

Adoption News



A Quarterly Newsletter from

Adoptions From The Heart

Summer 2013



AFTH's 2013 Adoption Conference *Adoption In a Changing World: Tools for Professionals & Families*

Adoptions From The Heart is proud to present a unique adoption conference this fall. "Adoption In a Changing World: Tools for Professionals & Families" will be held at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut on Tuesday, October 22nd from 9am-4pm. A bonus presentation geared towards adoptive families and prospective adoptive parents will be held from 4:30-6pm.

AFTH is teaming up with adoption expert Adam Pertman. Adam is the Executive Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute and will be speaking for the very first time, on their recent study "Untangling the Web: The Internet's Transformative Impact on Adoption".

The internet, social media in particular, is instigating historic changes in adoption practices. By offering unprecedented opportunities and resources, it is likely bringing an end to "closed" and "semi-open" adoptions and accelerating the formation of extended families that include birth and adoptive relatives. Additionally, the internet's impact on adoption challenges current laws and policies and raises critical ethical, legal and procedural issues. Despite the enormous impact the internet is having on adoption, there is still very little reliable information, research or experience to guide professionals, courts or families.

The Institute's report, "Untangling the Web" is the **first-ever in-depth examination the internet's positive and negative impact on adoption and the millions of children, families, and professionals effected.** Adam's presentation will draw from the study and highlight specific ways the internet and social media are transforming adoption and will include recommendations for future law, policy and practice.



See Page 2 for a **SPECIAL SAVINGS CODE** and full list of workshops and panels.

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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

WYNEWOOD OFFICE

30-31 Hampstead Circle
Wynnewood, PA 19096
610.642.7200

TOLL FREE NUMBER

1.800.355.5500

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

www.afth.org

The 2013 AFTH adoption conference will provide professionals, students, and families with tools and resources to navigate adoption in today's world. Our unique adoption conference is packed full of exciting workshops, panels and presenters, including Adam Pertman. Discover the ways in which adoption continues to be influenced by our changing world. Workshops are designed to give attendees a broad spectrum of discussions ranging from openness in adoption and special needs adoption to attachment and legal issues in adoption to see the adoption experience from a wide variety of perspectives.

There are a limited number of spaces available and popular workshops fill up quickly. So take advantage of Early Bird Registration, receive a discount and ensure your seat is reserved for you preferred workshops.

Workshop Topics:

Attachment in Adoption
Understanding Adoption and Tools to Educate Others
LGBT Adoptions
Adoptee Panel
Medical Issues in Adoption
Transracial Adoption Panel
Birthmother Experience Panel
Legal Issues in Adoption
Open Adoption Discussion
Adoption: The Hospital Experience
Exploring Special Needs Adoptions

Bonus Session (4:30-6:00)

The Adoption Experience from the Adoption Triad Perspective (panel)

Additional Information

Complimentary Lunch
6.5 CEUs Available for CT Social Workers
Discounted Rate for Groups of Three or More

To Register

Visit the online calendar of events at www.afth.org/events

For exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Alexandra Peters at AlexandraP@afth.org.

UNIQUE SAVING CODE JUST FOR YOU -

when registering for the conference, enter discount code **ADOPT_NEWS** for an additional \$5.00 off the registration fee. Code expires after August 20th.

For additional savings opportunities register early or bring 3 other people to qualify for the group rate.

Dear Friends of Adoptions From The Heart

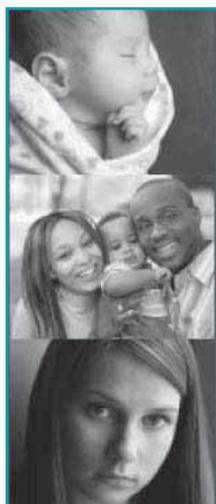
60% of Americans have a personal connection to adoption and an estimated **1 out of 10 Americans is an adoptee, adoptive parent or birth parent**. It's no wonder adoption has become an increasingly popular theme on tv shows, movies, and in new stories. This past year we saw adoption highlighted on FOX's *Glee*, ABC's *Modern Family*, and in national news stories surrounding Russian adoptions, however stereotypes and misconceptions continue to be presented. **Thanks to passionate donors and supporters like you**, AFTH is able to provide the community with reliable adoption education and awareness. Together we can share an authentic view of adoption.

