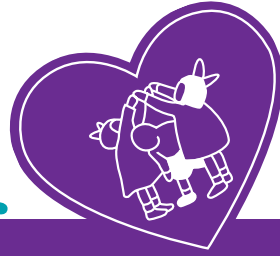


# Adoption News



A Quarterly Newsletter from

Adoptions From The Heart

Spring 2009

## SHE is the Reason We Celebrate Mother's Day

We often take time before Mother's Day to remind adoptive parents that Birthmother's Day is celebrated the Saturday before Mother's Day. This year, Birthmother's Day is on Saturday, May 9th. It was because of a birthmother's loving decision to give her child a different life that an adoptive mother now joyfully celebrates Mother's Day each year.

Several AFTH birthmothers have shared their experiences below.

"My son will be 3 on December 11th. When he was born...I was a single mother trying to make it. It was very, very hard and difficult. So when I had my son, the moment he was born, I choose adoption for him. Adoptions From The Heart came and helped me out. The people that I picked, I just had a feeling about them. A few weeks later, I met them and ever since then we have had a good relationship. I see my son once or twice a year. They consider us a part of the family and I really appreciate that because it helps me get through it a lot" - *Christy*

"When I found out I was pregnant, I was living in Wilmington at the time

and every day I walked to work and I walked past the agency. So the next day, I went online to visit the Adoptions From The Heart website and they had some of the sample families on there. So I looked at them. I wasn't really planning on placing my child with a gay couple but they were the first family I looked at and one thing caught my eye. I'm a bit of a dork because of it but they play Scrabble with their neighbors so I was really happy about that. I could barely take care

I have three emotional days a year..it's their birthday, Christmas, and Mother's Day.

of myself let alone my dog and so it was just a really good decision and choice. The family was amazing. I couldn't have picked a better couple. Regardless of the fact that they are gay, they are a loving couple and they have been together a long time. I love them. They are great guys and I hear from them every couple of weeks. I get pictures and letters and such. They are really, really happy and I'm happy for them." - *Ann recently placed her son in November of 2008.*

"They have a fantastic, fantastic life. And when I get these letters right around their birthday, when I receive the manila envelope, I need

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**INSERT:**  
Summer Picnic Details

## SHE is the Reason Cont'd

to walk away and get the emotions out. I have three emotional days a year, not that all of them aren't but it's their birthday, Christmas, and Mother's Day." - *Lynn placed her twin daughters in 1996.*

*From a birth grandmother's perspective:* "Her dad and I didn't find out she was pregnant until about 5 months into it. It was very, very hard for me to accept the fact that this was her choice and this is what she felt was the best thing for her. They (the adoptive couple) came the day she was induced. My daughter wasn't progressing very much and she fell asleep so we all went to get some lunch. While we were sitting out in the lobby eating, one of them just looked at me and said very, very sweetly "how are you doing?" I said, I have to tell you this was very hard at the beginning but meeting the two of you and seeing the respect and the utter love they had for my daughter and the gift that she gave them made it so much easier. They are so genuine and so appreciative and so loving and respectful of my baby. In that respect, they made it a lot easier for her family. It is amazing that they took our feelings into consideration as well."

So celebrate adoption. Celebrate the benefits of openness for all the members of the adoption triad. Remember it was your child's birthmother's difficult decision which led your child into your arms.



## Decline in Teen Birth Rates May Now Be Over . . .

Teen birth rates seem to be increasing, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A report released this year announced that teenage births rose in 26 states in 2006 (the most recent year studied) and increased overall from 40.5 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19 in 2005 to 41.9 in 2006. Birth rates for teens were highest in the South and Southwest, and lowest in the Northeast. The increase marked the end of a decline spanning from 1991 to 2005.

## AFTH Support Groups

### CENTRAL PA

Waiting adoptive parent support groups are being held in Lancaster and Harrisburg to help bring AFTH waiting families together in support.

Harrisburg - All Waiting Families

- Thursday, May 21 beginning at 7pm
- Thursday, June 18 beginning at 7pm

Lancaster - Domestic Family Support Group

- Thursday, April 23 beginning at 6pm

**Call (717) 399-7766 for more information**

### VIRGINIA

Adoptive parent support groups are held to bring AFTH waiting families together. **Check the calendar of events at [www.afth.org](http://www.afth.org) for upcoming dates.**

Birthmother support groups are also held to connect women who have or are making an adoption plan for their child. **Call (757) 361-0008 for information.**

### CHERRY HILL

Birthmother support groups are held to help connect women who have or are making an adoption plan for their child. **Call 856-665-5655 or email [JenniferB@afth.org](mailto:JenniferB@afth.org) if you are interested in attending.**

Waiting family support groups are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Cherry Hill Office.

- Wednesday, May 20 beginning at 7pm
- Wednesday, June 17 beginning at 7pm

**Call (856) 665-5655 to RSVP by the Friday before. Pre-Registration Required for Meetings.**

### DELAWARE

Adoptive parent support groups are held to bring AFTH waiting families together.

