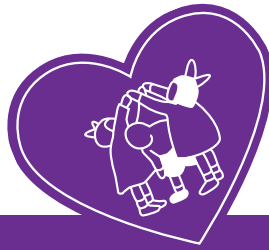


Adoption News



A Quarterly Newsletter from

Adoptions From The Heart

Fall 2013

AFTH Supports the Children's Miracle Network at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia



From Left: AFTH Board Member Stephen Facenda, "Cadillac Jack", AFTH Executive Director Maxine Chalker, AFTH Assistant Director Heidi Gonzalez & "Frank Lewis" of WOGL

For the second year, AFTH was thrilled to participate in the 98.1 WOGL Loves Our Kids Radiothon to help raise money for the Children's Miracle Network at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

The two-day event was broadcasted live from the Ryan Seacrest Foundation's "Seacrest Studios" located at CHOP. Businesses and members of the community

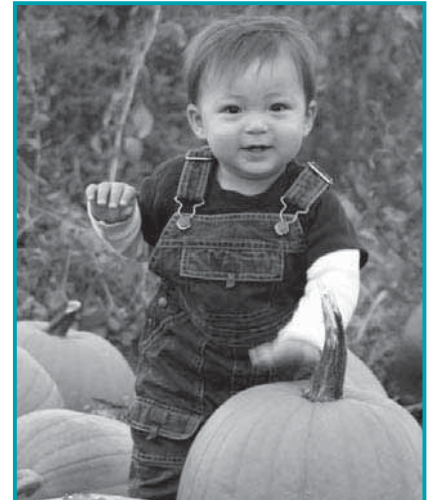
came together to raise funds and support this worthy cause.

AFTH was proud to present a \$3,000 check to CHOP in addition to sponsoring a "Power Hour" to help bring in donations from listeners and supporters alike.

This year alone, the radiothon brought in \$662,428.33 and over the past 12 years the donations have totaled more than \$6.2 million dollars. The funds raised through the radiothon each year are earmarked specifically for patient care programs at CHOP. No parent wants to see their child needing hospital care, however in the event that it happened these special programs are a vital part of the healing process, not only for the patient but also for the whole family. Every single child who visits CHOP is eligible for these specific support programs that would not be possible without the funding through the Children's Miracle Network.

AFTH appreciates WOGL for allowing us to again take part and to share in this inspirational event. We thank everyone who called in to make donations during the Adoptions From The Heart Power Hour and we look forward to participating again next year.

In This Issue



- 2 Special NAM Projects
- 3 Paper Heart Project
- 4 Support Groups
- 5 Adoption Books & Reviews
- 6 Save the Date for 2014 5K
- 6 AFTH Awarded Grant
- 7 "ReHoming" Trend
- 7 AFTH Idlewild Picnic Recap
- 8 AFTH Program Updates
- 9 Heartbeats Updates
- 9 New AFTH Families
- 9 Upcoming Conferences
- 10 International News
- 11 Exchange Student & Adoptees

Insert:

AFTH 2014 Calendar
November AFTH Events
AFTH Holiday Parties
Tax Information & Legislation

OFFICE LOCATIONS

ALLENTOWN OFFICE

2212 Union Blvd
Allentown, PA 18109
610.432.2384

CENTRAL PA OFFICE

1525 Oregon Pike, Suite 402
Lancaster, PA 17601
717.399.7766

CONNECTICUT OFFICE

703 Hebron Ave., 1st floor
Glastonbury, CT 06033
860.657.2626

DELAWARE OFFICE

18-A Trolley Square
Wilmington, DE 19806
302.658.8883

NEW JERSEY OFFICE

451 Woodland Avenue
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002
856.665.5655

NEW YORK

1.800-355-5500

PITTSBURGH OFFICE

1225 South Main St., Suite 207
Greensburg, PA 15601
724.853.6533

VIRGINIA OFFICE

1407 Stephanie Way, Suite H
Chesapeake, VA 23320
757.361.0008

WYNNEWOOD OFFICE

30-31 Hampstead Circle
Wynnewood, PA 19096
610.642.7200

TOLL FREE NUMBER

1.800.355.5500

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

www.afth.org

Honoring National Adoption Month This November

The Facts about National Adoption Month:

National Adoption Month began as a week-long celebration in Massachusetts in 1976, and since then it has evolved into a month-long event. Each year, the President of the United States makes a proclamation to announce that November is National Adoption Month. This year, National Adoption DAY will be celebrated on November 23. Thousands of adoptions are finalized in court rooms all across the United States on this special occasion. Every year this celebration grows larger as more and more states and courtrooms become involved. Whether you're an adoptee, birth parent, adoptive parent, advocate, or you just simply support adoption, join us in celebrating National Adoption Month!

Celebrate and support National Adoption Month (NAM) with AFTH this year! Get involved in one of our special NAM projects and help us spread adoption awareness this November.



Online Contests & Fun!

In addition to spreading adoption awareness and support throughout your local community during NAM, we encourage you to also remember to participate online.

The fun is just beginning on AFTH's Facebook page. Check-in all month-long for weekly contests, giveaways, trivia, and of course adoption discussions. Giveaways and prizes include AFTH gear, tickets to a Philadelphia Eagles game, admission to the Philadelphia Zoo, and much more!