Adoption Education and Awareness

- Staff trainings for hospitals, women's centers, and infertility clinics
- National Adoption Month awareness campaign
- Speaking engagements at conferences and support groups
- Diversity workshops at local middle and high schools
- Partnerships with local businesses and organizations
- Low cost educational workshops for adoptive parents
- Education through social media (Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress)
- LGBT community support (HRC recognized)

Birthmother Support and Financial Assistance

- Buddy program
- Birthmother support groups
- Birthmother Fund (medical, housing, food, and transportation assistance)
- Holiday gift card drive
- Find Her Footing 5K



AFTH's commitment to the adoption community shines through our passion for our work 365 days a year. We want to continue to be a resource for the community, families, children, and women in need.

We thank you for graciously **extending your hand to partner with AFTH** as we continue to advocate for the needs of the adoption community in this changing world. All donations made to AFTH are tax- deductible. *Donations may be made in honor or in memory of specific individuals.*

Sincerely,

Maxine Chalker

Founder & Executive Director

P.S.

Consider partnering with AFTH year-round by joining our Pledge Program. *(details below)*

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

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: _____

**Credit Card
Donations
Accepted Online:
www.afth.org**

***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.



Live United!

United Way improves lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world to advance the common good. It began in 1887, and was created as an organization to serve as an agent to collect funds for local charities, as well as to coordinate relief services, counsel and refer clients to cooperating agencies.

Fast forward to 2013...thousands of companies participate in the United Way Workplace Campaign each year. The purpose of the campaign is to provide companies and their employees unique philanthropic opportunities that will aid local non-profit and charitable organizations in continuing their missions.

Adoptions From The Heart is eligible to receive contributions through the United Way Donor Program. Your United Way contribution will help us to continue our dedicated service to adoptive parents, pregnant women, and children.

How to Make a Contribution to AFTH Through the United Way Donor Option Plan:

- 1) Request a Donor Option Card from your company's United Way representative.
- 2) The agency's donor number is different in each area. The AFTH donor number for your area can be found in your United Way booklet. *You can do this even if it is not listed in your particular United Way booklet:*
PRINT: ADOPTIONS FROM THE HEART and the local branch office's address (see page 2 for addresses)
- 3) Enter the amount of your pledge and your payment method (e.g. check, payroll deduction, etc.)

NEW ADOPTION GROUP FOR FAMILIES STARTING!



FIRST MEETING:

Thursday
September 12
10-11am
Wynnewood Office

Adoption Connections:

Activities, Discussion and Support For Young Children & Their Parents

Bring your preschool-aged child, toddler, or infant to celebrate the start of fall with Adoptions From The Heart! Facilitated by a social worker, the group will include song, seasonal craft, story, snack, and time to schmooze 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)

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

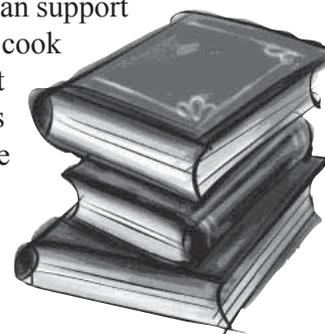
*Groups will be held on the 2nd Thursday of each month, so mark your calendars now!

Adoption Related Books at Unbeatable Prices

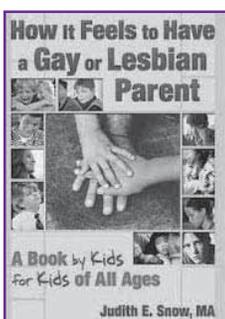
Not only can you snag up some great adoption related books at fabulous prices, you can support AFTH in the process. We have books on international adoption, domestic adoption, cook books, country specific books, children's books, books about birthparent, books about transracial adoption, books that every 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>



