

Helping caregivers through their journey one step at a time.

My Story by **Christi Tam**

It's kind of funny being the mother of a boy who I swore I wasn't going to raise. When my oldest daughter was 20, she was living at home having already been in and out of two or three colleges. Her most recent boyfriend was living with us because he had nowhere else to go. We made the two of them sign a contract which was promptly ignored. Anyway, after having been together only a month or two, our daughter was pregnant. And not accidentally, mind you. This blew my husband's and my minds because neither one of them had a job OR a home of their own. I remember the day they told us...all of us sitting in our living room. My husband and I informed them that we were NOT going to raise this baby.

Move forward in time a couple of months and our daughter's boyfriend is out of the picture. He actually threatened our daughter, who was pregnant with his child, so there was a restraining order against him. Things went fine. Our daughter re-enrolled in a local college the following spring and did great! She had to delay her finals because she gave birth to our grandson the last week of April. She was thriving. Rising to the challenge. And then...post-partum, failure to breast feed so was pumping and then feeding the baby, and the worst of all...her friend introduced our daughter to a young man who, in my opinion, wrecked her life. He introduced her to spice. As I understand it, spice is basically a potpourri of sorts that makes one high and sick as a dog when smoked. Our daughter would drag our grandson in his little car seat out at all hours to visit her boyfriend who was living in a

run-down camper on his parents' farm. They would hang out and smoke spice. I'm not sure what else they did. I really don't want to know because my grandson was privy to it.

When our grandson was five months old, we got a call from DCS. Or maybe it was the police. I can't remember now. But we were informed that our daughter was being taken to the local hospital by ambulance. She had been rolling around in a grocery parking lot, very sick, with our grandson strapped in the car. My husband went to get the baby while I headed to the hospital. I beat the ambulance there. I can't describe what it felt like to see her arrive like that in the state she was in, covered in vomit and high as a kite. DCS had to come inspect our home in the middle of the night before they could officially release our grandson into our care.

Well, as anyone reading this probably knows, in order to get custody of your child back, you have to go through a lot of steps...supervised visits, several kinds of therapy, etc. And WE had to go through a lot....DCS visits, CASA visits, court, supervised visits, family meetings, etc. And the whole time working toward reunification.

After 15 months of this, our daughter gave up. She just didn't have it in her to continue "the plan". She signed over her parental rights. So now we had a decision to make...go for guardianship or adoption. It really wasn't a hard decision for us because our grandson had been "ours" for a long time.

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We loved him, cared for him, and were very protective of him. There was no way we wanted to possibly hand him back over to our daughter one day so we started the adoption process.

We thought this would be a quick and easy deal since our daughter had given up her parental rights. Nope! Because the biological father was not at all in the picture (he wasn't even listed on the birth certificate), DCS had to bend over backwards to inform him of what was going on with his biological son. This was really upsetting to me, mostly because I didn't want him to know anything about him...his sex, his name, etc.

The day we had been anticipating for arrived almost a year and a half after our grandson became our responsibility. February 28, 2016 is his "Gotcha Day". It was a really rough journey. It still is. Raising a very strong-willed child later in life is not what we had planned on. I trust that it is in God's will but really wonder what the purpose is.

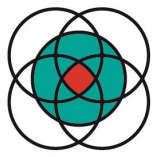
When our daughter was pregnant, at one point in time she had decided to look into adoption. Whew! She got packets of profiles of potential parents.

These were so heart-warming to read. As I went through them, I was getting excited about our grandson's future and the possibility of making a couple very, very happy! I don't know what changed our daughter's mind. This made so much more sense to me than having older parents who had already raised a generation, raise this little boy. Again, I have to trust that there is a purpose in God's master plan.