Gift Card Drive Benefitting Birthmothers in Need

Just before the holiday season, AFTH identifies several birthmothers, parenting children at home, as being in need of extra financial assistance. **AFTH will graciously be accepting Target, Acme, Walmart, and Visa gift cards ranging from \$25-\$200.** Without these gift card donations, many of the birthmothers would not be able to provide a special meal, warm clothes, and a few presents for their children during the holiday season. Last year we were able to help 37 families. Please keep this opportunity in mind for your charitable giving in 2013, especially when you are out shopping and see the gift cards at the checkout.

If you or your company would like to make a monetary or gift card donation please click on the Gift Card Drive link or contact AlexandraP@afth.org. Gift card donations may also be sent to the AFTH Wynnewood Office at 30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood, PA 19096 before November 22nd.



Making a Difference, One HEART at a Time: AFTH's Paper Hearts Project

On Friday, September 27, as a part of United Way of Bucks County's "Volunteer Bucks Day of Service," volunteers joined AFTH staff in preparation for this year's project. With the help of registered volunteers, some students passing by, and the wonderful Bucks County Community College staff, almost 1,500 purple paper hearts were cut, bundled, and are ready to go for AFTH's annual fundraiser and awareness campaign, The Paper Heart Project.



Throughout the month of November, participants and sponsors collect donations of \$1 in exchange for a purple paper heart which is then displayed during the month to spread adoption awareness. All proceeds raised from the project benefit AFTH's Birthmother Fund. In addition to raising money for a worthy cause, The Paper Heart Project is a simple fundraiser to bring the community together in supporting and spreading adoption awareness.

All proceeds will be donated to AFTH's Birthmother Fund which supports women choosing to place their children for adoption; in their education, counseling, medical care and guidance, living essentials or other special needs.

If you would like to join the 2013 Paper Heart Project (PHP), register your business, organization, classroom or small group online by visiting the National Adoption Month page at afth.org. Register to join the PHP or make a personal donation online, at a participating location, or in your local AFTH office. For questions or to register to join please contact Alexandra Peters at AlexandraP@afth.org by October 18th.

Paper Hearts Participants Include: Animal Haven Veterinary Center in Bear, DE ♥ Farmers Insurance-Foat Agency in Sicklerville, NJ ♥ Friedman's Service Center in Bethlehem, PA ♥ Happy Tymes in Warrington, PA ♥ LevLane Advertising in Philadelphia, PA ♥ Maria's Salon & Lorenzo's Barber Shop in Vineland, NJ ♥ Natural Health Services Family Wellness in Greensburg, PA ♥ Sweet & Sassy Lehigh Valley in Center Valley, PA ♥ The Ice Cream Lab Inc. in Walnutport, PA

Please Make Your Checks Payable To: **Adoptions From The Heart**
and mail with form to: **30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood, PA 19096**

Credit Card
Donations
Accepted Online:
www.afth.org

Please use my donation: ____ To help birth mothers in the U.S. ____ Where it's needed most.

I'd like to generously donate: ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

*JOIN THE AFTH PLEDGE PROGRAM:

I authorize Adoptions From The Heart to
invoice me in September, December, and March
for 3 additional quarterly payments of \$ ____.

Adoptions From The Heart is a registered, charitable organization. In accordance with PA law, a copy of our official registration and financial information may be obtained from either the PA Department of State by calling toll-free (800) 732-0999, or the state of NJ by calling (973) 504-6215. A copy of our official registration and financial information may be obtained from the state of NY upon written request to the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. A financial statement is available upon written request from the VA State of Office of Consumer Affairs, (800) 552-9963.

AFTH Support Groups

ALLENTOWN

Waiting family support groups are held for adoptive parents to come and connect.

Call (610) 432-2384 for information.

CENTRAL PA

Small, informal gathering for birthparents to come together, get to know each other by sharing their stories.

Call (717) 399-7766 or Email AmandaK@afth.org

Support group for recently placed and waiting families are also being held. Contact for more details.

Email AmandaK@afth.org for upcoming dates.

Cherry Hill

One-on-one Support - Social workers available to meet with NJ waiting families to provide support, review profiles and discuss any concerns families may have. Must register by November 13th for time slots between 6:30-8:30pm.

Tuesday, November 19th

Call (856) 665-5655 or Email TerryP@afth.org

Birthmother support groups help connect women who have or are making an adoption plan for their child.

Call 856-665-5655 or Email TerryP@afth.org for details.

CONNECTICUT

Waiting family support groups will be offered throughout the year for families to come together and share their experiences. Contact office for details.

Call (860) 657-2626 or Email PennyR@afth.org.

DELAWARE

Birthparent support groups are designed for birth parents to come together in support and to share their adoption story with others who have or who are considering adoption.

Call 302-658-8883 or Email DanielleG@afth.org

Support groups bring AFTH waiting families together.

Call 302-658-8883 or Email DanielleG@afth.org

VIRGINIA

Adoptive parent support groups bring AFTH waiting families together for extra emotional support during "the wait."

Call (757) 361-0008 or Email NicoleF@afth.org

WYNNEWOOD

Adoptive parent support groups bring AFTH families together in support during the "wait."

Email AshleyK@afth.org or Call 610-642-7200 for details.



NEW MONTHLY ADOPTION GROUP FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN!



UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Thursday, Nov. 14

Thursday, Dec. 12

from 10-11am

Wynnewood Office

**Held 2nd Thursday each month*

Adoption Connections:

Activities, Discussion and Support For
Young Children & Their Parents

This new monthly activity group is created to bring adoptees and their parents together with other families touched by adoption.