Book Reviews



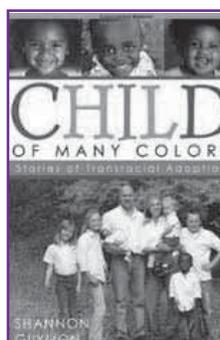
How It Feels to Have a Gay or Lesbian Parent: A Book By Kids for Kids of All Ages by *Judith E. Snow* - The children of gay couples who were interviewed for this book range from 7-31. It is interesting to see the differences and the commonalities in many of

their situations. Most were okay with their parents being gay but when they were in elementary school or middle school they were scared their friends would make fun of them. Once they hit high school, they didn't care as much but many were selective about who they told. This book could be very valuable to kids whose parents are just coming out or kids who are having a hard time adjusting to their parents being gay. Knowing that there are other kids in their shoes and knowing that they feel similar may makes them feel not as alone. [Amazon.com price \\$9.95 \(paperback\)](#)

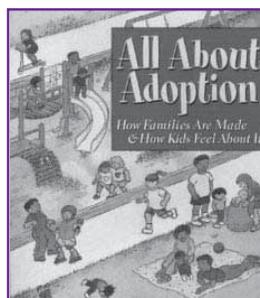


Weaving a Family: Untangling Race and Adoption by *Barbara Katz Rothman* - Ms. Rothman takes on some of the biggest issues in our society. Whole chapters are devoted to such topics as race labels and what they mean, motherhood and how it has changed in the last two generations, race matching in the adoption process,

and the issues facing white women raising black children. This book is wise, personal, well researched, and often very funny [Amazon.com price \\$20.70](#)



Child of Many Colors: Stories of Transracial Adoption by *Shannon Guymon* - Guyman has compiled an inspiring collection of stories depicting the drama, excitement, pangs of anxiety and guidance of faith that accompany building a family. Drawing on her own experiences as an adoptive mother, Shannon presents the true-to-life realities of transracial adoption. [Amazon.com price \\$8.99](#)



All about Adoption: How Families Are Made & How Kids Feel about It by *Marc Nemiroff and Jane Annunziata* - For children adopted at any age and from any country, All About Adoption explores the what, how and why

of adoption, as well as the many feelings kids can experience as they grow up. And for parents, an extensive afterword discusses the unique practical and emotional dimensions of adoptive children and their families, with suggestions for answering the most challenging questions. [Amazon.com price \\$8.96](#)

Amazon gives AFTH a small donation from each book purchased through the AFTH bookstore at: astore.amazon.com/lovebuilfam0e-20

Different Kinds of Support

AFTH understands how very important it is to have support during your adoption journey. Many of our families and birth mothers have family members and friends who “get” adoption and can provide support, however there are also many who don’t. And even if you have supportive family members and friends, it may be a welcomed change to also have the support and friendships of those who are or who have recently been in your shoes. AFTH believes that support goes beyond the connection that you have with your social worker. Support is important for everyone involved in adoption throughout each and every step of the adoption journey as well as post placement as it is a lifelong experience.

Waiting Family Support

The waiting process can be hard and so AFTH local offices host support groups for waiting families to come together in support. Support groups are led by AFTH staff and will cover a variety of topics designed for waiting families. Visit our events calendar at www.afth.org for upcoming support group details.

ALLENTOWN

Call (610) 432-2384 for information.

CENTRAL PA

Call 717-399-7766 for details.

Cherry Hill, NJ

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 for time slots between 6:30 and 8:30pm.

Tuesday, August 20th from 6:30-8:30pm

Tuesday, September 17th from 6:30-8:30pm

Call (856) 665-5655 or email TerryP@afth.org to RSVP by the Wednesday before each above date.

CONNECTICUT

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

DELAWARE

Call 302-658-8883 for information.

VIRGINIA

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

WYNNEWOOD

Monday, September 9th from 6:30-8:30pm

Email AshleyK@afth.org for details.

In addition to the above in-person support groups, AFTH also has online support groups for waiting and recently placed families. All you need is an email address to get involved. See box on next page for details.

