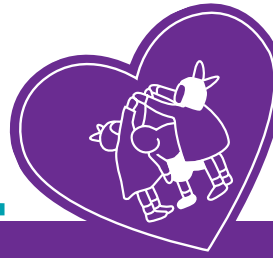


Adoption News



A Quarterly Newsletter from

Adoptions From The Heart

Spring 2008

AFTH CONFERENCE

Strengthening Bonds: Adoptive Families & the Community

On a sunny Saturday in March, over 115 adoption professionals, teachers and adoptive families gathered together at Delaware County Community College in Media, PA for AFTH's first adoption conference.



Jeff Gammage, a writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer and an adoptive father, kicked the day off with a powerful message as our keynote speaker.

The event was comprised of 17 thought-provoking workshops led by dynamic adoption experts including Rita Roitman, Pam Hasegawa, Helen Casale, Esq., David Marion, EdD., and Dr. Jane Aronson, whose workshop, *Medical Issues in Adoption*, "confirmed and addressed many questions I had," for one of the attendees. Other workshops included *Adoptee and Identity*, *Legal Issues in Adoption*, *Adoption Challenges for Same Sex Couples*, *Family Diversity in the Classroom*, *Birth Country Tours and Raising Asian Children Throughout their Life*, which gave one attendee, "motivation to explore some issues with my adult son."

Our panel discussions drew the largest attendance. *All Sides Now*, moderated by Maxine Chalker, was a panel about open adoption and

included various members of the adoption triad. For one attendee and her husband, this panel, "solidified the importance of correspondence in open adoption." The second panel discussion, *Understanding How I Feel*, featured adopted teenagers and young adults sharing their feelings about their adoptions. "Hearing the panelists' personal stories was very moving, especially potent and informative," said an attendee. A social worker who attended this panel said, "we often talk about how adoptees feel based on our education and understanding- it was excellent to hear the information from the source."



Through this conference, AFTH's goal of raising awareness and educating the community about adoption issues was achieved. The conference promoted unity between all the various members of the adoption community, providing an attendee with, "a balance of great presenter information and great group participation," and a social worker with an experience that, "opened my eyes to issues that were not considered before."

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Insert:
Summer Picnics



Remember Where It All Began...Birthmother's Day



Remember the day you adopted your child, the day you became a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, an aunt, an uncle, a grandparent? That day has forever changed your life and the feeling can not be replicated. While it was one of the happiest and most joyous days of your life, the woman who gave you your child felt loss and sadness. Because of your child's birthmother, who decided to make an adoption plan for her child, you became parents. Her decision to make an adoption plan for her child completed your decision to adopt. As a special thank you to the woman who forever changed your life, remember where it all began and celebrate "Birthmother's Day."

On Saturday, May 10 celebrate Birthmother's Day. Celebrate the woman who gave you the most selfless gift, the gift of a child, a family. Out of love, she gave her child - your child - an opportunity to experience life. Through her selfless choice, you received one of the most special gifts in life. Thank her. Celebrate her for the opportunity she gave you to become a family.

Birthmother's Day was founded in 1990, by a group of Seattle, WA birthmothers. These women found that Mother's Day was one of the hardest days of the year for mother's who placed their children for adoption. The goal of Birthmother's Day is to not only educate, but more importantly honor and remember those mothers who created a life plan for their child - your child.

Think back and remember the day your child was placed in your arms. Your child's birthmother will also remember that day forever. The memory of that day and the thoughts of her child will always be in her heart. She was your child's first mother, honor her selfless gift and show your appreciation. Because of her, you get to celebrate Mother's Day. Send her a card or small gift to remind her that she is not forgotten and that you will be forever grateful for the gift that she gave you and your child.

Say Cheese!



Send your pictures to:
Marketing Team Calendar Search
Adoptions From The Heart
30-31 Hampstead Circle
Wynnewood, PA 19096
(610) 642.7200

Submit Your Photos!

We are collecting pictures for our 2009 calendar starring AFTH children!