- Wednesday, April 29 beginning at 6pm

**Call (302) 658-8883 to RSVP by the Monday before.**

### ALLENTOWN

Waiting Families Support Group

**Check the calendar of events at [www.afth.org](http://www.afth.org) or call (610) 432-2384 for more information**



## Paying It Forward

Community involvement in fundraising efforts for AFTH is on the rise. We have received an increase in calls from organizations and companies wanting to show their support for AFTH's mission. Donations are primarily gifted to our birthmother fund. If your company or organization would like to help, contact us at [adoption@afth.org](mailto:adoption@afth.org).

### Black Bear Saloon Hosted Valentine's Day Event in Celebration of Adoption

On a cold winter day, AFTH was offered a warm opportunity! Black Bear Saloon in Hartford, CT contacted AFTH, offered to host a fundraising event on Valentine's Day and AFTH was to be the direct recipient of their fundraising efforts and the event's proceeds. Black Bear normally donates their fundraising proceeds to the local fire fighters but selected AFTH this year because the Saloon's manager is adopted and said adoption has always been close to his heart. Black Bear thought Valentine's Day was a perfect day for a fundraiser for an organization that has so much to do with love and AFTH could not agree more! The fundraising kicked off before Valentine's Day with \$1 hearts available for sale. Many Black Bear patrons purchased these hearts, wrote their names on them and the hearts were hung around the bar. On Saturday, February 14th, fundraising for AFTH continued with a win a date auction where patrons could bid on a chance at romance with one of Black Bear's bartenders! All auction proceeds went directly to AFTH, including the highest bid of \$1,000, which was placed on a popular bartender! Black Bear was also kind enough to donate half of all their Bud Light sales that night to AFTH. Connecticut office supervisor, Penny, was on hand at the event celebrating Valentine's Day with her husband and watching Black Bear patrons support adoption. Black Bear raised \$1350 for AFTH which went directly to AFTH's birthmother fund. This fund is used to provide assistance with housing, medical and travel expenses, and any other assistance our birthmothers may need. A gracious thank you to Black Bear Saloon for recognizing that love builds families!



### Shopping to Benefit AFTH

Shop all day at Lord and Taylor while supporting AFTH! Does your wardrobe and style need a boost for spring? Do you just love to shop, shop, shop? How would you like to be a part of an event held at Lord & Taylor where you can meet with national makeup artists and fashion directors for some personal tips on style? The event will also feature authors with books on health and wellness and of course fashion.

The Lord & Taylor in Westfield, NJ and West Farms, CT are hosting all day benefit bashes on May 5th. Tickets are \$5 each. With the purchase of each ticket you receive a 20% saving pass on any sale and regular priced items and 15% off cosmetics and fragrances plus chances to register for fabulous prizes at the event. If you already have a Lord & Taylor credit card, you can save up to 30% on your purchases.

Order your tickets online today. Go to our online store at [www.afth.org/store](http://www.afth.org/store) and go to Special Events to order your tickets. Tickets will be sent to you in the mail. For more details about the Benefit Bash, go to [www.lordandtaylor.com/benefitbash](http://www.lordandtaylor.com/benefitbash).

### Donations Made to Tam Binh and Thi Nghe Orphanages in Vietnam

With donations designated for humanitarian aid project in Vietnam, AFTH was able to provide education scholarships to over 100 junior and senior high school students at the Tam Binh Orphanage. Each child also received their very own messenger bag to help carry their books. Cans of infant formula, bath towels, and changing pads were also donated to the orphanage to help provide for the daily needs of the infants being cared for at Tam Binh.

Thi Nghe orphanage was also the focus of our humanitarian aid efforts in Vietnam. A washing machine and a water filter machine were donated. The orphanage also received 160 cans of infant formula, bath towels, and changing pads.

In total, over \$8,000 in scholarships and materials were donated.

## Get Ready for Summer!

Spring is here which means baseball games, Memorial Day picnics, and beach days are just around the corner.

Last year our “Love Builds A Family” large purple beach towels were hot, hot, hot! Be sure to get yours before the pools open so you can be ready to enjoy some fun in the sun this summer.

For families in Connecticut and Pittsburgh, towels sell fast at the picnics so order your towel now and be prepared for some fun at the waterparks. (*see insert for details about summer picnics*)

The large, soft towels are available for purchase at our online store for \$20.00.



**New** this year...large AFTH coolers are now available. Great for picnics or ball games! Plenty of room to pack snacks for the whole family. The cooler has two front pockets in addition to mesh pockets on each side. And the removable insert makes clean up easy.



Available for purchase at our online store for \$25.00. Supplies are limited so order yours today and be prepared for the summer.

### Items Available for Purchase Online!

## You Might Be Adopting From China If....

Please know we understand that the frustration and emotional stress of waiting for your child is not to be made light of. The below excerpt has been floating around China listserves and support groups and came to us via a waiting family. We hope that as you read and begin nodding your head and smiling, know the “waiting” is a unique bond you share with thousands of others. Those outside of the adoption process will not understand the message, but you, along with other waiting families, not only understand it but are living it each day and can appreciate the cute reminder that you do all of it, the paperwork and the waiting, for the love of your child.

