

Fall 2020 Newsletter

A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello, friends.

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family safe and healthy.

As a brief reprieve from this time of uncertainty in the country, I would like to share some uplifting DNAngels news and updates, as well as one very special client's story.

I'm also excited to say that we've made some significant changes to our website! We hope that you will find it to be more user-friendly and comprehensive to all of our visitors! Please check it out and feel free to give us feedback and ideas: www.dnangels.org

As always, your generous contribution to DNAngels is greatly appreciated!

Laura Leslie
Founder and Executive Director
DNAngels



NEWS & UPDATES

As DNAngels continues to expand, so too do our numbers of solved cases, new client intake and more.

- August 2020 New Clients: 52
- August 2020 Cases Solved: 65
- September 2020 New Clients: 70
- September 2020 Cases Solved: 60
- New cases accepted YTD 2020: 574



A special 'Thank you!' to all of our DNAngels volunteers! Your dedication, time and energy towards the DNA support services we provide to clients is what makes our organization a success.

TERRY'S STORY

My story is a bit different due to the fact I kind of fell into the DNAngels Facebook group by accident. But really...was it? I have been working on our family tree and history for a while - like 40 years. When I initially started the genealogy search it was because "I wanted to know where we came from"; England, Ireland, Russia - where exactly?

I remember asking my mother in grade school this same question, to which she always responded, "call your grandmother." You see she had been adopted and there were no members of her family alive. She never wanted to talk about her adoption and when she did, she did so with short answers - "yes", "no", or "I don't know." We just had our grandmother, my dad's mother who was a widow. My mother had literally been handed a small cedar chest with a few items when her adopted mother had died, and was told "Oh, by the way, you need to know you're adopted." This happened when she was 17 and it stuck with her forever!



I am the oldest of six children and the only one that pursued more family information. My mother was widowed at 32 and had six children to raise, and when any of us would ask about her adoption or what she knew, her reply was the standard "I consider the woman who raised me to be my mother." Of course that made sense to me but after I had my first child, I really wanted to know more. I would gently bring the subject up and after some time she produced her original birth certificate with her given name. Needless to say, this was before the internet and computers (yea, I'm that old!). I had taken a genealogy class and started my tree. I worked on it, put it aside, and then worked some more. It was a long process over a long time and I never found much.

The years flew by, computers got better and the internet had a webpage called Ancestry. It was a blessing to find that others were just as interested as I was. I became the "go to" person in my family whenever someone had a question. In 1997 I had found my mother's birth family. Unfortunately, she had passed away in 1995 and she never knew she had two sisters and a brother. I kept picking away at information and found that the internet and Ancestry was a wealth of information for genealogy.

Fast forward to Christmas 2017. I had received an Ancestry DNA test from my son. My first thought was, 'I'll finally be able to confirm the countries that we know we're from!' I took the test and waited and waited some more. I received the notice saying my results were in. Here we go, I thought! It confirmed most of what I knew however, under my 'DNA Matches' there was a name I didn't recognize. My sister was there, my two cousins were there but here was a name under "Probable 1st cousins" that I didn't recognize. How could that be? I made calls to my siblings - no one in the family recognized the name. I sent a message and could tell that this person probably had not been on Ancestry for a while. Like a dog with a bone, I was

obsessed as they say. I had to know WHO was this person and how could we be related? I looked on social media and came up with a list of people with the same name. So, what did I do - start at the top and worked my way down the list.

I sent a message to him (his name is Shane) and asked if he had recently tested via Ancestry and I said that we were a high match through the DNA segments and CM's. I crossed my fingers and hoped I would get a response. Within 30 minutes he replied "yes" he had taken the test and I asked if he was open to a chat, text, etc. to which he also said yes. I hit the jackpot! First one on my list! We talked for approximately 20 minutes, shared information and last names but none were making sense to either of us. The most shocking thing was, this man lived approximately 15-20 minutes away from me and he had grown up in the same neighborhood as my siblings and !! We both tried to come up with common denominators but failed. I was at a loss but we still kept in touch for about a year hoping to figure it out. Like a dog with a bone!



After Thanksgiving 2019, I was scrolling thru Facebook and came upon a genealogy page and post with a question. I wasn't familiar with the site and the question was "What is the highest number you have matched and you don't know who they are?" Hmm...keep scrolling I thought. I'm not sure I want to answer that! Five minutes later I thought to myself, 'well why not, this should be interesting,' so I went back and answered the question. I matched 1,996 cm's across 72 DNA segments - pretty high right? Later, a woman responded, a DNAngel. "You don't know who this is?" she texted. Nope - zilch! Nothing! My DNAngel's name is Laura.

