susan Garner Wenzel
 Kelly West
 Lucy Wyka
 Allyson and Richard Zak
 Renato and Gina Zanichelli
 In Memoriam: Peter S. Gutrich