- Send us pictures representing holidays!
- Send us seasonal pictures such as on the beach or in the snow!
- Send pictures with clean faces and endearing expressions!
- Set your digital camera to the highest resolution and pixel setting for clarity!
- Send horizontal 4x6 pictures, (it helps with design!)
- Send multiple pictures of your children. Variety is good!

Label each photo with your child's name, age, country, and parents name and address and send to us by June 30, 2008 for consideration!

Introducing Adoption into Playtime

Remember your favorite activity as a child? Maybe it was playing house with your dolls or building a castle with Legos. Remember the storylines you created as you played? Those are probably some of your fondest moments spent playing with your parents, siblings and friends.

Your child will be creating those same memories now as they grow and develop. Playtime provides a

perfect opportunity to connect with your child and introduce the topic of adoption into something that your child loves doing.

You have probably already shared with your child their personal adoption story. This often becomes a favorite bedtime story that children ask to hear over and over again. Take this a step further and create an opportunity to hear how your child sees adoption and how it makes them feel.



The concept of adoption is surprisingly easy to introduce into playtime. If your child loves to play with Barbie dolls, then suggest that Ken and Barbie adopt a

child. Or when playing house, you can play the role of the adoption social worker and visit your child and ask why he or she is choosing to adopt and how they would talk to their own child about adoption.

While playing with dolls is an easy example, there are many other ways

to introduce adoption into your child's playtime.

If your child loves to build things, suggest building an orphanage including all the things the children would need such as a playground, a library, a place to eat and sleep, a doctor's office, etc.



If playing teacher is one of your child's favorite activities, create a situation

where one child is asking questions about a student who is adopted and have your child form their own answers to help explain adoption. This type of play will also begin building your child's ability to answer questions they may be asked in school by other students.

Drawing pictures on paper or on the sidewalk with chalk is another great activity to introduce adoption play. A child can draw pictures of their birth country or of the day they remember meeting their birth parents at the AFTH annual picnic.

Once you incorporate adoption into playtime, your child might even reenact this type of play with their friends. You will hear how your child explains adoption and it will give their friends a positive learning experience about adoption.

By introducing adoption into playtime, you will have a better insight on your child's inner feelings about adoption. It can also create an open door in and your child will feel secure coming to you about any issues or feelings they might be experiencing now or in the future.

You may even find yourself amazed and inspired by the innocence of how your child sees adoption. Out of the mouths of babes, adoption can be seen quite simply as Love!

AFTH Support Groups

Adoptions From The Heart proudly offers support groups for waiting families. The groups are a great way for AFTH families to come together in support and share in a discussion.

Harrisburg

Our Harrisburg Office holds support groups for all waiting families on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Meetings are held at the Landis Building at Polyclinic. Mark the date and join us for our next meeting.

- Thursday, April 17 beginning at 7pm
 - Thursday, May 15 beginning at 7pm
 - Thursday, June 19 beginning at 7pm
- Call (717) 232-1787 for info.**

Virginia

Our Virginia Office hosts support group meetings in Richmond and Chesapeake areas to bring AFTH waiting families together. Watch your email for detailed information about upcoming support groups. Birthmother support groups are also held to connect women who have or are making an adoption plan for their child.

Hazlet

Domestic Waiting Families Group

- Wednesday, April 30 from 6:30-8pm
- Wednesday, June 25 from 6:30-8pm

RSVP at (732) 355-8883

Congratulations to Families Who Have Recently Adopted!