After some texting and discussion, she asked if I would like some help figuring this out. Absolutely I did! I was clueless! She looked at my tree and confirmed the information she needed. Laura told me she wanted to pull some other team members in to help her and for me to give her a couple of days. I thought, why not, the more the merrier, but I'm not sure we'll have an answer.

Laura set up a time with two other DNAngels; Ashley and Emily to assist. She also asked if I thought Shane would be willing to participate with us. I asked him and his response was "you bet!"

So it began...on December 9, at 7 pm. I watched my tree along with all the information they were pulling, and he and I answered their questions. These three women were a 'well-oiled', working, genealogy network machine doing what they do best! Connecting all the dots, data, and dates and even pulling pictures! This went on for hours and I was in awe. I finally went to bed knowing full well every time I woke up I would be looking at my cell phone and the information they were getting.

At 4 am I got up, looked at my phone and saw, "Boy, Terry is gonna be surprised when she gets up and finds out she has a full-blooded nephew!" WHAT??? WHAT!! How could that be? (bad joke here - we know how!) Both Shane and I were a bit stunned I think.

Shane and I had a full day or two to fully absorb all this news and chat. The DNAngels determined he was the son of one of my three brothers. OMG! Now it was my job to figure out how to break the news to two of them, as we had recently lost a brother. Laura made some suggestions to me and I seriously thought about all this.

About a week or two later, after Christmas, I made a date with my brothers Jeff and Mike for coffee and asked them not to bring their spouses. I tried to make it a "oh, just siblings having coffee" type of thing. I took the DNA green sheet and information for them regarding DNA, even a few pictures. I concentrated on saying the word "nephew" instead of "son" because I knew that might freak them out. I also explained that before our brother Tom had died (he was single and never married) he had told me there was a possibility he could have a child 'out there somewhere'. So...after a brief explanation of why I wanted to have coffee, that it was about my genealogy search, I said to them "Well, we have a new nephew and it may be Tom's". Their two faces said it all! My brother Jeff recently told me that it hadn't dawned on him that it could've been his son until he got home. He told me I kept repeating "nephew" and I said that was just what I wanted - for them to get to the "son" part on their own, ...and they did.

A couple of weeks later my youngest brother Mike brought all this up to his daughters one night. He told his wife and girls we all had a new cousin but we weren't sure WHO'S son it was. (Mike's wife was totally on board no matter whose son it was. As she said "This was before Mike and I met and married. I'm totally okay with it.") During a video call with his daughters they said to him "Dad, how do you know it's not YOUR son?" That gave way to a lot of discussion among the four of them. Then his oldest daughter said, "Dad, this would be so cool if it was your son because we've always wanted an older brother!" That spoke volumes of acceptance for me. I had already accepted Shane no matter what my two brothers would decide. I had told Shane I wouldn't let go of him, he was stuck with me at least, and I thought the rest of the family would be

just as happy as I was/am.

Mike's daughter decided to take the Ancestry DNA test (Mike was still unsure) and her test showed a 'sibling match.' Now we absolutely were sure. The girls now have their older brother, Mike has a son, and Shane knows for sure who his father is!

These past several months all of Mike's daughters have gotten to meet Shane. We've had family get-togethers, we text, talk on the phone, have coffee and are enjoying getting to know one another. Shane is married and has three daughters just like Mike. Shane's mother had never told my brother she was pregnant. We are blessed to have Shane, his wife and three daughters in the family. We laugh and say Mike and Shane are like two peas in a pod! It's a good thing! I think back to when my son gave me the DNA test for Christmas and the question he asked me after I told him I had my results, "Mom, is there anything you learned that you didn't know before?" Well...that is a very long story now. Our family story and one that is Shane and Mike's story that is still being written. We have been blessed!

REFER US TO FAMILY & FRIEND

Do you know someone struggling or confused with his or her DNA results? While our mission currently focuses on finding biological parents, we also offer guidance and support to anyone in need, regardless of their circumstances.

We encourage anyone in need of answers, support and all things genealogical to visit us online via [our website](#) or [Facebook](#). We can also be reached by email at info@dnangels.org.

DNAngels is the leader among organizations who assist individuals in the interpretation, mapping and support services following at-home DNA testing. This means we provide our support services to more individuals each year than any other organization that provides similar support services nationwide.

DNAngels continues to grow in response to the increasing need for our DNA support services.

[GivingTuesday](#) is a global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world.

GivingTuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past seven years, it has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. [Please click here for additional information.](#)

This is a great opportunity for you to show your support to our efforts at DNAngels at a time when the need is greater now than ever before. Requests for our DNA support services increase daily with the growing popularity of at-home DNA tests.

Your contribution to DNAngels on Giving Tuesday will support our efforts to meet the needs of those seeking biological answers and emotional support within our growing NPE/Adoptee community.



Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter!

Questions, comments or ideas? Please email us at info@dnangels.org.