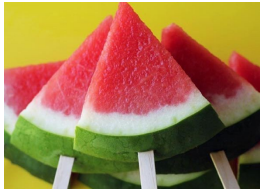
I personally knew Christina Rajanayakam, the former caregiver coordinator. I ran into her at Panera one day during our guardianship period. I shared with her our struggles. We didn't have a clue where to find resources we needed or simply some emotional support. Our conversation inspired her to look into starting a Relative Caregiver Support Group. Goodness knows there are oodles of grandparents and other relatives raising children that aren't their biological kids. This group helped me keep my head above water. Although we were pretty much through the process when it began, I knew how valuable it would be to others like me, especially those who are retired and on a fixed income. I thank God for this group. It is a lifesaver!

Do you have an email address? Do you want to receive your newsletters electronically? Please submit your email address to me for future correspondence! You can email me at jferril@thrive-alliance.org. Caregivers of Older Adults support groups are currently held the third Thursday of each month at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. You can also join the first Thursday of every month at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom or live at the Decatur County Hospital. Relative Caregivers support groups are currently being held the second Tuesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Relative Caregivers support group will also be meeting in person on August 2.

All support groups are R.S.V.P. We also have a Thrive Alliance Caregiver Resources Facebook group. Email me to be a part of the group.



August 2022



Watermelon

Citrullus lanatus
Available from July to October

Types

Seedless watermelons have few or no seeds. **Seeded** watermelons have numerous black or brown seeds.

Shapes: Round, oblong, oval.

Sizes: Very small (often called "personal"), small ("ice-box"), medium, large.

Rind Colors: Dark green, light green, dark green/light green striped.

Flesh Colors: Red (most common), yellow, orange.

Selection Info

Look for a yellowish spot where the watermelon rested on the ground. Pick a symmetrical melon that seems heavy for its size.

Preparation

Wash watermelon under cool running water to clean, or use a clean wet cloth or paper towel to wipe clean.

Fresh: Watermelon can be sliced, cubed, scooped into balls, or added to a fruit salad or recipe.

Storage

Short-Term Storage:

If watermelon is cut, store in an airtight container in refrigerator for up to 5 days. If watermelon is whole, store at room temperature.

Long-Term Storage:

Watermelon can be frozen 8-12 months

Quick Fact

The first recorded watermelon harvest occurred nearly 5,000 years ago in Egypt. Watermelons are now grown in 96 countries worldwide.

Pairings

Mint, lemon, lime, berries, coconut, almond, shrimp, pork, avocado

Nutrition Information

Serving Size 1 cup, diced (152g)

Nutrients	Amount
Total Calories	46
Protein	1g
Carbohydrates	11g
Dietary Fiber	1g
Total Sugars	9g
Total Fat	0g
Saturated Fat	0g
Cholesterol	0mg
Calcium	11 mg
Sodium	2mg
Vitamin A	43 mg
Vitamin C	12 mg

Food Safety Tips

Always keep fresh produce away from raw meat and raw meat juices to prevent cross-contamination.

Follow the safe food guidelines for all fresh produce.

Watermelon Cooler

Recipe adapted from Oregon State University Extension's [FoodHero.org](https://www.oregonstate.edu/foodhero).

Servings: 3

Ingredients

- 3 cups watermelon (cubed, seeds removed)
- 1/2 cup orange juice

Directions

- Place watermelon and juice in blender. Put lid on tightly.
- Blend until smooth.
- Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.





Family

1. A female parent.
2. A married man.
3. A brother or sister.
4. A girl who has the same parents as you.
5. Two babies born at the same time.
6. The brother of your father or mother.
7. A member of your family.
8. A married woman.
9. Someone's husband or wife.
10. A young person.
11. A son of your brother or sister.
12. A child of your aunt and uncle.
13. The brother of your husband or wife.
14. A man who is not married.
15. The people in a family or other group that are living together.
16. A woman who has just married or is about to marry.
17. A man who has just married or is about to marry.
18. Someone who is married: a husband or a wife.
19. A former husband or wife.
20. An unmarried woman.
21. A parent of your father or mother.
22. A daughter of your brother or sister.
23. A family that includes not only parents and children but also other relatives.
24. An old-fashioned word for a person's relatives.