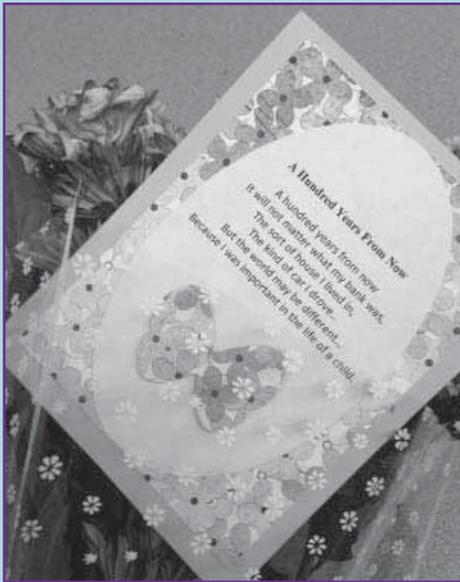
Education Seminars for Waiting and Recently Placed Families



We are excited to say that our Spring Education Seminar Series which just finished had some of our most popular classes to date! The photos are from the Delaware seminar Effects of Drugs and Alcohol During Pregnancy. The class was packed and the feedback received was all positive. Families felt more secure in making their profile key selections after attending. Other offices held similar seminars with similar positive feedback as well.



Our Fall Educations Series is finalized and you can see a list of the upcoming seminars in the newsletter insert. We strongly encourage the seminars for our waiting and recently placed families. We are even hosting pizza party and discussion groups for the children in some of our offices in the fall. These classes offer a great way for families to come together in support.



A Very Special Gathering of Birthmothers In Support

On May 4th, a very special group of women gathered together in the Cherry Hill Office. The Cherry Hill staff were honored to be joined by 5 birthmothers, 2 birth grandmothers, and a woman working with AFTH who is considering making an adoption plan for her baby. Three of the women had placed within the past year and the other two birthmothers had placed more than two years prior. They were able to share their experiences and offer support to each other. Each woman brought a unique experience and the woman who is considering making an adoption plan found the camaraderie priceless. Even the birth grandmothers discovered wonderful connects in each other.

The reason for the gathering was to come together in support just before Mother's Day weekend which can often be a difficult time for birthmothers. The AFTH staff walked the women through the calendar and opened up a discussion about what the most difficult times of the year are and offered tips and suggestions for dealing with grief during those times.

Each woman who attended received flowers along with the poem "A Hundred Years From Now" by Forest Witcraft:

A hundred years from now
It will not matter what my bank account was,
The sort of house I lived in,
The kind of car I drove...
But the world may be different...
Because I was important in the life of a child.

All our offices offer various types of birthmother support whether it be a buddy system with women who have placed or an informal gathering several times a year. If you are interested in participating in a birthmother support group, reach out to your social worker to learn more about the upcoming opportunities in your area.

NEW - Online Adoptee Support Group

AFTH has recently created an online yahoo group where adoptees of any age can come together in support. We encourage any and all adoptees to subscribe to the yahoo group and begin the discussion.

Adoptees can subscribe by sending a message with the word "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to:

AFTH_AdopteeSupport-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Post-Adoption Support for Families

AFTH offers ongoing support for the more than 6,000 families that have adopted children through the agency's programs. AFTH has received an increase in the number of inquiries about post adoption support groups for children and adults. In response, AFTH will be providing group sessions in the months ahead.

[Adoption Connections: Parent & Child Group in Wynnewood](#)
(see details about this monthly activities group on page 4)

[Fall Festival in Allentown in October](#)

[Halloween Party for AFTH families in New Jersey in October](#)

[Pizza Party & Discussion Group in several offices in November](#)

Be on the lookout for details and even more gatherings leading up to and during National Adoption Month.

Get SOCIAL
Find AFTH On...

Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest,
Google+, WordPress & Tumblr

Got E-mail?

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:

DOMESTIC LISTSERVE -

AFTHDomesticUpdates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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:

DOMESTIC DISCUSSION GROUP

AFTHOpenadoption-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Celebrating Adoption: AFTH Picnic Recaps

Agency's 25th Picnic - Ft. Washington, PA

AFTH hit an exciting milestone this year by celebrating our 25th annual summer picnic. We are so happy to have been able to celebrate adoption with all those who were able to attend.