John & Wendy
Anthony &
Melissa
Erik & Rhonda
Richard & Anne
Brian & Linda
Allen & Tracy

Paul & Maureen
Megan & Margaret
Robert & Kimberly
Sherman & Laura
Michael & Jacqueline
Daniel & Francoise
(twin boy & girl)
Frederick & Alyssa
Michael & Sarah
Mark & Carolyn
Michael & Ann
Josh & Cherie
Scott & Nikki
John & Marci

Daughters from China

Matthew & Angela
Eric & Jennifer
Joseph & Pamela
Christopher & Michelle
Samuel & Annetta
Matthew & Cherie
Robert & Deanna *(twins)*
Thomas & Denise
Edward & Janine
Charles & Joan
Thereasa
Elizabeth
Joseph & Donna
Dennis & Carol
Todd & Theresa
Jeffrey & Jill
Peter & Elise
Marc & Teresa
Paul & Kim
Tarek & Pamela
Mark & Melissa
Matthew & Julie
Todd & Joy
James & Patricia

Daughters from Guatemala

MaryBeth
William & Amanda
David & Diane
Thomas & Annette
Darren & Catherine

Sons from Guatemala

Michael & Meghan
Darrow & Kara
Dean & Laurie
Robert & Kimberly
James & Mariangela
Susan
Chris & Andrea
Michael & Jeanne
Donna

Daughters from Kazakhstan

Frank & Melissa
Salvatore & Tamara

Sons from Kazakhstan

Jeffrey & Bonnie
Brian & Maryellen

Daughters from Ukraine

Erik & Shea
(3 children, siblings)

Daughters from the USA

Robert & Lisa *(twins)*
Sean & Joie
Michael & Yonette
Brian & Denise
Thomas & Donna
Robert & Margaret
Ted & Marguerite

Sons from the USA

Glenn & Katherine
Beverly
John & Amy
Michael & Laura
Jonathan & Amory
Scott & Angela
Kevin & Cathy
John & Judith
Timothy & Valerie
Darin & Lori
Dan & Susan
Edward & Elizabeth
Jeffrey & Melissa
Jeffrey & Michele
Daniel & Francoise
(twin boy & girl)
Charles & Christina
William & Deana
Susan & JoEllen
Michael & Bethany
Eric & Leah





Legislation



NEW JERSEY - In New Jersey, a bill to open records sponsored by Sens. Joseph Vitale (D., Middlesex) and Diane Allen (R., Burlington), has cleared the Senate and is moving to the Assembly. After the law's effective date, all children adopted in New Jersey would have access to their original birth certificates, including their mother's name, once they turned 18. Mothers could indicate whether they wished to be contacted, and if so, how.

ALASKA & NEBRASKA - Alaska and Nebraska are the final U.S. states to enact "safe haven" laws, legalizing infant abandonment at designated sites. All 50 states have adopted the laws in the last 10 years.

MISSISSIPPI - The Mississippi Senate passed legislation (SB 2766) this month that would "clarify" that "unmarried adults who are cohabitating outside of marriage with one or more sexual partners" are prohibited from adopting. The bill - which would also deny state recognition of out-of-state adoptions by more than one unmarried individual - is currently under consideration by the House Judiciary Committee.

TENNESSEE - In a similar bill to the one presented in Mississippi, both houses of the Tennessee legislature are considering bills (SB 3910 and HB 3713) that would prevent unmarried, cohabiting couples from adopting children. The bills state that "it is not in a child's best interest to be adopted by a person who is cohabitating in a sexual

relationship that is not a legally valid and binding marriage under the constitution and laws of this state" and specifies that the ban "applies equally to cohabiting opposite-sex and same-sex individuals".

UTAH - Legislation (HB318) that would remove a cohabitation restriction from current adoption laws in Utah, thereby permitting unmarried cohabiting heterosexual and same-sex couples to adopt jointly, was introduced by state House Rep. Rebecca Chavez-Houck on Jan. 23. Currently, individuals - including gays and lesbians - can adopt a child in the state, but only married couples can adopt jointly. The legislation, if passed, would permit children to be adopted by a second parent but would give preference for an adoption to people who are legally married.

COLORADO - Governor Bill Ritter (D) signed into law a bill (HB 1006) requiring counties to arrange single and/or ongoing visits between foster children and their siblings at their mutual request. The law specifically states that termination of parent-child relationships does not impact sibling relationships.