Facilitated by a social worker, the group will include a song, seasonal craft, story, snack, and time to connect with other adoptive parents. This will be a fun and enriching way to connect with other local adoptive families. We look forward to seeing you.

\$10/Family (pay at the door or online)

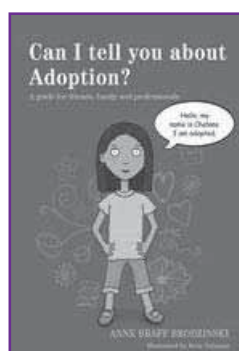
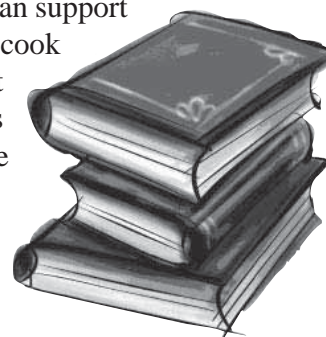
Contact Sam at 610-642-7200 or SamW@afth.org to RSVP

Adoption Related Books at Unbeatable Prices

Not only can you snag up some great adoption related books at fabulous prices, you can support AFTH in the process. We have books on international adoption, domestic adoption, cook books, country specific books, children's books, books about birthparent, books about transracial adoption, books that every prospective adoptive parent should read, books for adoptees and so much more. Start your search here and take advantage of these amazing prices before our inventory runs out:

AFTH's Amazon Storefront: <http://tiny.cc/AFTH-Amazon-Sales>

AFTH Blog Recommends: <http://tiny.cc/AFTH-Book-Store>



Can I Tell You About Adoption? A Guide for Friends, Family and Professionals by *Ann Braff Brodzinsky* - This is an honest explanation for children trying to understand their own adoption

story which in turn helps them to inform others around them. It can be useful to empower children to tell their story, stop annoying questions asked by others about their adoption, and help others understand adoption even better. Since this book was written in the UK, there are some words like push chair (stroller to those of us in the U.S.) which you may need to explain to your child but there is a lot of good, honest, easy to understand information. [Amazon \\$8.37](#) [Kindle \\$7.95](#)



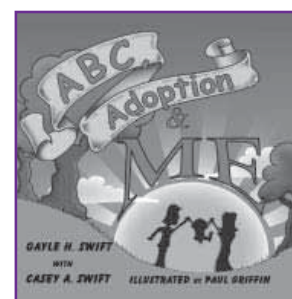
Come Rain or Come Shine: A White Parent's Guide to Adopting and Parenting Black Children by *Rachel Garlinghouse* - Most people don't like talking about race. It's one of those taboo subjects that people just brush over, but Garlinghouse does a great job talking about it and

about becoming a multi-racial household. There are challenges and rewards in adopting across racial lines, and Garlinghouse presents a lot of things that many people may not have thought of and some that maybe you have already discussed. A useful book for anyone trying to decide if adopting outside of their race is right for them. [Amazon \\$13.46](#) [Kindle \\$9.99](#)

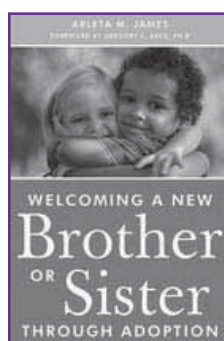
Book Reviews

ABC, Adoption & Me by *Gayle H. Swift and Casey A. Swift* - This

book has bright, quirky illustrations with a really positive message. Each page of the book features a letter of the alphabet and explains another detail of adoption. It's a great way to start a conversation with your child or keep the conversation going! [Amazon \\$10.84](#) [Kindle \\$6.99](#)



Welcoming a New Brother or Sister Through Adoption by *Arleta James* - James has



written a book about the dynamics of families formed by adoption. Whether you are interested in pre-placement issues, post-placement concerns, disruption/dissolution, sexual acting out, blending siblings, or marital stress, this book will have something to offer. James focuses on how a child's past influences his blending into the family in a simple yet comprehensive way. Throughout the book, James includes stories of the adoptive families she has helped, giving real life examples and real life hope. A fabulous book to help families navigate the ups and downs and ins and outs of weaving together a family through adoption. [Amazon \\$17.47](#) [Kindle \\$16.60](#)

On Your Mark, Get Set, Go...

Mark Your Calendars for the 2nd Annual Find Her Footing 5K Now!

Mark those calendars and start hitting the trails! The 2nd Annual Find Her Footing 5K Run, Walk and Kid's Dash hosted by AFTH has been scheduled:



Sunday, April 6, 2014

Delaware County Community College in Media, PA



Proceeds raised from the Find Her Footing 5K will benefit AFTH's Birthmother Fund. The Birthmother Fund supports women, both before and after pregnancy, who have worked with the agency. Many of these women are in need of extra financial assistance for food, housing, transportation, and medical care and for raising other children at home.

With your help, AFTH offers lifetime support and guidance for the women we work with. The Birthmother Fund is used to help a woman "Find Her Footing" before and after making an adoption plan for her baby.

Last year, supporters of all ages walked and ran the "rolling" course— we had a great turn out for the race's first year! Several adoptive parents pushed strollers the entire

length of the course, we even had one adoptive mother walk with her son strapped on her back.



This year we hope to see even more participants. The morning will include a 100 meter kid's dash (ages 2-10), the 5K walk/run, music, food, giveaways, prizes and more!

Early Bird Registration will open this winter at www.afth.org. For sponsorship opportunities please contact Alexandra Peters at AlexandraP@afth.org.



