

I Have a Mom Too

by Jeff Martin

As we were coming home one evening from day camp orientation where campers get to meet their new summer friends, my partner and I looked for an opportunity to introduce ourselves as “the diverse family” --to the other parents on the bus, and perhaps ease the way for future conversations.

One six year old asked where Marcus’ mother was.

We took this as our big opening and proudly announced “Marcus has two dads!” and may have added “Isn’t that great?”

Without missing a beat, my son corrects us....”I have a Mom too. She’s in Cambodia, we don’t know who she is, but I do have a mom.”

We stood corrected. And in that, he reminded us that we should never forget his roots, heritage and the extended family we all belong to. Even though she is not with us, Mom is very real for him.

Just recently Marcus’ good friend Jacob was having lunch with us at home. Jacob is remarkable for his sensitivity, maturity and insight that go way beyond his 10 years. For some reason, at one point he remarked, “That’s so gay”. It hung in the air for a second or so, before I found the words. “Did you know John and I are gay? Do you know what gay is?” He claimed he knew, but was not referring to us. “It’s just an expression.”

What a great moment to discuss how words can hurt, and to think about what you're saying before it's too late to 'not' say it.

Jeff Martin and his partner John Kroner live in New York City, with their 10 year old son Marcus.