

# La Opinión

## “We both always wanted children”

A gay couple adopts three Latino children and reinforces the importance of fostering children without homes



The Rubio-Sparks Family is an example of how love comes in “many shapes and sizes” reiterating the importance of adoption. (Jacqueline Garcia)

By: Jacqueline Garcia  
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Wilbert Rubio and Scott Sparks got married in 2008 in New York. Three years later they moved to Long Beach, California, to start a family.

“We both always wanted children and we looked at all the possible options. We thought my sister would carry the baby, we considered artificial insemination and international adoption...” said Rubio, 33 years of age of Salvadoran descent.

“But while looking through our options we realized there were many [children without homes] here.”

The couple decided to contact the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for advice. Rubio stated they attended several classes to learn about the adoption process. When they felt ready they participated in their first meeting where they would meet many children awaiting a family.

“It was like a version of speed dating,” Sparks said. “First, we met three groups of children and then we saw them,” he said emotionally remembering when they met Giovanni (age 7), Genesis (age 6), and Angel (age 3).

“At first we thought they were only two because the other one was running around everywhere, but later we were told “they’re three” and I thought “This is them!,” pointed out Sparks of 44 years of age, and he added that once they saw them, the children filled every expectation they were looking for in adopting.



Scott Sparks and Wilber Rubio are adoptive parents of three children. (Jacqueline Garcia)

Once they decided to adopt the three siblings they proceeded to contact the social worker to begin the process.

According to the latest statistics from DCFS for February 2017, the Department supervises about 35,000 children.

“This includes children we are trying to reunify with their parents, children living with their parents and receiving supportive services, and those not able to safely return to the care of their parents” said Amara Suarez, DCFS spokesperson.

“More than half live with relatives. The rest are placed in temporary foster or group homes. Currently we have about 500 children [in Los Angeles County] in need of an adoptive home” she said.

## **The Adoption Process**

For a month Rubio and Sparks visited the children in their foster home, located in East Los Angeles.

Once their request to adopt the children was approved, the children were placed in their home. If the children adapted well, then they would be their adoptive children.

Rubio and Sparks recall the transition was difficult at first since the children had a difficult history and this was reflected in their actions and behaviors.

And on top of that this would not be the traditional home of a father and mother, but two fathers.

The children were not used to eating vegetables, Rubio recalls. Their favorite foods were “Cheetos sandwiches and “hot dogs with Tajín and lemon.”

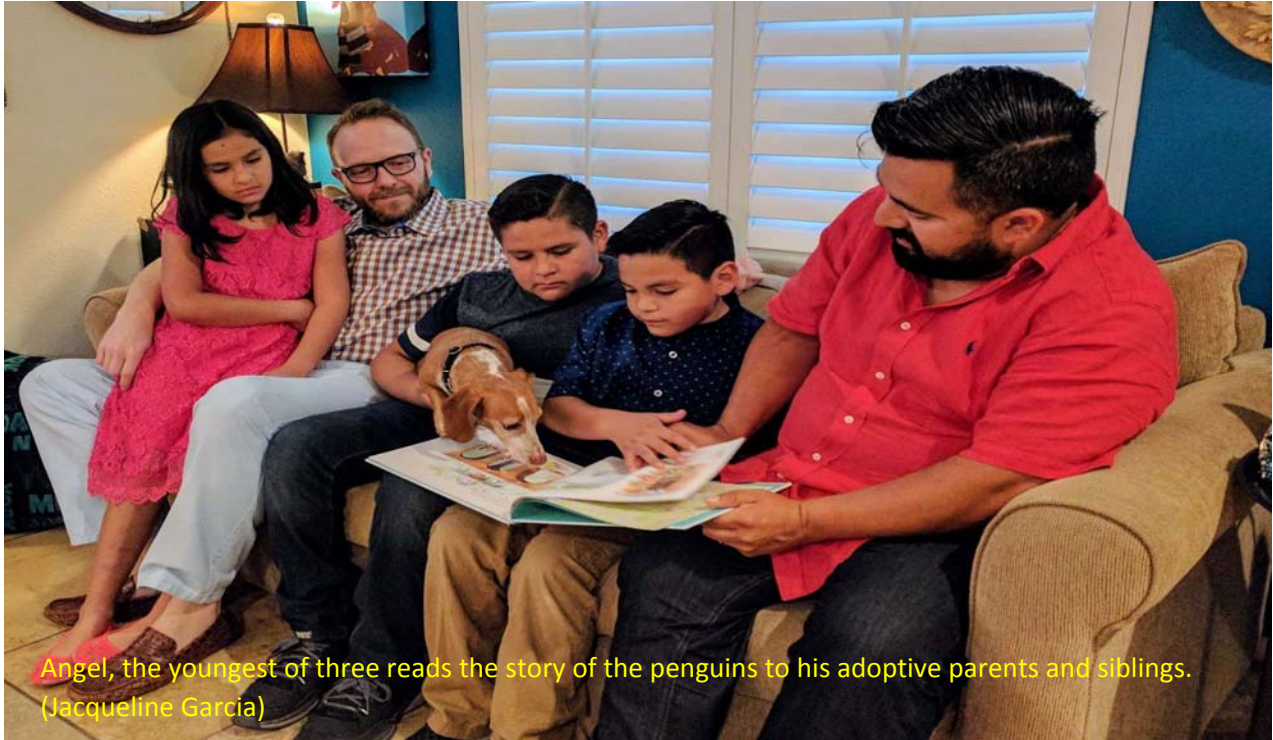
Also, due to Giovanni being the oldest, he had strong emotional reactions. These would range from total silence, crying and kicking for long periods of time.

