

## Bittersweet reunion ends with mother bringing daughter home

By Kristi Glissmeyer  
The American

Cut in a pageboy style that frames her 6-year-old face, Carolynn Kay Daly's strawberry locks are just a shade or two lighter than her mom's red hair.

For the last four years, Carolynn didn't know that. She thought her mother had black hair. She was told her mother was dead.

The joy 29-year-old Charlotte Kay Daly feels to have her daughter back home four years after the child was abducted by her father cannot cover the scars etched on the hearts of all involved, Daly said Saturday.

Mother and daughter returned to Odessa Saturday night after the Houston group American Association of Lost Children found Carolynn in Bakersfield, Calif.

The two arrived at Midland International Airport in matching shirts printed with the child-find group's name and number, 1-800-873-5678.

Their reunion in a California police department was bittersweet, Daly said.

"I wanted so bad to just reach out and grab her," she said. "I didn't because she didn't even know me. I said, 'Hi, I'm your mom. I love you.'" Her

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mouth dropped open. She said she wanted to live with her stepmother. She was scared, and that hurt."

Daly had called police and searched for her daughter after the 1985 abduction. But American Association of Lost Children founder Mark Miller and president Elizabeth Whittington say their agency did in five days what law agencies were unable to do in four years.

They found the redheaded girl in Bakersfield, where she had been living with her father, Kenneth Wayne Daly, who had remarried and changed his daughter's name to Kelly.

She was reunited with her mother Thursday, just an hour after police arrested Kenneth Wayne Daly on

Please see REUNION/4A



The Odessa American: Mark Rogers

From left, Carolynn gives a hug to her grandmother Lela Lilly while her mother hugs close friend Charlotte Beard.

### FROM 1A

## Reunion

fugitive child abduction charges. He will be extradited from California by the Ector County Sheriff's Department, said Cpt. Gene Kloss.

The first thing Carolynn wanted to do when she arrived at the airport Saturday was play video games. Her half-brother, Kevin, 12, offered her some gum. But she already had some and dug into her bag for the treat she would share with a brother she didn't remember.

The last thing Carolynn wanted to do was talk to any strangers who wanted to know how she felt reunited with the family she was taken from as a toddler.

Daly said Carolynn has been surrounded by cameras and questions this week, creating a whirlwind of emotions. She knows her young daughter is confused, and she shares her pain.

Daly said she wants to help other parents and children who suffer from being separated by abduc-



The Odessa American: Mark Rogers

Daly received a welcome home hug from Charlotte Beard.

tion. "People who run off with babies... it's the worst kind of

child abuse there is," she said. At the airport, Daly was met by Charlotte Beard, a Midland mother reunited with her 2-year-old daughter in November 1988. The American Association for Lost Children helped Beard find her daughter, Baily, in Pittsburgh, Pa., six months after the child was taken by her father.

Beard and Daly plan to raise funds for the nonprofit group.

"I will never be able to repay them for finding my child. That is priceless," Daly said. "A lot of other mothers don't know what to do. They need someone who knows what they are going through. I'll talk to them. I know how they feel."

Miller, a licensed private detective, and Whittington found Carolynn's father with the help of postal records and extensive interviews. They said they have found 21 missing children since they formed the two-person organization in 1987. The two said they earn

\$150 a week from candy sales in front of supermarkets to support their work.

"It's always a struggle," Miller said. "We're the only organization that physically searches for children. We do more than put them on milk cartons and flyers."

Daly said she is confident Carolynn will find a happy home in Odessa. "All she needs is love and support. Mostly, just a lot of love," she said.

Meanwhile, with the patience of a mother who loves her child, Daly will help Carolynn adjust. "She has called her stepmother three times since we've been gone. It's kind of a security blanket. I can't just take them away from her because that's all she's known."

Minutes later, Carolynn stood before her mother with the question: "Mama, can I call my stepmom?"

"Yes, honey, you can," Daly replied and reached in her purse for a quarter.