Grant Received in Support of the AFTH Birthmother Fund

**THE
PHILADELPHIA
FOUNDATION**

The Power of Endless Possibilities.

Recently, AFTH was awarded a grant of \$250 from the Koenig Family Charitable Fund of The Philadelphia Foundation to go directly to the AFTH Birthmother Fund to help women who are struggling to provide for their basic needs.

AFTH was thrilled to receive the grant, which was given to a woman who placed her baby for adoption, and the money went to help her to find stable housing with the child she is parenting. We thank the Koenig family for their gracious giving.

For more information on the AFTH Birthmother Fund, please visit www.afth.org and click on Support Our Mission. Additional donations to the Birthmother Fund can be made online or by completing the form on page 3.

A Star is Born...2014 Calendars Have Arrived!

LAST YEAR WE ONLY HAD A FEW CALENDARS LEFT AFTER SALES, SO HURRY AND ORDER YOURS TODAY.

Because of our record breaking number of presales, **100% of the \$12 purchase price goes directly into the AFTH Birthmother Fund!**

The 2014 Building Beautiful Calendar features children adopted through AFTH Programs.

Calendars are sold 3 ways:

- **Online** at www.afth..org
- **In AFTH Offices**
- **By mailing** in this form with payment

Celebrate ADOPTION and Support this great fundraiser for the AFTH BIRTHMOTHER FUND!

The Birthmother Fund assists expecting mothers who are considering or birthmothers who have worked with AFTH to make an adoption plan for their baby. Many of the women are struggling to provide for their basic needs during pregnancy - food, shelter, clothing, heat, etc. The financial hardships many of the expectant parents we work with don't end with placement and so the AFTH Birthmother Fund is here for them after placement as well.

CALENDARS PRICES:

Purchased at an AFTH office - \$12.00
Online & Those Being Mailed - \$13.50



Building Beautiful Families 2014 Calendar

COMPLETE FORM AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT

Name: _____

Phone: (____)_____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

_____ # of Calendars x \$13.50 (includes shipping)

= \$ _____ **Total Enclosed**

Make Checks Payable to:
Adoptions From The Heart

Mail Payment and Form To:
Adoptions From The Heart
30-31 Hampstead Circle
Wynnewood, PA 19096

Or Visit AFTH Store to Order Online!

Join in AFTH Activities to Honor National Adoption Month



CENTRAL PA OFFICE

Post-Adoption Pizza Party & Discussion

Celebrate National Adoption Month at AFTH with other adoptive families! Parents and kids will have the opportunity to socialize over food and drink provided by AFTH. At 6:30 parents can participate in a group discussion of post-adoption concerns, needs, and interests led by AFTH social workers. A separate group will be provided for children ages 6-9 with age-appropriate activities led by Lorrie Peters, LC Peters Counseling LLC. Lorrie is a licensed clinical social worker with many years of experience offering counseling to children, adults, families, and groups. She has a local private practice in the Central PA area and she has direct adoption experience. Cost: \$10/family

Tuesday, November 19th from 5:30-7:30pm

Location: AFTH Central PA Office in Lancaster

RSVP by November 14th- 717-399-7766 or AmandaK@afth.org

CHERRY HILL OFFICE

Pizza, Movie & Discussion for Kids

This is a great opportunity for children grades 1-3 to socialize with other adopted children. Pizza will be served and AFTH staff will lead children in games, activities and age appropriate discussion. Portions of the movie "Despicable Me" will be shown to help engage children in discussion. Children can join in whether or not they have seen the movie. Cost: \$10/family

Monday, November 4th from 6:00-8:00pm

Location: AFTH Cherry Hill Office

RSVP by November 1st- 856-665-5655 or TerryP@afth.org

CONNECTICUT OFFICE

Pizza & Adoption Storytime

Come together with other adoptive families, enjoy pizza, listen to adoption stories, and share in the discussion. Cost: \$10/family

Saturday, November 16th from Noon-2:00pm

Location: AFTH Connecticut Office in Glastonbury

RSVP by November 13th- 860-657-2626 or KayceeK@afth.org

DELAWARE OFFICE

Pizza Party & Adoption Group Discussion

Come socialize and celebrate National Adoption Month at AFTH with other adoptive families! Pizza and drinks provided by AFTH. At 6:30 a group discussion of post-adoption concerns including how to deal with questions about adoption in general as well as their child's adoption story led by our AFTH social work team. For children a separate group will be provided with age-appropriate activities. Cost: \$10/family

Thursday, November 14th from 5:30pm-7:30pm

Location: AFTH Delaware Office in Wilmington

RSVP by Nov. 7th- 302-658-8883 or DanielleG@afth.org

PITTSBURGH OFFICE

Celebrate November with Pizza

Join us for a pizza party to celebrate National Adoption month and provide an atmosphere for adoptive parents and adoptees to discuss issues relevant to each group. The charge for this is only \$10 per family regardless of family size. Come and join us for an evening of camaraderie and food!