INDIANA - Indiana plans to expand its efforts to increase the number of adoptions of children from the state's foster care system with a new two-year, \$4 million program that will include the recruitment of minority parents through churches and community groups. Indiana increased the number of adoptions of children

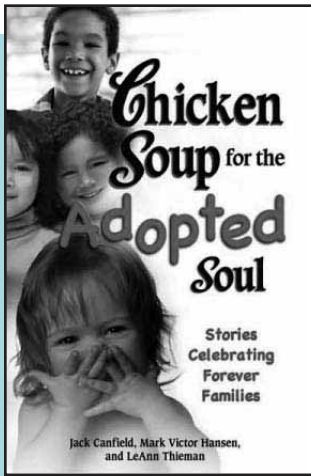
from foster care by 40% between the years 2005 to 2007, in part through the development of a state website and magazine featuring photos of waiting children. The new project will build on these successes and will include the "One Church, One Child" program to reach out to minority communities, considered an important component since children of color make up 45 percent of the state's foster care population.

SURVEY FINDS NUMBER OF EMPLOYER OFFERING ADOPTION BENEFITS

INCREASING - According to a Feb. 4, 2008, Financial Week article, more U.S. companies are offering employees help in adopting. "Adoption Benefits Can Pay Dividends," by Patrick Kiger, reports that Hewitt Associates found that "47% of major U.S. companies now offer some type of assistance to adoptive parents, up from 12% in 1990." A Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption 2007 survey found that, on average, companies provided a \$4,700 reimbursement, compared to \$2,500 five years earlier, and five weeks of paid leave. A human resources representative for Avnet, a company featured in the article, remarked that "the return on this benefit is substantially greater than the cash outlay.

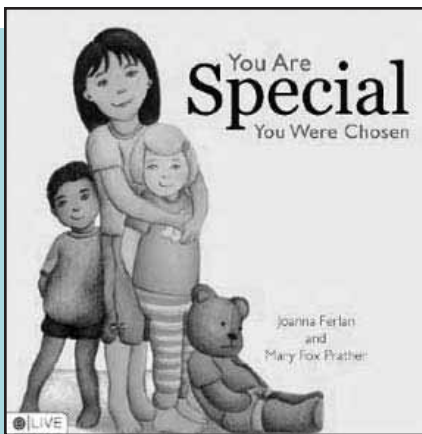
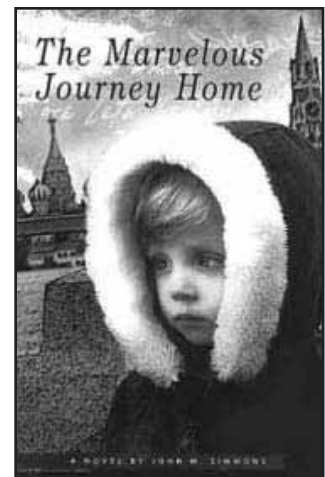


Book Reviews



CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE ADOPTED SOUL: STORIES CELEBRATING FOREVER FAMILIES by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, LeAnn Thieman L.P.N.- This edition of the popular "Chicken Soup" series focuses on stories of creating families through adoption. Stories consist of tales about children adopted internationally and children who spent years in the foster-care system as well as those who were adopted at birth. Read a letter from a birth mother to her son explaining how difficult it was to place him for adoption when she didn't have the means to care for him, how she still thinks about him often, and how she will always love him. This is a warm touching book that inspires. \$12.00

THE MARVELOUS JOURNEY HOME by John M. Simmons - This book allows us to journey through the adoption process through the eyes of both the prospective adoptive parents, and the children living in an orphanage in Russia. It is a story of love, hope, fear and triumph. A "must read" for anyone adopting an older child and a good read for those who just want a touching story of family. \$19.00



YOU ARE SPECIAL - YOU WERE CHOSEN by Joanna Ferlan, Mary Fox Prather - Based on a story author Joanna Ferlan was told as a child by her adoptive father. This inspiring story tells the tale of how much an adopted child is loved before he or she is even born by their birth parents and by their adoptive parents. The illustrations are multi-cultural so this story could pertain to any adoption. A great read. \$12.00