- ...you know that I-600 and I-797 aren't highways
- ...you've been expecting a baby for over 3 years
- ...you understand that it's 2006 in some parts of the world
- ...you've paid for 3 citizenships but never brought anyone into the US
- ...you know that waiting for China has nothing to do with dishes
- ...your homestudy is followed by a number (i.e. #3 or #4)
- ...you never know how many days next month will have
- ...you know babies come in batches
- ...you've been fingerprinted four times but never committed a crime
- ...you automatically assume everyone who is expecting is having a girl
- ...you own new clothing in 3 little sizes for all 4 seasons because you don't know when or how big
- ...you look twice when you see a ladybug
- ...you're more interested in what did happen in April 2006 than in April 2009
- ...you know people who understand when you talk about 2 day months and 5 day months
- ...your due date hasn't changed by days but by years
- ...you know who the Rumor Queen is...AND...you don't know who she is
- ...you know the forecast doesn't have anything to do with the weather
- ...you've waited so long, they re-checked your fingerprints to see if they changed
- ...when you speak of 'that time of month' you're talking about CCAA updates and referrals



*You might be adopting from China if you love someone you've never met with all your heart!*



## Congratulations to Families Who Have Recently Adopted!

### Daughters from China

William & Heidi

### Daughters from Guatemala

Joan  
John & Jacqueline

### Daughters from Kazakhstan

James & Cynthia  
Larry & Shana  
Donald & Veronica

### Sons from Kazakhstan

Greg & BethAnn

### Sons from Russia

Curtis & Amy  
Edward & Michelle  
John & Marybeth

### Sons from Ukraine

Peter & Kathy

### Daughters from Vietnam

Richard & Kristi

### Sons from Vietnam

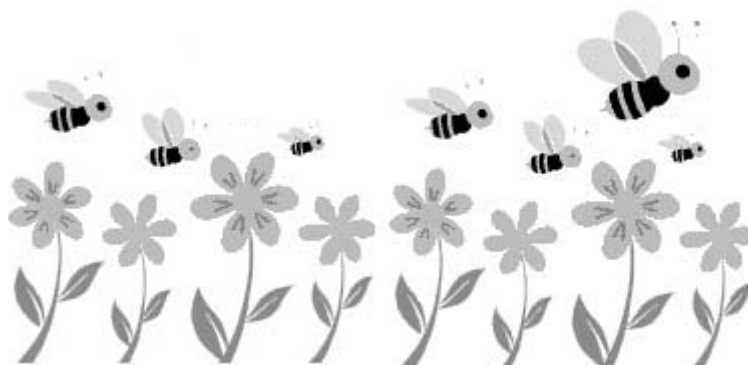
Anne

### Sons from the USA

Jeffrey & Annette  
Patrick & Jennifer  
Justin & Julie (*twins*)  
Dale & Erika  
Lon & Trudie  
Alphonso & Kimberly  
Patrick & Ulysses (*twin boy & girl*)  
Michael & Thelma  
Martin & Robin  
Alexander & Beatrix  
Michael & Joelle  
Thomas & Alison  
Dwayne  
Joseph & Rachel  
Robert & Maura  
Melanie  
Wayne & Linda  
Andrew & Melissa  
Toshie

### Daughters from the USA

Thomas & Rosaline  
Rocky & Michael  
David & Rebecca  
Mark & Elizabeth  
Patrick & Ulysses (*twin boy & girl*)  
John & Catherine  
Paul & Kristen  
Russell & Marci  
Marybeth  
Orlando & Jill  
Matthew & Monica  
Bruce & Michelle  
Steve & Brandi  
Richard & Kimberly  
John & Alisa  
Dale & Tamara  
William & Melissa





## Legislation



### STUDY ON CHILDREN CONCEIVED THROUGH EMBRYO PLACEMENT -

A study was published in December 2008, comparing adjustments of children conceived through embryo donation to those conceived through IVF and adopted children. The Study "Embryo Donation Families: A Follow-Up in Middle Childhood," by Fiona MacCallum and Sarah Keeley, was published in the *Journal of Family Psychology* (Volume 22, Issue 6). This study, based in England, found that adopted children were rated by mothers and teachers as having the highest rate of social-emotional problems of the three groups examined. Children conceived through embryo transfers were not found to be at increased risk of psychological problems during middle childhood, although they found higher emotional over-involvement of parents and greater reluctance to disclose information about their origins in families formed through embryo donation.

**CAMBODIA** - The Cambodian government is considering new rules that would ban a range of foreigners from being able to adopt, according to a Feb. 13 story on the website PinkNews, "Cambodia to Ban Foreign Gays from Adopting Children." The restrictions reportedly would apply to gays and lesbians, single people, those with "low income," and those who already have two children. In addition, the new rules would make it legal for parents to relinquish children for adoption; currently, only orphans are eligible for inter-country adoption.

**NEW YORK** - On March 24, the New York City Board of Health unanimously voted to allow married lesbian couples to be able to list both spouses as parents as soon as their children are born in New York City. Until now, married same-sex couples, male and female, have been able to list both spouses on a city birth certificate only after going through the months long legal adoption process, then filling out a special form to get a new birth certificate. This new policy allows lesbians to list both women as parents from the outset when one of them gives birth. Unfortunately, male couples still have to adopt because of regulations requiring a birth certificate to include the birth mother.