Tuesday, November 5th from 7:00pm-9:00pm

Location: AFTH Pittsburgh Office in Greensburg

RSVP by November 1st- 724-853-6533 or KatieH@afth.org

VIRGINIA OFFICE

Pizza & Adoption Discussion

Come and kick off National Adoption Month with AFTH and other adoptive families! Pizza and drinks will be provided as we make new connections and discuss adoption with other placed families. This event is geared toward school aged children but all placed families are welcome to attend. Cost: \$10/family

Saturday, November 2nd from 12:30pm-2:00pm

Location: AFTH Virginia Office in Chesapeake

RSVP by October 29th- 757-361-0008 or JennyH@afth.org

WYNNEWOOD OFFICE

Pizza & Adoption Discussion for Families

Celebrate National Adoption Month at AFTH with other adoptive families! Parents and kids can socialize with one another over food and drink (provided by AFTH). At 6:30, there will be a group discussion for parents regarding post-adoption experiences, led by an AFTH licensed clinical social worker. Planned topics include talking with children (and others) about adoption, incorporating birth culture and/or birth family in the lives of adoptive families, and identifying families' post-adoption concerns, needs, and interests. At the same time, separate groups will be provided with age-appropriate activities for the children, led by Dawn Connors of Main Line Adoption Counseling Services. Dawn is a licensed clinical social worker with many years of experience offering counseling to children, adults, families, and groups, and with a private practice dedicated to working with adoptive families. She is also proudly an adoptive parent. Cost: \$10/family

Thursday, November 7th from 5:30pm-7:30pm

Location: AFTH Wynnewood Office

RSVP by November 5th- 610-642-7200 or SamW@afth.org

AFTH Holiday Events & Activities

CENTRAL PA OFFICE

Holiday Party



Join us for a holiday celebration with staff and other AFTH families. Enjoy fun activities for all the children! In honor of the season of giving, we again ask each family to bring an item to donate to the Neighborhood Center in Harrisburg. Some of the highly needed items: school supplies, arts & crafts, games, and non-perishable snacks. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Tuesday, December 10th from 6:00-8:00pm

Location: Giant Community Center in Harrisburg

RSVP by December 3rd by calling 717-399-7766 or emailing AmandaK@afth.org

Holiday Open House at the Office

Stop in and join us for a Holiday Open House celebration with staff and other AFTH families. Visit the office anytime between 3-5pm and be sure to bring an item to donate to the Water Street Mission, the only year-round emergency shelter in Lancaster, PA. Some of the highly needed items: diapers (sizes 4, 5, and 6) and baby wipes, alarm clocks, pajamas for women (new or gently used), twin bed sheets and blankets, toiletries, cereal, canned fruit, 5 lb bags of sugar, coffee, and dry pasta. We look forward to having you join us.

Thursday, December 12th from 3:00-5:00pm

Location: Central PA AFTH Office in Lancaster

RSVPs preferred by not required by December 3rd by calling 717-399-7766 or emailing AmandaK@afth.org

CHERRY HILL OFFICE

Holiday Open House

The holiday party is an opportunity for adoptive families and birth families to get together for a visit prior to the holidays. There will be light refreshments, a chance to have photos taken, and possibly a special visitor. If you would like to attend and invite your birth family, contact the office for more information.

Saturday, December 7th from 1:00-4:00pm

Location: To Be Announced (contact for details)

RSVP by November 15th by calling 856-665-5655 or emailing TerryP@afth.org

Birthmother Support - Holiday Coffee

If you have made an adoption plan or are considering making a plan, this is a great opportunity to share your experiences and to get support. The group will lead the flow of discussion, but the focus of this session will be on handling the holidays. Light refreshments will be served.

Saturday, December 7th from 10:30am-Noon

Location: Cherry Hill Office

RSVP by December 2nd by calling 856-665-5655 or emailing TerryP@afth.org

CONNECTICUT OFFICE

Holiday Celebration



Time to reconnect with old friends and make some new friends too! Come enjoy a light buffet lunch, activities for the kids including a magic show and Santa will be stopping in for a visit!

Cost Per Person: \$17.50

Free for children under 2 years old

Saturday, December 7th from 11am - 2pm

Location: Hilton Garden Inn in Glastonbury, CT

RSVP by December 3rd - email HilaryC@afth.org or call 860-657-2626 or send payment to the CT Office.

DELAWARE OFFICE

Holiday Open House and Support Group



Meet and greet the new Delaware AFTH staff members and other local adoptive families. All are welcome to attend: placed families, waiting families, and in-process families. Snacks and drinks will be provided as well as fun games and stories!

**Wednesday, December 4th
from 5:00-7:00pm**

Location: Delaware AFTH Office

RSVPs by November 27th by calling 302-658-8883 or emailing DanielleG@afth.org

See Next Page for Virginia & Wynnewood Events...

VIRGINIA OFFICE

Annual Holiday Party

Join our annual holiday party with a visit from Santa. Bring a dish to share "potluck style" and a non-perishable item for the church food pantry. Adoptive parents are encouraged to write a letter of invitation to their child's birthparents for an annual visit.

Saturday, December 7th from Noon - 2pm

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Williamsburg

RSVP by December 4th by calling 757-361-0008 or emailing JennyH@afth.org

Wynnewood

Holiday Gathering

The holiday gathering is a chance for all present and past families to join in celebrating the holiday season with the AFTH staff and other adoptive families. This will be a time for families to meet new people and enjoy games and arts and crafts. Please bring your children to enjoy the party and a snack to share with everyone.

Wednesday, December 11th from 6:00-8:00pm

Location: Haverford Township Free Library

RSVP by December 6th by calling 610-642-7200 or emailing AshleyK@afth.org



Almost Tax Time But Still No SSN For Adopted Child... What To Do?

Some of the families who have adopted domestically in 2013 will not finalize before the end of the year which means that their child has not officially been issued a Social Security number yet. So how do those families file their taxes?