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND BIRACIAL HAIR CARE (DVD) - Hair care help made simple for parents adopting or fostering an African-American or biracial child. Master stylists use live models to help you work with a texture that is different than your own, with practical advice and suggestions for new styling techniques. All segments of the DVD can be easily accessed individually from the menu: hair care basics, combing out, processing, styling, braids, twists, and knots, and styling for toddlers. 97 minutes \$ 22.00



All reviewed books are available in our branch offices, online, or you can order by calling the Wynnewood office at (610) 642-7200.



Chinese Family Cultural Camp 福

AFTH has partnered with Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania to present its first Chinese Family Culture Camp August 15-17, 2008, to be held at Camp Laughing Waters Girl Scout Camp in Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania. There will be lots of fun for everyone with activities for adults and children. The adult groups will include such activities as Tai Chi, Chinese Calligraphy, Developmental issues of the Chinese adoptee and much more. Some of the children's activities will be Chinese dance, storytelling, t-shirt making with Chinese symbols and outdoor Chinese games. Of course there will be swimming for both adults and children.

Families are invited to attend the entire weekend or just for Saturday when all activities take place. Friday check in will be from 6 to 8 PM with a campfire and snack. Checkout will be Sunday at 11:30AM (continental breakfast included). Sleeping accommodations are platform tents (with bathrooms and showers close by) which sleep four, or cabins for several families to share, which sleep 26 (they have bathrooms and kitchens but no A/C and cost slightly extra). Bring bedding, sheets, towels and toiletries.

The costs are \$100 per adult, \$70 for children over 3 and \$20 for children under 3. The cost covers all meals (snack on Friday, 3 meals on Saturday and a continental breakfast on Sunday) accommodations and activities. There is a \$15 non-refundable deposit to be submitted with your registration and that will go toward the entire cost for a family. Costs are the same if you choose to only attend the Saturday activities or the entire camp event.

Much of the camp will be run by volunteer parents and volunteers from Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania. This will be a camp facilitated by those who can pitch in and help by waiting tables, bringing food to the tables from the kitchen and the ever popular clean up of trash and other debris.

SPACE IS LIMITED so REGISTER EARLY to RESERVE YOUR SPOT!

To register go to www.afth.org/community/camp.html A great time will be had by all.

Chinese Family Cultural Camp

August 15-17 at Girl Scout Camp Laughing Waters in Gilbertsville, PA

Family Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number () _____ - _____ Email: _____

Ages of Children Attending:

____ _

____ **Adult(s) \$100 each**

____ **Children 3 yrs and Older \$70/each**

____ **Children under 3yrs \$20/each**

T-shirt Sizes of All Attendees:

___ **Adult Small**

___ **Adult Medium**

___ **Adult Large**

___ **Adult X-Large**

Children's Sizes:

___ **Small**

___ **Medium**

___ **Large**

Sleeping Accommodations:

___ **platform tent (no additional cost)**

___ **cabin (\$25 per family cost)**

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Make check Payable to: Adoptions From The Heart and mail to 30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood, PA 19096

International Adoption Program Updates

CHINA - AFTH has been approved to do special needs adoptions in China. The program is not yet set up so we will have more news for you when it is ready. Many people responded when we inquired about their interest in such a program. Also, as posted on the China list serve, we are still waiting to see if assignments will be forth coming for the month of April. The next group of families who will be receiving assignments are those with a LID of 1/12/06. We are hoping matches may be a little faster once the Olympics are over, but we have no way of being sure. In addition, certain orphanages are raising their fees from \$3000 to \$5000. Because we do not know which orphanages these will be, we are urging all waiting families to be prepared to pay the higher fee if necessary. Please remember this is the first fee raise in the China program in all the years of its existence.