**VIRGINIA** - Measure (HB1937) introduced in the state General Assembly on Jan. 13 was approved in the Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions, but the additional state expense created by the bill contributed to its failure to make it out of the Committee on Appropriations, where it stalled on Feb. 10. The bill would have permitted any adopted adult, over 21, born in the state to apply for disclosure of identifying information; the current statute only applies to adoptees with finalized adoptions on or after July 1, 1994.

**GEORGIA** - The Georgia State Senate has just passed the first Embryo Adoption Bill (HB388) allowing embryos to be formally adopted offering process the same legal rights as adoption of a child. While the HB388 allows for adoption of the embryo, it fails to grant it its own rights. It does however, ask for a change to the definition of the word "child" to include human embryo. It also asks for the adoption to be no longer carried out as a form of contract or property law.

**SOUTH DAKOTA** - Legislation (S153) in South Dakota was approved by the state Senate on Feb. 24 and went to the state House for consideration; The House passed an amended version of this bill and it was sent back to the Senate for review. The measure permits adopted adults 18 years or older, an adoptee's attorney, and if deceased the adoptee's descendants, to request a copy of his/her original birth certificate from the state Department of Health.

**TENNESSEE** - Legislation (HB0605/SB0078) was introduced in the two chambers of the legislature on Feb. 9 and 10 that would also prohibit any individual cohabiting with another person outside of marriage from adopting a child, and specifically states it applies to co-habiting opposite-sex and same-sex individuals. The measure is currently being reviewed in the House Children & Family Affairs Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee.





# Adoptions From The Heart®

hosts its

## 21st Annual Picnic

RAIN or  
SHINE!

Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
11am-2pm

Live Music,  
Arts & Crafts, Snacks  
Face Painting, and Ice  
Cream for each child!

Fort Washington Park (Flourtown Picnic Area) \*See website for directions

### Our way of saying Thank You for choosing Adoptions From The Heart!

Join the AFTH staff and families from both domestic and international adoption programs as we celebrate another year of building beautiful families. Bring your family, a blanket, and a picnic lunch. AFTH will provide some drinks, snacks, and entertainment.



We encourage all our  
Open Adoption families  
to invite their child's  
birth parents.

Send a letter of invitation  
with your full name and the  
birth parent's name to your  
local AFTH office.

Be sure to send your letter  
soon so your child's birth  
parents do not miss out on  
this great event. AFTH will  
not invite your child's birth  
parent without your consent.



Free Family  
Portraits!



#### Information To Know Before You Go:

MAKE SURE YOU DESIGNATE A SPECIFIC AREA TO MEET  
BALLOONS ARE A GREAT WAY TO HELP CONNECT WITH OTHERS

- Mark all valuables with your name and keep away from trash areas.
- Please supervise your children at all times.
- To cut down on the number of cars, we encourage carpooling.

DO NOT PARK ON GRASS UNLESS  
DIRECTED BY A PARK RANGER!

# 2009 Virginia Annual Picnic

Chesapeake City Park  
"Fun Forest"

Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>

2:30 - 6:00 pm

Rain or Shine



"Fun Forest" is the ultimate playground with an imagination center & family adventure area.

**Get ready to enjoy our annual adoption celebration!**

- ♥ Bring a dish to share.
- ♥ Grills are available for families to use.
- ♥ AFTH will provide paper products, drinks, and ice.

*Check out the...*

- Shaky Bridge • Dolphin Tunnel
- Whisper Dishes • Plant Walk
- Underground Telephone
- Fossil Dig-a-dinosaur and MUCH MORE!!



- Face Painting
- Fun & Activities
- Playgrounds



Families who adopted through the **Open Adoption Program** are encouraged to invite birth parents to the annual picnic. If interested, please send a letter of invitation for your child's birth parents to the Chesapeake AFTH office and be sure to include your full name and birth parents' names. We will forward the letter to your child's birth parents. Please send letter as soon as possible to allow time for birth parents to respond. **No birth parents will be invited by the agency without your consent.**

RSVP to the Chesapeake office by Thursday, June 11th: (757)361-0008

## Celebrate Adoption!

# 9th Annual Pittsburgh Office Picnic

Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009



Exciting rides!

Roller coasters and water slides!

Seven theme areas!

Bring your own lunch or choose from  
several eateries at the park.

*Located on Route 30 in Ligonier, PA*

Park opens at 10 am

Join us at Pavilion C2 & C3 at 1pm  
and meet Ricky Raccoon!

Directions on website

(724) 238-3666

[www.idlewild.com](http://www.idlewild.com)

Cost is \$16.00 per person. Children 2 and under are free.

Tickets will be sent directly to you before the picnic.

If you have questions or need directions ...

Call Katie at (724) 853-6533 or email [KatieH@afth.org](mailto:KatieH@afth.org).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# of tickets \_\_\_\_\_ # of people attending \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:  
Debbie Cohen

Send this form and payment to:  
Adoptions From The Heart  
1225 South Main St, Suite 207  
Greensburg, PA 15601

Deadline to order: July 13th

# Connecticut's Annual Adoption Picnic

This is going to be a picnic to remember!