The picnic was held at the Fort Washington State Park in Pennsylvania on Sunday, June 2nd, 2013. Families and staff enjoyed a lovely afternoon despite the heat. We were so excited to host an estimated 1,500 guests again this year, including adoptive parents, grandparents, birth parents and children from all over who gathered to celebrate adoption. This year, several waiting adoptive parents came out to get to know each other and visit with families who have already adopted.

AFTH board member, Thom Rossi and wife Donna, generously volunteered to grill hot dogs for guests in the hot sun. The Rossi's collected donations for the agency while cooking; they raised almost \$100 for the birthmother fund. AFTH thanks them for their kindness and support.

Raffles were a big hit again this year! Guests had the opportunity to win several raffle baskets with gift certificates, toys, and AFTH gear and a cash prize from our 50/50. AFTH also sold the new T-shirts, picnic coolers, and tumbler glasses. Shirts and coolers can be purchased through our online store.



A special thank you to The Raucaous Brothers for providing smooth Reggae rhythms; Tom Picard of Music Fun with Tom, 5 local college students for stellar face painting, AFTH board members, McKenzie Frankel, and Dan Hall; and of course the AFTH staff and friends who helped make our event possible.

This picnic truly is a day of celebration and we are so thankful for the families adoption creates!

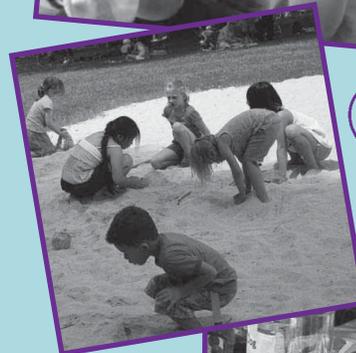
A heartfelt thank you for their donations and support goes out to : GIANT, WHOLE FOODS, WEGMANS, ORIENTAL TRADING, WAWA, HERRS, JJ SNACK FOODS, NBC SPROUT, PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES, ARNOLD'S FAMILY FUN, PHILADELPHIA FLYERS, STRASBURG RAILROAD COMPANY, RIDE THE DUCKS, JUST BORN, QVC STUDIOS, VALLEY FORGE CASINOS, FIELD HOUSE SPORTS BAR, SESAME PLACE, EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY, and to AFTH Board Members RITA ROITMAN & MICHAEL OFFORD (YELLOW PAGES & INTERNET MARKETING CORP.)

Virginia Summer Picnic

Virginia Picnic had a fabulous turn out of 92 guests in spite of a dreadful weather forecast. Luck was on our side and we avoided the rain and high humidity. There were a record number of reunions this year. We had 11 adoptive and birth parents visits. The Virginia AFTH staff worked hard to make the picnic a success and comfortable place for the visits and clients. Thank you to all those who came out and enjoyed this year's picnic.

Connecticut Summer Picnic

We had such a wonderful turn out with over 125 people who came together in celebration of adoption. And we couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day for our picnic at Quassy! We were thrilled to have 6 reunions with birthparents as well this year! We look forward to coming together again next summer.



Fall 2013 Adoption Education Series



Not only Building Beautiful Families, but Helping Strengthen Them Too!

The adoption journey is lifelong, so regardless of what stage of the adoption process families are in, AFTH's goal is to strengthen families by empowerment through knowledge. The AFTH Education Series is designed to offer support through educational opportunities and discussions.

♥ Glastonbury, CT

Estate Planning Basics to Protect Families

While parents of adopted children don't need any special estate planning documents, they need and should have at least the basic plan that every parent of a minor child needs. Please join Attorney Steven M. Basche for an informative and educational workshop on Estate Planning for Parents. One of the toughest parts of planning for parents is choosing a guardian for minor children. Steve will talk about the 8 most common mistakes that people make when choosing a guardian and how to avoid them. He will also explain the 5 basic elements of an estate plan: Will or Trust, Power of Attorney, Living Will, Health Care Proxy and HIPAA release. For same sex parents, it is even more important to know which aspects of estate planning will be controlled by state law (which may be more favorable) and which aspects are controlled by federal law, which may present challenges. You owe it to your family to understand how to protect them in the event that the unthinkable happens. *(note: class held at the Law Offices of Steven M. Basche)*

Saturday, September 21st from 10:00am-11:30am

\$10/person or \$15/couple

Call (860) 657-2626 with questions.