GUATEMALA - The grandfather clause is being successfully implemented and cases are continuing to be processed and get PGN approval. In February, 5 families brought their children home and in March 11, families traveled and brought their children home. Cases are coming out of PGN on a weekly basis. Unfortunately, to date, there is no information available on the future of adoptions in Guatemala.

INDIA - We are currently not accepting applications. We are still working with two orphanages, Matruchhaya and Latur. We have received one referral from Latur. Please check back monthly for status updates for this program or contact Joan Kim at JoanK@afth.org.

KAZAKHSTAN - This program is becoming more popular and many families are transferring from programs that have longer wait times. On an average, we are getting 2 or 3 invitations for families to travel every 6 weeks or so. Families are continuing to move through the process relatively quickly but as more families chose Kaz, the waiting list will get longer and the time frames will become longer. It is urgent that all families who have adopted do their post-placements and annual reports on a timely basis. They should be sent to Terry in the Cherry Hill office at least a month before they are due in Kaz.

RUSSIA - AFTH's Russia Networking Program has been running very well since the beginning of the year. Most recently, 2 families traveled to Moscow in March, and each adopted a child in Court during their trip. It is anticipated that each of these families will be able to

bring their child home in April. In the meantime, 5 other families are expected to travel to Russia in the next two months to meet the child each hopes to adopt.

With all of these families expected to travel shortly, only 2 families in AFTH's Russia Networking Program with completed Home Studies are awaiting a referral. So, families who are still working on Home Study and Immigration paperwork should try to get these completed as soon as possible. Referrals continue to be of boys and girls as young as 12 – 36 months of age, so all applicants need to be open to the referral of a child anywhere within this age range.

UKRAINE - The experience of recent families traveling to Ukraine has been that it is getting very difficult to get referrals on children under 6 who are in relatively good health. The process in country has become very challenging and those considering this program need to be very flexible regarding child requirements and the need to be prepared for longer or multiple trips. AFTH is no longer accepting applications for families who are seeking children under 6.

VIETNAM - Several families have received referrals. We are currently trying to find homes for several older special needs children between 7 and 12 yrs of age. Their special needs range from heart conditions and deafness to cleft lip/palate. If you are interested in adopting a special needs child, please contact JenniferM@afth.org.

The MOU between the U.S. and Vietnam is due to expire September 1, 2008. They are still currently in negotiation to try to come to a new agreement. There have been proposals by the DIA regarding what may happen when the MOU expires in September, if a new agreement has not been reached. Proposals include a grandfather clause for families with dossiers currently logged into the DIA and exemption for families wanting to adopt special needs children. Nothing has been officially put in writing yet, as it is still in the discussion stage. There have been rumors of an impending deadline for dossier submission to the DIA. We recommend anyone who has not yet submitted their dossier to us do so immediately.

China Facilitator Grace Chang Publishes Children's Book



Grace Chang, one of our China Facilitators and half of Gracewood Inc, was born in Beijing, China into a family of entertainers. She learned magic from her grandfather in the courtyards of the Forbidden City and years later

was selected as the star illusionist and ringmaster in an internationally acclaimed Chinese Circus. Grace has appeared on stage and screen in both China and the US, including the film, *The Joy Luck Club* based on best selling author Amy Tan's novel. Grace has always dreamed of becoming an author and is pleased to announce the publication of her first book.

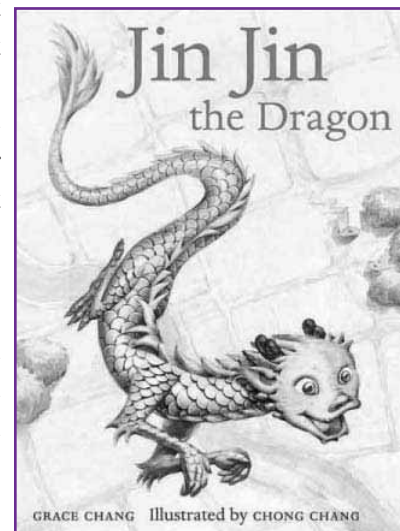
Grace's brother, Chong, illustrated the book with beautiful watercolor drawings. Chong graduated from Tiansen art school and lives in China where he works as a graphic designer. When asked about his drawings for the book he said, "his sister wrote the book with her heart and he drew it with his."