The IRS can issue families in these types of situations an Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number (ATIN) which is a temporary nine-digit number for a child who does not have a Social Security Number in time to file taxes. ATIN numbers can be requested through the form W-7A which can be downloaded online at www.irs.gov. Documentation describing how your child was placed with your family via adoption will need to accompany the form. It can take up to eight weeks to receive an ATIN and it is valid for two years and can be used to claim dependency on tax documents.

Consult with your tax preparer if you have additional questions about requesting an ATIN for your child or about the tax credit.



Recent Legislation



ADOPTION TAX CREDIT REFUNDABILITY ACT OF 2013 (\$1056)/(HR2144) - While the adoption tax credit, enacted in January, included a permanent extension of the credit, it did not make it refundable. As a result, according to the Adoption Tax Credit Working Group, most of the benefit of the credit goes to families making \$100,000 or more per year. The proposed Senate bill and its House companion bill would allow the credit to be refundable.

ADOPTION FRIENDLY WORKPLACE - Prudential Financial, Inc. earned a spot on the Dave Thomas Foundation's "2013 Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces List." Prudential employees are reimbursed up to \$10,000 per adopted child and receive up to 26 weeks of parental leave. There is no limit on the number of adoptions that can be covered in a year. In addition, Prudential offers counseling services and referral programs to help employees through the adoption process. For employees who are foster parents, the company also provides \$1,000 per calendar year for new, foster care placements.

"Re-Homing" Adoptees After Placement

Recently Reuters ran an article exposing the increasing trend of parents of internationally adopted children - and a few domestic adoptions as well - turning to the internet instead of adoption professionals to find new homes for their children. Usually citing complex behavior issues, some adoptive parents find they are not equipped to cope with the needs of their children and are "marketing them online" in a newly sensationalized process called re-homing. These ill equipped parents are then giving their children to strangers without any background checks, clearances, or education, many of whom go on to abuse or traffic these children. 70% of the children listed on Yahoo or other internet groups were adopted overseas.



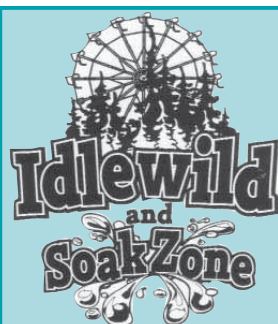
Shockingly enough, passing off legal responsibilities of a child can be surprisingly easy. Legal adoptions must be handled through the courts, and prospective parents must be vetted, however there are ways around these legalities. Children can be handed off to new families quickly through a basic "power of attorney" document – a notarized statement declaring the child to be in the care of another adult. This is an extremely dangerous practice, and while not illegal, runs a lot like the child trafficking heard about in other countries.

It is important to point out that these unethical practices are not the majority. However since the article was released, there has been a lot of finger pointing: agencies are being blamed for not providing enough post-placement services; the government for not doing anything to shut these websites down; and the Child Welfare System and the Interstate Compact for not providing the resources to stay on top of these situations.

So why aren't these adoptive parents seeking help from professionals instead of taking matters into their own hands? The stigma of a failed adoption is often seen as "failed parenting" but maybe it's more so a fail of society to help support the parent that is struggling.

While there is no easy fix, the Universal Accreditation Act, which was passed by Congress and due to go into effect in July 2014, will help increase education and professional requirements for international adoption agencies and will help create support services for adopted children. And the Child and Families First Act due to be introduced in congress soon would potentially improve the ability to track placements of children adopted internationally for the purpose of post adoption reports. Both of these are steps in the right direction but we as a society seem to be missing a piece of the puzzle. The judgments we as a society place on parents often leave them feeling hopeless and inferior. Instead of pointing fingers and shifting blame, the focus needs to be on the needs of the children and providing the resources and education necessary for the adoptive parents to manage those specific needs.

If a parent is struggling and they don't feel they can continue to parent a child for any reason, they should contact their county for services or a private agency to help find a new home for the child. It may take more work but it is a safer and better option for the child. Parents in crisis should know that they are not alone and there is help!



Pittsburgh Office Idlewild Picnic Recap

Friday, August 2nd was a great day at Idlewild Park! There were about 200 people in attendance and there were several birth families visiting with their adoptive families. Many thanks to Sharon Lalli who made up 10 baskets. We also had tickets to the Pittsburgh Zoo and The Children's Museum that were raffled off. Over \$320 was raised for the AFTH Birthmother Fund.

AFTH Program Updates



DOMESTIC PROGRAMS - As you may already know, November is National Adoption Month (see page 2-3 for a list of AFTH's unique projects honoring National Adoption Month). Our local offices will be hosting special events this November to bring people who have been touched by adoption together (see the insert for more details).

AFTH understands the importance of staying connected before, during, and after placement so we continue to host a variety of gatherings to meet the needs of all those involved in adoption.

Holiday Parties - As we begin to prepare for the upcoming holiday season, we hope many of our AFTH families will consider joining us in celebration at our office holiday parties. See the newsletter insert for details for the upcoming holiday gatherings.

Adoptee & Parent Activity Group - The Wynnewood office has begun "Adoption Connections," a group for parents and their young children to come connect with other local adoptive families.