**Quassy Amusement Park**  
**Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**11:00am - 8:00 pm**

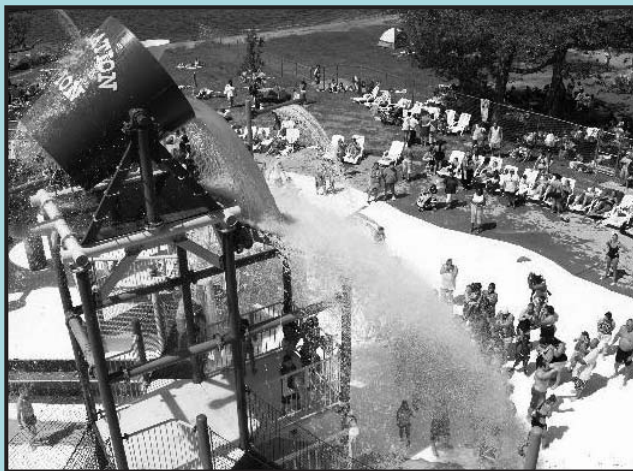
We have exclusive use of the pavilion with volleyball, horseshoes & bocce available. **Free admission to the Saturation Station** water play area and **free parking too.**

**Food served from noon until 3pm:** jumbo hot dogs, 1/4 lb. hamburgers, cheeseburgers, veggie burgers, Italian sausage, potato salad, close slaw, soda, iced tea, lemonade & fruit punch.

## **Advanced Reservations REQUIRED!**

**Adults \$17.50 and Children (ages 3-12) \$15**

***An all-day ride pass can be purchased at the park for \$10.***



Please mail your check payable to AFTH:  
Adoptions From The Heart  
78 Eastern Blvd. Suite #7  
Glastonbury, CT 06033

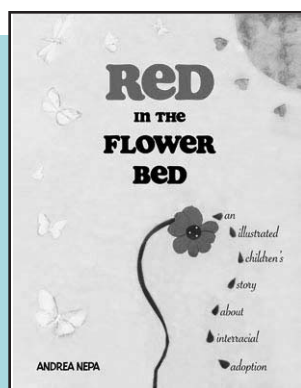
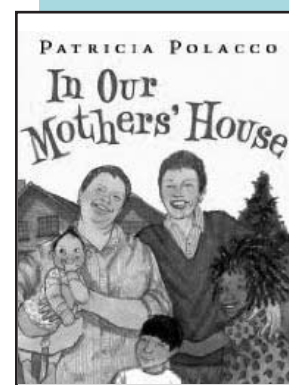
*include names of all attendees, # of adult & children  
for reservation, and your address & phone number*

**Please contact us if you have questions:  
BrendaS@afth.org or PennyR@afth.org  
or call (860) 657-2626**

**Deadline for Reservations: JUNE 10th!**

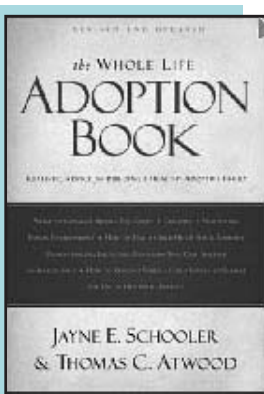
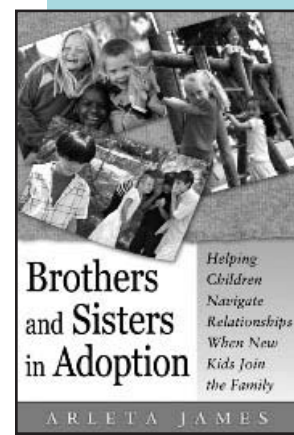
## Book Reviews

*In Our Mothers' House* by *Patricia Polacco* - This is a story of diversity and self confidence in the face of adversity. Two women, Marmee & Meema are raising a culturally diverse family of three children. They do all the things other families do, but they don't look like other families. Some of the other families don't accept them. They say they are different and dislike them for it. Marmee & Meema teach their children that different doesn't mean wrong. Their encounters with discrimination are met with dignity and teach their children how to handle tough situations with grace. **AFTH price \$13.00**



*Red in the Flower Bed: A Story About Inter-racial Adoption* by *Andrea Nepa* - Written by one of AFTH's families, this abstract story is about a small poppy seed that makes a long journey to find itself in a garden with other flowers that don't look anything like the beautiful red poppy the seed grows into. It is a story of acceptance and teaches that you don't have to look the same to fit in. It's a good way to introduce the topic of diversity to children. **AFTH price \$12.00**

*Brothers & Sisters in Adoption: Helping Children Navigate Relationships When New Kids Join in the Fun* by *Arleta James* - While this book looks and sometimes reads more like a textbook, it is filled with really valuable information for families adding older children to an already established family. This book offers great examples and practical tools for helping families prepare and accept a new family dynamic. It also helps families become better able to handle the practical, emotional and physical needs of all of its members. This is a very helpful book for families adopting older children, sibling groups and/or adding children to an already established family. **HARDCOVER List Price: \$30.00 AFTH price \$ 20.00**