Signed copies of *Jin Jin* are available through AFTH branch offices and in our online store.

JIN JIN THE DRAGON by Grace Chang
Illustrated by Chong Chang - Jin Jin hatches out

of a golden egg and searches for his identity. He doesn't look like any of the other animals he meets, Fish, Eagles, Snakes so he goes in search of Old Turtle and Crane who help him discover not

only who he is but why and how he is special. Following the story are four additional pages that provide an overview of Chinese characters the Chinese Dragon as well as a picture history of 13 Chinese characters that are central to the story. Retail price \$16.95
AFTH price \$12.00



Got E-mail?

To have monthly adoption program updates sent to you, send an e-mail with the word "subscribe" in the subject line to the appropriate email address:

CHINA - AFTHChinaUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

GUATEMALA - AFTHGuatUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

INDIA - AFTHIndiaUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

KAZAKHSTAN - AFTHKazakUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

NEW **RUSSIA** - AFTHRussiaUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

UKRAINE - AFTHUkraineUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

VIETNAM - AFTHVietnamUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To become a member of our Domestic online discussion group where you can connect with other AFTH families, send an email with the word "subscribe" in the subject line to the email address below:

DOMESTIC - AFTHopenadoption-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



Scaring Away the Goblins

By Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan

Every so often I read - or even am told by virtual strangers - that adoption is scary.

Some of these folks are prospective adoptive parents considering whether or how adoption fits in their lives, and others have little knowledge of adoption outside of the relatively rare - considering the number of adoptions annually - stories of scams or situations gone awry picked up by the media.

So, is adoption scary? Yes.

But not for what might be considered the "obvious" reasons. Let's start at the beginning.

Adoption means opening your heart to a child that didn't come from your womb, loving a child not created with your own genetic contribution.

(Nope. Not the scary part.)

Although my husband and I did the obligatory research at the start of our adoption process, we actually brought to the table experience from another side of adoption. My husband was adopted in the 1970s, the era of closed records, and knows very little about his story, his own nature versus nurture, and the people responsible for bringing him into the world. Between everything we learned about openness in adoption, and everything we already knew about being part of a closed adoption, our choice and preference for openness was clear.

The agency classes that followed explained the practical

parts of an open adoption: a minimum of letters, photos and an annual picnic visit.

(And no, that's not scary either.)

After all, my own longing to become a parent and the loss in not yet having a child in my life made me acutely aware of the intensity wrapped up in motherhood. As much as I wanted to be a mom, I couldn't let my own motherhood somehow negate another woman's. So cultivating a relationship between my child and his or her other mother was something I hoped for.

(Still not shaking in my boots.)

Truth is, after placement, I made it through all that without any trouble. After all:

- Loving Maeve? Piece of cake!
- Writing long, lovingly detailed letters to her first mother? Not a problem!
- Sharing copies of the loads of photos we were taking? Nothing to it!

At our first picnic, I watched with awe as my 11-month old interacted with her first mom. Like the paparazzi, I snapped photos all afternoon, capturing moments I knew only they could share.

When it was time to say goodbye, the tears pushing themselves from my face reflected the sadness I hadn't realized was building inside me that day. My daughter would have no recollection of that sweet afternoon in the park, or the time spent in her first mother's arms.

(Now that? *That* scared me.)

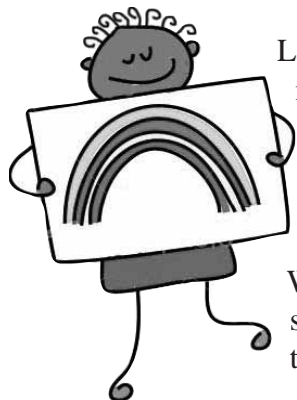
I was scared of losing contact with Maeve's first mother, scared she would decide it was too hard and pull away, scared she would decide to close any openness we had and Maeve would lose the vital connection to her story.