Adoptee Online Discussion - AFTH recently created a Yahoo group where adoptees of any age can come together in support. Any and all adoptees are welcome to subscribe to the group and join in the discussion. Adoptees can subscribe by sending an email with the word "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to: AFTH_AdopteeSupport-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Waiting Family Support Groups - AFTH hosts support groups in our local offices for our waiting families and we hope that you will join us. This is a great time to connect with others who are adopting and to receive updates from your AFTH social worker regarding the Domestic Program. You can also stay connected with AFTH by following us on our different social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, etc.

Post-Adoption Counseling - AFTH provides post-adoption counseling services not only birth parents, but to adoptive parents and adoptees. If you feel you need counseling regarding your adoption story, re-connecting with your birth parent, how to talk with your child about adoption, or a related topic, please contact the Domestic Program Coordinator, Jeanne McGee, at 610-642-7200 or e-mail at JeanneM@afth.org.

org. We would be happy to set up a counseling session with one of our licensed social workers.

Expectant Parent and Birthmother Support - Various levels of pre and post placement support are available to those making adoption plans. If you are a birthmother/birthfather or are an expecting parent considering making an adoption plan for your baby and would like to connect with others, please contact your social worker who will be able to connect you to others in support.

For details or to register for the mentioned events, visit the online calendar of events at www.afth.org.

Stats, Stats, and Even More Stats...

In AFTH's 2012-2013 fiscal year, there were a total of 141 infants placed in adoptive homes. In addition to that number, we had 3 special needs placements, 2 sets of twins (counted as 1 placement each for stat purposes), and 7 identified placements.

AFTH is thrilled to say that even though we are welcoming new adoptive parents into the books each month, 90% of our families currently in the books have been waiting less than 1 year. Additionally, all but 1 family currently in the books, who are open to children of African-American heritage, have been waiting less than 6 months.

It seems that we are also seeing an increase in our emergency placements in 2013. 40% of our picked families are for emergency placements which is up from 34% in 2012. And 46% of AFTH birthmothers who are selecting families are reporting no drug or alcohol use which is another wonderful stat.

We are also seeing an increase of clinics, hospitals, and planned parenthoods inviting AFTH to host adoption training for their staff. As an agency, we are focusing on building better awareness about adoption and the options that women have when faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

AFTH staff continues to work hard in providing expecting parents all the services and support they need no matter what decision they make in the end as well as continuing to provide counseling, education, and placement services to all of our adoptive parents.



HEARTBEATS - Families continue to show interest in the *Heartbeats Embryo Support Services*, with several having recently participated in agency-sponsored webinars. The program remains an excellent option for families in which a woman is able to carry an embryo donated by another family. Wait times for matching between recipient and donor families average approximately 1-2 months.

Webinars about AFTH's Embryo Support Services are able to be offered at the convenience of those wishing more details about the program. This webinar is a great way to learn about the program and to ask any questions you may have regarding the process.

The next Embryo Education Series will be offered in January and February. These webinars address talking with children about embryo placement, potential contact with genetic relatives, and many other related topics. Please visit AFTH's online calendar at www.afth.org to register for this series.

To schedule your free informational webinar, or to ask any questions you may have regarding the agency's Embryo Placement services, please contact Sam Wojnilower at SamW@afth.org or 610-642-7200.

Upcoming Conferences

Visit the AFTH booth at the below events.
Go to www.afth.org for event details.

October 31st

University of Bridgeport 2013 Health Fair
in Bridgeport, CT

November 1st

10th Anniversary PA Conference for
Women in Philadelphia, PA

November 2nd

Resolve of New England in Marlborough,
MA

November 9th

Concerned Persons for Adoption (CPFA)
"Let's Talk Adoption" Conference in
Piscataway, NJ

November 9th

7th Annual OrphanCare Expo in Wexford,
PA

November 24th

Adoptive Parents Committee (APC)
Adoption Conference in Brooklyn, NY



Congratulations to Families Who Have Recently Adopted!

Sons

Kenneth & Laura
John & Stephanie
Annika & Elaine
Kevin & Sarah
Kevin & Brenda
Scott & Kristin
Ashley & Nicole
Thomas & Janene
Michael & Elizabeth
Salman & Bahar
David & Rebecca
Steven & Kathleen
Brian & Misty
Richard & Denise

Daughters

Chad & Julianne
David & Suzanne
Pattuswamy & Latha
Thomas & Margaret
Christopher & Adrienne
David & Colleen
Lee & Kimberly
Randy & Jennifer
David & Rebecca
Timothy & Karen
David & Kimberly
Patrick & Tracey





International Adoption News

AFTH prides itself on keeping abreast of news and legislation regarding intercountry adoption. The agency continues to provide Home Studies, Education, Post-Adoption/Placement Reports and Services, and other assistance in support of international adoptions, despite no longer having placement programs in foreign countries. AFTH collaborates with many agencies across the United States that do provide intercountry adoption placement services. Please contact your local AFTH office to see how we can help you with your adoption process, including referring you to one of these partner agencies. For details on AFTH's intercountry adoption services, contact Sam Wojnilower at 610-642-7200 or SamW@afth.org.

Ethiopia: Effective September 1, 2013, the Government of Ethiopia began requiring all adoption cases filed on behalf of U.S. prospective adoptive parents with the Ethiopian courts to undergo the U.S. Pre-Adoption Immigration Review (PAIR) process. Ethiopia's Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs has confirmed that the new criterion will not affect the 70 U.S. cases with open applications that were still pending with its Federal First Instance Court as of that time. The purpose of PAIR is to allow U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to assess and make a preliminary determination of a child's likely eligibility for U.S. immigration benefits before Ethiopian courts finalize an adoption decree. While this process is designed to ensure that an adoptee will be eligible for a U.S. immigrant visa prior to his/her adoption, it is also expected to add a number of weeks to adoption processes.