*Whole Life Adoption Book: Realistic Advice for Building a Healthy Adoptive Family* by *Jane Schooler & Thomas Atwood* - This book is filled with practical and thoughtful advice on adoption. It delves into issues that may come up at different developmental stages, and how to handle them. There is advice for families who have adopted older children, and for those who have adopted children as infants. While there is not a ton of information for parents adopting internationally, this newly revised edition does touch on Hague and some of the new international regulations. *The Whole Life Adoption Book* is a very good comprehensive parenting book. **AFTH price \$ 13.00**

**All reviewed books are available in our branch offices, online, or by calling (610) 642-7200.**

## AFTH Program Updates

**HEARTBEATS** - Free information meeting on Surrogacy in India at the Cherry Hill office on May 27th at 7pm. All questions will be answered at that time. RSVP to [RobertaE@afth.org](mailto:RobertaE@afth.org).

**DOMESTIC** - The Domestic programs have been seeing an increase in placements due to the current economy. Our African-American and Biracial Program is in need of more families who are open to being selected by a pregnant woman with some drug and mental health issues. Instead of saying no to the unknown about these types of situations, we encourage all of our families to do research to learn more about these issues. AFTH wants to maximize the times each family is shown by reminding families to do research, ask questions, and take a look at their profile again to see if there are any additional situations they may be open to.

In addition to the existing online discussion group for AFTH families, families are able to subscribe to the new domestic listserv in order to receive program updates from AFTH. *See page 9 for additional information.*

**RUSSIA** - During the winter, four more families brought children home from Moscow via AFTH's Russia Partnering Program. Six other families have traveled to Russia, either to meet the child each hopes to adopt, or to adopt their child in Court. Families open to adopting a boy continue to receive referrals within less than 6 months of completion of paperwork. The waiting time for families wishing to adopt a girl is a few months longer. Referrals are of boys and girls, as young as 12-36 months and up to 5 years of age.

In February, AFTH became aware that it had been included on a list issued by the Russia Ministry of Education (MOE) in Moscow. The list contains the names of agencies that are considered responsible for Post-Placement Reports deemed missing by the MOE. AFTH was able to learn that 3 Post-Placement Reports

that had been previously completed by AFTH (dating as far back as 2004) were never officially received in Russia. This may have been due to the failure of the placing agencies in those cases to submit to Russia the Reports done by AFTH, or due to some mailing or clerical glitch. In any event, AFTH has now resubmitted these Reports, and the Regional MOE's (in Russia) in those cases have notified the MOE in Moscow that AFTH is current with all post-placement reporting. As such, the Ministry of Education in Moscow has updated its "list" and AFTH is no longer on it!

This issue highlights the importance of timely post-placement reporting. For each Russia case, AFTH completes 5 Post-Placement Reports within 3 years of the child's placement in the adoptive home. Families commit to participating in such reporting early in their adoption process. All of us should remember that the cooperation of so many thousands of previous adoptive families has allowed for orphaned Russian children to continue to be adopted by loving parents in the U.S.

**UKRAINE** - There is currently only one family in process for Ukraine. This program continues to be challenging and is only appropriate for families seeking older children (age 6 and up) and preferably sibling groups. Post-placement compliance continues to be an issue for the Ukrainian government and all families who have adopted are reminded to submit their annual reports to the Consulate of Ukraine in New York at least one month prior to the anniversary of their court date. Questions regarding Ukraine can be directed to Terry Petrone via e-mail at [TerryP@afth.org](mailto:TerryP@afth.org) or by phone to the Cherry Hill office.

**GUATEMALA** - Our Guatemala Program is coming to an end. We had two families travel the last week in March to bring their children home. We only have one family left and they are waiting for PGN approval.



## Program Updates Cont'd

**CHINA** - China continues at a very slow pace. Our last set of referrals was received in late October of last year. Our families with a log in date of 3/17/06 continue to wait for their assignments which they may receive in May. We will keep our fingers crossed.

We still have 171 families on our waiting list with log in dates through April of 2008.

**KAZAKHSTAN** - Although Kazakhstan is not a Hague country, the government has made a decision to only allow Hague accredited agencies to assist with adoptions. Since AFTH has not yet been accredited, the program has been transferred to WACAP, a Hague accredited agency. Families who submitted dossiers after July 2008 can complete their process through WACAP. The government is permitting AFTH to complete the process for families whose dossiers were received in Kazakhstan prior to July 2008. At this time there are four families remaining in the program and our coordinator is hopeful that they will all travel within the next six months. Because so many countries are currently closed to adoption or are moving very slowly, Kazakhstan is

seeing increased applications. This has resulted in longer wait times and more competition for each referral. In addition, our coordinator reports that more in-country families are adopting. It is very important that families who have completed adoptions continue to submit their annual reports to Terry Petrone at the Cherry Hill office at least one month prior to the anniversary of the date of their final court in Kazakhstan. Even one late report can effect invitations for our remaining families to travel. Any questions regarding the reports or the Kazakhstan program can be directed to Terry Petrone via e-mail at [TerryP@afth.org](mailto:TerryP@afth.org) or by phone to the Cherry Hill office.

