Letters

Readers shared the agonizing choices faced by potential adoptive parents and praised family-friendly workplaces

DO THEY WANT ME?

My boss came in yesterday and told me he'd gotten his *Washingtonian* over the weekend and read about me, so I knew Brooke Lea Foster's December story about Kidsave's Summer Miracles program was out. I read it last night and was surprised at how powerfully it affected me.

Foster managed to capture all of the conflicting emotions of the summer—the joys, the frustrations, the surprises, the fears, the happiness, and, for some of us, the despair that it had to come to an end.

It was hard for me to read it, as it brought back such poignant memories—in particular the dollar bill that Ivan gave me for my birthday.

I still feel that he was somehow meant for us, but I guess he was only meant for us for a short time. There is a couple in Reston that is now seriously considering adopting Ivan and Alina; I spoke with them at length. But as your story made clear, it has to be unsettling when a family you've never met shows up one day to adopt you. I don't know how Ivan would react to that.

I hope this story catches the attention of other families who are potential hosts. Brooke Foster is an extraordinary reporter with enormous potential as a journalist.

NANCY GRAHAM
Washington, DC

WOMEN AT WORK

We commend Sherri Dalphonse and her colleagues on their November "Great Places to Work" feature. In recognizing what makes a great workplace for all workers, the articles took the important step of highlighting workplace benefits and characteristics that matter to women, specifically working mothers.

These benefits—on-site childcare, subsidized child or dependent care, flexible schedules, and paid family and medical leave—help to create an environment that values all workers. In particular, they help bolster the economic security of single mothers. Without these supports, many of them would struggle to maintain steady employment and, as a result, find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty.

Based on an analysis of 2000 Census data by the Washington Area Women's Foundation, there are about 75,000 women-headed families with incomes under $50,000 in the Washington area. The majority of the women are working. It is heartening to read about employers who are responding to the needs of the workforce in ways that are mutually beneficial to employees and company bottom lines.

ANNE B. MOSLE
President
Washington Area Women's Foundation
Washington, DC

THE PERFECT MATCH

Kerry White's November article, "What's the Right School?," offered some needed clarity in the confusing and anxiety-producing process of matching a child with an educational opportunity.

But after 30 years of experience in independent schools as a teacher and principal, I must stress the importance of school visits. No matter how prestigious the reputation may be, the atmosphere the school imparts is equally valuable.

Talking with teachers and current students, peeking into classrooms, and observing the interaction between teachers and children often reveals much more about a child's potential experience than do test scores and eventual high-school and college placement. The best match for the child may involve unexpected choices not found in statistics.

ALEXANDER "EXIE" HARVEY
Head of School
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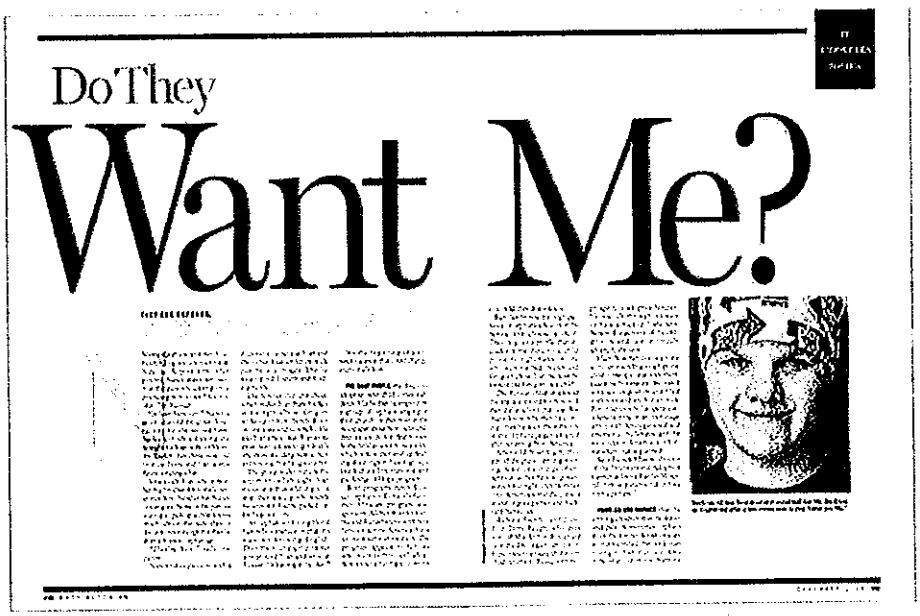
Do They
Want Me?

CORRECTION

Our December story on antique jewelry had the wrong number for Aunt Tink. It should have been 703-464-9503.