“In the classes we were told this would happen. Living it was very different from hearing about it in class, it was tough,” said Rubio recalling those first instances.

## The Inclusion of Non-traditional Families

Sparks said they began to prepare the children since the beginning to understand their new family.

They did this by reading stories which spoke of two male parents or of ducks adopting a kitten or the one of the two male penguins who provided warmth to an egg until it hatched. The couple showed the children love comes in “many shapes and sizes.”



Angel, the youngest of three reads the story of the penguins to his adoptive parents and siblings. (Jacqueline Garcia)

“One day while I was brushing Angel’s hair, I took off my ring and placed it above the sink.” Sparks remembered.

When the child saw the ring, he asked what it was, to which Sparks answered that it was a wedding band.

“Who are you married to?” he [Angel] asked, I answered “With Wilber [Rubio].” To which he said “Ah! I thought he was your brother,” remembered Sparks. He said the three children were present and took it as a normal thing.

To not confuse his fathers, Angel decided to call Rubio “dad” and Sparks “daddy.”

The couple recognizes that they rarely face discrimination or dissatisfaction by people who see them as a family.

“My parents love the children because they are their first grandchildren,” said Sparks who is one of two children.

## The Importance of Inclusion

Meanwhile, Rubio found the arrival of the children to be an opportunity to become closer with his family.

His parents, who are evangelical and conservatives, migrated from El Salvador to New York when he was 4 years old and when he became an adult, he enlisted in the Armed Forces.

When he married Spark, his family knew of it but they would not openly accept it.



Sparks shows family pictures with his parents and children, as well as Rubio's family.

One day his family came for a visit to California and on their way to Las Vegas, Rubio felt the need to speak to his family about his plans, since he was already in the adoption process.

“I told my father, ‘Scott and I are adopting. Is it okay if the children call you grandpa?’ ” Rubio asked his father.

“There was a long pause. And later he said, ‘of course! It’s not their fault’, and with that it was enough,” remembered Rubio, who took his father’s reply as an acceptance.

The Salvadoran said that since the arrival of the children his parents are happy to be grandparents, especially his father.

“One time he took them to church and said they were his grandchildren,” he said emotionally. “Giovanni even looks a bit like him, which he likes very much.”

It’s been four years since Rubio and his spouse made the decision. Now they are part of a family with three children and three pets.

The couple recommends that those who are interested in adopting, should, independently of their sexual orientation, and to not be afraid.

“They need to become informed. Speak to DCFS or other similar agencies like Raise a Child. These agencies will help you create a strong family foundation.” said Rubio.

“There’s so much support and when you feel alone they provide all the resources. DCFS helps you.”

To obtain more information regarding adoption and requirements go to <http://www.fosterlakids.com/foster-adoption/>

Translated by: Rita Eustaquio, MSW Intern

Link to original article: <http://laopinion.com/2017/04/01/los-dos-siempre-quisimos-hijos/>