**VIETNAM** - The last family for Vietnam has traveled and brought home their son. The program continues to be closed. There is hope that talks between the United States and Vietnam will begin to discuss the possibility of an interim Memorandum of Understanding, however, there has been nothing official yet.



### Got E-mail? Stay Informed with AFTH!

To sign-up for monthly adoption program updates, send an e-mail with the word "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to the appropriate email address as shown below. These listserves are for outgoing agency messages.

**CHINA** - [AFTHChinaUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AFTHChinaUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**RUSSIA** - [AFTHRussiaUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AFTHRussiaUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**UKRAINE** - [AFTHUkraineUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AFTHUkraineUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

A new update listserv has been created for families in our domestic program. Families in-process can subscribe to the listserv by sending a message with the word "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to:

**\*NEW\*** **DOMESTIC** - [AFTHDomesticUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AFTHDomesticUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

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

**DOMESTIC DISCUSSION GROUP**- [AFTHopenadoption-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AFTHopenadoption-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



## Kids' Needs: Adoption Reads

By Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan

We participated in the recent Dr. Seuss Read Across America program, an annual celebration of reading held the week of Dr. Seuss' March 2 birthday. We've done so every year since Maeve was born, tallying the books we read that week. Reading is part of our day in myriad ways: before bedtime, when the quiet settles in and her heavy eyelids fight an impossible battle; before or after dinner; anytime there's a snuggle; and even the occasional weekday morning when we're on time - I especially like reading to Maeve while she eats breakfast, just before we head out for the day.

There's always a stash of books in the backseat of the car so she "reads" while we head to our destination. It's much like the pile of board books we placed at the end of her crib once it was safe to do so. It was lovely to wake hearing baby Maeve coo as she looked at the surprise we'd left for her. We also listen to stories in the car on CD so we're all read to at once.

I noticed this year's tally of 68 reads included nine adoption-related books. Less than I'd like, so I'm shaking things up a bit, reevaluating what we're reading, what's available and what I've been meaning to get to.

Given the just-picked daffodils on my desk and the sound of windows opening everywhere, spring seems like the perfect time for such a fresh look. So I'm sharing my list of adoption-related children's books with you. Due to space and much to my chagrin, I'm listing here mainly books that made our week of Dr. Seuss reads. My complete book list is neither all-inclusive, nor will it ever be static - I've had to grimace and flag one when I learn it's out of print. Still, the books remain in my arsenal, ever hopeful I might find a tattered copy at the library or buried in a box at a yard sale, like pirate's treasure. I've always thought each book has its benefits, some more than others, and each approaches adoption in its own way. Some are more serious, others skim the surface but provide windows for conversation. Surely one will be more-suited to a situation over another, and even others are just a pleasure to

read. For my family, sharing and discussing all kinds of adoptions - and the myriad people touched by it - feels right to us. We believe Maeve will benefit from such exposure, and that books on adoption aren't things to be taken out for discussion at certain times of the year or when a specific question arises. They are not treated differently than the countless other books we try to surround her with. Truly, for us, the more we can make these books part of her everyday existence, the better.

*The Tummy Mummy* by Michelle Madrid-Branch, written by an adoptee, gently shows two sides of the triad. It's perfect for Maeve now, at 3½, because it's a very general story of a woman who couldn't care for her child. A couple lives on the other side of the lake, and their home is ready for a baby. The first mother brings the baby to them in a solemn ride across the water. It's nice in that it has no specific details about situations, making it like or unlike a particular situation. I see it more as symbolic. Its artwork is rich; its vibe is peaceful.

*A Mother For Choco* by Keiko Kasza has been a go-to book for us at least two years. Subtle in a specific adoption theme, as the word isn't mentioned, it's a sweet story about a bird looking for its mother. Although Choco is reluctant to believe the bear who finds and consoles him would be a terrific mother, a visit to her home shows him - in a surprise twist I hadn't expected - that their physical differences don't matter at all.

*Pugnose Has Two Special Families* by Karis Kruzal is a coveted title in my house - I've yet to get my hands on a copy for keeps, as it's out of print. While it's a bit homespun, the story of a mouse in an open adoption is useful because the first parents are characters and it addresses the sadness in adoption in an acute, realistic way.

*The Day We Met You* by Phoebe Koehler also sits in our bookcase, with wording like, "You felt like the sun shining inside us."

*Megan's Birthday Tree: A Story About Open Adoption* by Laurie Lears details the tender relationship between a first mother and her child, who learns her first mother is getting married and moving. It touches on real concerns and lovingly illustrates how deep the commitment can be between a first mother and her child, and how it develops over time. I'm happy to have this as part of our home library.

*The Little Miss Spider* books by David Kirk don't directly address adoption, but the original book has Miss Spider looking for her mother. She soon realizes Beetle Betty was caring for her all along. Later books, and the television program, show Miss Spider with her children - each a different kind of bug.

## Mama Musings Continued...

*Pablo's Tree* by Pat Mora gets me every time. A loving story told by adoptee Pablo who shares a special bond with his grandfather, who bought a tree when he learned his daughter was adopting. He waits to plant the tree until his grandchild arrives, and decorates it in a special theme each year.