Guatemala: A Virginia family, for which AFTH is the Home Study provider, was finally able to bring their son home from Guatemala in September. This was more than 6 years after they initially received his referral in 2007. AFTH offers its congratulations to this persistent and dedicated family, and its hope that the approximately 115 other "pipeline" cases across the U.S. from prior to 2008 will soon be resolved. Since 2008 American citizens have been unable to initiate an application to adopt an orphaned child from Guatemala.

Haiti: The Haitian Chamber of Deputies passed a new adoption law on August 29, 2013. This law has now been passed by both houses of the Haitian government, and speculation is that it may be implemented in the fall as Haiti moves toward becoming a member-country of the Hague Convention.

Under the new law, prospective adoptive applicants will need to meet eligibility criteria such as:

- Being between the ages of 30-50 for couples, or between the ages of 35-50 for singles
- At least 5 years of marriage or cohabitation for heterosexual couples

Also of important note is that from among the more than 1,000 Haitian children who came to the U.S. on Humanitarian Parole visas following the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, 244 have not yet applied for U.S. citizenship or permanent residency. It is imperative that their families do so prior to the expiration of the Help Haiti Act on December 9, 2013, in order to avoid these children becoming subject to deportation. Any potentially impacted families are urged to speak with a USCIS "Help Haiti" officer by contacting the U.S. National Benefits Center at 877-424-8374.

Mexico: The Mexican Central Adoption Authority gave notification in August that it had granted authorization to 5 additional U.S.-based adoption agencies. This brings the total number of U.S. adoption service providers authorized in Mexico to 11. At the same time, however, and as is sadly the case with so many other countries, the number of adoptions from Mexico to the U.S. has fallen for 5 consecutive years, from 105 in 2008 to only 21 in 2012.

Vietnam: In September, the Department of Adoptions in Vietnam's Ministry of Justice (MOJ) issued guidance regarding its July announcement that it would accept applications from U.S. adoption agencies to provide adoption services in Vietnam. The MOJ stated that it will license 2 U.S. adoption service providers in 2014 to operate a proposed, limited intercountry adoption program of children with special needs, older children, and children in sibling groups. Adoptions from Vietnam to the U.S. have been "closed" since the expiration of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries in September of 2008.

Exchange Student Sharing Culture with Adoptees



"She looks like me!" Hannah said. "No, she looks like me!", James said. "She looks like both of you!" I said. Hannah and James were referring to our exchange student Ainur Akhmetova from Kazakhstan, who we are hosting this school year.

Ainur is a high school exchange student who has come to experience American culture first hand for an entire school year. She's here to improve her English, make American friends and share her culture and customs.

As the regional coordinator of International Student Exchange, our family has hosted students before- Sara from Montenegro, Marika from Sweden-- but finally having a student from the country our children are adopted from has taken on a whole new meaning. We are finally getting to learn more about the country they come from, their culture, and their language. For families who also adopted from Kazakhstan, you'll remember how it was while we were over there. While in country for 4-6 weeks, we were told not to talk to any of the locals. Don't tell anyone why you're there, as some folks don't like the idea of foreigners adopting their children. While some people think we are doing a good thing, other folks think we are adopting the children for their body parts or taking them away from their country therefore losing their culture. There are many misconceptions with international adoption in Kazakhstan and you never know the thoughts with folks you might be talking with so it was better to keep a low profile. That being said, we never really got to know the culture well while in country. We only got to know it through our coordinator's eyes, fellow adoptive families, or through the caregivers at the orphanage. And while the Baby House in Kostanai, (where our daughter is from), was very open in talking with caregivers, in Uralsk, (where our son is from), it was not.

So now we get the chance to learn directly about Kazakh culture right here in our home.

Ainur has tried her hand at baking Kazakh bread, although she doesn't cook. She's teaching our kids Russian words, and explaining Kazakh culture to our family.

To make it extra special, Ainur is from Kostanai, the same city my daughter is adopted from! When I show her photos of my adoption trip to Kostanai, she says "Oh yes, I know that building!" or of a nice street view "oh wow! My friend lives in that apartment!"

The world is very small and again and again I realize how we are all connected. Case in point, when her mom first saw my photo she said she remembered seeing me in a restaurant 9 years ago in Kostanai! Our coordinator used to take us to various restaurants and there were not many Americans back then in Kostanai so it's quite likely she did. Of course, I joke that if the person her mom saw was rude and obnoxious, then of course it was not me!

Hosting an exchange student is a rewarding experience and a chance for lifelong friendships across the world, but an even more rewarding experience hosting a student from your adoptive country. I encourage families to give it a go. Don't feel you need to wait until your children are teens. Start now while they are young.

It's an eye opener for them to learn about the world, connect to their birth country, or to learn about a new country they know nothing about. Remember the world is small and we are all connected.



For additional information about hosting an international high school exchange student, please refer to our website: www.iseusa.com.



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FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME

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Registration Required

Calendar of Events at www.afth.org

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The listserve is a way for families to stay in the loop of agency updates related to the domestic program. Waiting families can subscribe by sending a message with the word "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to:

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To connect, support, and share with other AFTH families in the domestic program, join the yahoo group created for discussion and support. To join, send an email with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to the below address:

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