Since my daughter was born two and a half years ago, our relationship with her first mother has grown - especially so in the last year.

Although Maeve's first mom may need a break periodically, I'm trusting in the conversations we've had

Musings Cont'd

about communicating that and other needs as they arise. While I'm aware there will be an ebb and flow to this special relationship, I also know we all have Maeve's best interests at heart.



Last week we sent a rainbow Maeve painted to her first mom, as well as a little gift for a special member of her first family. We've exchanged full names, addresses, phone numbers and I created a special e-mail address just for our communications.

We've chatted by instant messenger - sometimes just to simply say hello - and we've begun to talk about getting together this summer for a weekend.

Doing these things erases nothing from me - rather, it brings me more fulfillment as Maeve's mother because I see all the parts of her present in her life and know I'm doing everything in my power to raise a happy, whole child.

Go ahead. Ask Maeve whose belly she grew in and she'll tell you. Ask her how much I love her and her arms fly open wide.

These are the moments and conversations of her truth that remedy even the most scary adoption goblins.

Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan was placed with her infant daughter in July 2005 through Adoptions From The Heart. An editor in legal publishing, she also is a freelance writer and currently writes about adoption and first-time parenthood on her blog, musings: mamahood&more, at www.mamagigi.wordpress.com. You can reach Gretchen by emailing mamagigi@comcast.net.

Share Your Adoption Stories

Do you remember the beginning of your adoption journey when you wished that someone who had already adopted could share their experiences with you and set your mind at ease?

Now that you have completed your adoption, would you be willing to share your journey and experiences with future adoptive parents?

AFTH is looking for families willing to give testimonials to inspire and motivate future adoptive parents.

What stood out about AFTH? What does adoption mean to you? Why did you choose open adoption?

Testimonials can be a brief quote or a short story and will be used on flyers and on the website. Please send your testimonials to KristyG@afth.org.

If you are interested in sharing your adoption experience with potential adoptive parents directly, contact your AFTH social worker and asked to be added to our reference list.



Be In-The-Know

Does your family want to be in-the-know about the special event that AFTH is hosting to bring adoptive families together?

Would you like it to be as easy as hitting a button to RSVP?

AFTH is beginning to use email blasts as a way of staying in touch with adoptive families. We update families on events happening in their area (holiday parties, support groups, etc.) in addition to agency-wide events (Annual Picnic, Asian New Year Party, upcoming adoption conference, etc.).

It is important for us as an agency to have current contact information so that we can reach you. In order to begin receiving email blasts we need to have your current email address as well.

If you have recently changed email addresses or have never provided us with one, please be sure to contact your local office so we can update our information.

Prevent our messages from being lost in your junk mail by adding info@afth.org to your contacts.

FAMILIES AND ADOPTION:

Panel Discussion & Information Session

Hosted by: In the Spirit of Family

Thursday, June 12, 2008

6:00-8:00pm

WHYY Civic Space in Philadelphia, PA

For More Information and to Register:

<http://www.whyy.org/childrenservice>

or Call 215-351-1235

FAMILY FUN DAY

Hosted by: Chinese for Families

Saturday, May 17, 2008

6:00-8:00pm

Reformed Church of Ascension in Jeffersonville, Pa

For More Information and to Register:

Email: ChineseForFamilies@comcast.net

or Call 610-716-1854

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30-31 Hampstead Circle
Wynnewood, PA 19096
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2212 Union Blvd
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WEST VIRGINIA OFFICE
1.800-355-5500

NEW YORK
1.800-355-5500

CONNECTICUT OFFICE
Local Staff: 800.355.5500
or contact our Lancaster Office

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.afth.org

Is Our Mailing List Current?

Do you wish to be removed from future mailings? Are you receiving more than one copy? Are your name and address incorrect? Please let us know by e-mailing adoption@afth.org.



Adoptions From The Heart®

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See Inside for Annual Picnic Details

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