*Our Twitchy* by Kes Gray is a charming tale of a confused bunny with parents that are a cow and a horse. His journey toward realizing he should be himself is a sweet one to take.

*The Mulberry Bird* by Anne Braff Brodzinsky, about a young mother bird struggling to ensure the best care for her baby after a storm. She ultimately decides to find another bird family to care for her baby. This 1986 book is now revamped to reflect changes in adoption, and now has more inclusive language and an enhanced description of the baby bird's feelings.

Below you'll find additional books on my list. Happy exploration!

### OTHER RECOMMENDED CHILDREN'S BOOKS

*How I was Adopted* by Joanna Cole ♥ *The Red Blanket* by Eliza Thomas ♥ *Brown Like Me* by Noelle Lamperti  
*Sam's Sister* by Juliet C. Bond ♥ *I Love You Like Crazy Cakes* and *Every Year on Your Birthday*, both by Rose Lewis  
*The Three Names of Me* by Mary Cummings ♥ *A Koala For Katie* by Jonathan London ♥ *Giant Jack* by Birte Muller  
*We Adopted You, Benjamin Koo* by Linda Girard ♥ *Mommy Far, Mommy Near: An Adoption Story* by Carol Peacock  
*Mama's Wish/Daughter's Wish* by Debbie and Brynne Blackington ♥ *Families Are Different* by Nina Pellegrini  
*And Tango Makes Three* by Peter Parrell & Justin Richardson ♥ *Is That Your Sister?* by Catherine and Sherry Bunin  
*Beginnings: How Families Come To Be* by Virginia Kroll ♥ *Rosie's Family: An Adoption Story* by Lori Rosove  
*Happy Adoption Day* by John McCutcheon ♥ *The Best Single Mom in the World: How I Was Adopted* by Mary Zisk  
*Over the Moon: An Adoption Tale and The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz ♥ *Place in My Heart* by Mary Grossnickle  
*Welcome Home, Forever Child: A Celebration of Children Adopted as Toddlers, Preschoolers, & Beyond* by Christine Mitchell  
*Oliver* by Lois Wickstrom ♥ *Anthony's Surprise* by Roz Grace ♥ *Lucy's Family Tree* by Karen Halvorsen Schreck  
*Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born* by Jamie Lee Curtis ♥ *Did My First Mother Love Me* by Kathryn Miller  
*Horace* by Holly Keller ♥ *I Don't Have Your Eyes* and *We See the Moon* by Carrie A. Kitzel  
*All About Adoption: How Families Are Made & How Kids Feel About It* by Marc Nemiroff and Jane Annunziata  
*Twice Upon A Time: Born and Adopted* by Eleanora Patterson

*Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan was placed with her daughter in July 2005 through Adoptions From the Heart. Managing editor of a legal newspaper, she also is a freelance writer and has an adoption and first-time parenthood blog, musings:mamahood&more, at www.mamagigi.wordpress.com. Reach her at mamagigi@comcast.net.*

## Say Cheese!



Email to: [KristyG@afth.org](mailto:KristyG@afth.org)

or Mail to:

Marketing Team Calendar Search  
 Adoptions From The Heart  
 30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood, PA 19096

Call 610-642-7200 with any questions.

### Submit Your Photos!

We are collecting pictures for our 2010 calendar starring AFTH children!

Deadline July 1, 2009

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

Label each photo with your child's name, age, country, and parents name and address.

## CALLING ALL FAMILIES: ANNUAL ADOPTION PICNICS

Each summer AFTH host picnics and encourages all AFTH families to join the staff in celebrating adoption. Hundreds of families come together for a fun-filled day for the whole family.

Flourtown Park in Ft. Washington, PA  
"Fun Forest" in Chesapeake, VA  
Idlewild Park in Ligonier, PA  
Quassy Amusement Park in Middlebury, CT

For more details about our 2009 picnics, take a look at the newsletter insert. We hope to see your family there!

## SURROGACY IN INDIA

AFTH will be hosting a free information meeting focused on the new Surrogacy in India Program.

**May 27th at 7:00pm in Cherry Hill**

All questions will be answered there.  
RSVP to [RobertaE@afth.org](mailto:RobertaE@afth.org).

**WYNNEWOOD OFFICE**  
30-31 Hampstead Circle  
Wynnewood, PA 19096  
610.642.7200

**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  
717.232.1787

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

**NEW JERSEY OFFICE**  
451 Woodland Avenue  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002  
856.665.5655  
732.335.8883

**DELAWARE OFFICE**  
18-A Trolley Square  
Wilmington, DE 19806  
302.658.8883

**VIRGINIA OFFICE**  
1407 Stephanie Way, Suite H  
Chesapeake, VA 23320  
757.361.0008  
804.218.2569

**NEW YORK**  
1.800-355-5500

**CONNECTICUT OFFICE**  
76 Eastern Blvd. Suite 7  
Glastonbury, CT  
0603360.657.2626

**TOLL FREE NUMBER**  
1.800.355.5500

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**  
[www.afth.org](http://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](mailto:adoption@afth.org).



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