♥ Harrisburg, PA

Caring for Infants and Older Babies: What New Adoptive Parents Need to Know

Learn the basics of infant care in a comfortable setting with other adoptive and prospective adoptive parents. This class includes newborn care, feeding, sleeping, adjustment to parenthood and so much more. An invaluable learning experience for all.

Monday, September 16th from 6:30-8:30 PM

\$25/person or \$35/couple

Call (717) 399-7766 with questions.

♥ Lancaster, PA

Hair & Skin Care Techniques for Families Adopting Transracially

Take the mystery and frustration out of caring for your child's hair. We want to aid parents who have or will adopt transracially in caring for their children's unique hair and skin. A hands-on demonstration will be provide techniques to use for your children including braiding. Various product, books, and hand-outs will be available. Children are welcome for a fun evening of learning.

Monday, October 7th from 6:30-8:30 PM

\$10/person or \$15/family

Call (717) 399-7766 with questions.

♥ Richmond, VA

Explaining Why a Birth Sibling Was Parented and Another Placed for Adoption

Susan B. Keophila, an adult adoptee, will lead a discussion about the challenges for birthparents and adoptive parents in explaining why a birth sibling was parented and the other placed for adoption. Susan wrote a book, "But, Mama! She's My Sister!" which focuses on how a birthmother explains to her children why she is choosing adoption for a baby brother or sister. The book was written for all members of the adoption triad. Come and join in the discussion.

Friday, September 13th from 6pm-8pm

\$10/person or \$15/couple

Call (757) 361-0008 with questions.

♥ Wynnewood, PA

Understanding Potential Effects of Drug and Alcohol Exposure on a Pregnancy

Dr. John Potts is the director of the University of Pennsylvania Domestic Adoption Services Program and a member of the Department of Family Medicine at PENN. He practices as a Domestic Adoption Medical Consultant. His presentation will help adoptive families and prospective adoptive families gain a deeper understanding of the implications of substance use during pregnancy. Dr. Potts will offer his professional expertise, as well as his perspective as an adoptive father, and will be available to answer questions from attendees.

Saturday, October 19th from 2pm-4pm
\$25/person or \$3/couple

Call (610) 642-7200 with questions.

♥ Pittsburgh, PA

Effects of Pre-Natal Drug Exposure

Dr. Scott Curry, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at UPMC, will speak about the effects of drug and alcohol exposure during pregnancy. Dr. Curry brings many years experience as both a research doctor and clinician. He is also the adoptive father of two children through AFTH. Discussion of short and long-term effects of substance use and abuse. Seminar will provide families with helpful information in completing their profile key. Dr. Curry welcomes your questions!

Date, Time and Location to Be Announced
\$25/person or \$35/couple

Call (724) 853-6533 with questions.

For ONLINE Registration:
<http://afth.org/community/courses.php>

To Register by Mail - fill out the below form & return with payment to:
Adoptions From The Heart
30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood, PA 19096

Name(s): _____ Phone: () _____ - _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

\$10/person and \$15/couple:

- Hair & Skin Care (*Lancaster*)
- Explain about Birth Sibling (*Virginia*)
- Estate Planning (*Connecticut*)
- Pre-Natal Drug Exposure (*Pittsburgh*)

Number of Attendees: _____

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

\$25/person and \$35/couple:

- Caring for Infants (*Harrisburg*)
- Drug/Alcohol Effects on Pregnancy (*Wynnewood*)



Prepping the AFTH Paper Hearts

Runs November 1st – 30th

What is the AFTH Paper Hearts Project?

Each year in honor of National Adoption Month in November, AFTH networks with local businesses to spread awareness about adoption through the Paper Hearts Project. Local businesses offer their customers the chance to purchase and write their name on a paper heart for \$1 donation in support of adoption. The hearts are then displayed in the business throughout the entire month. The donations collected benefit the Birthmother Fund which goes directly to women working with AFTH who are struggling to provide for their basic needs.

How Can You Help?

If your business would like to participate in the Paper Hearts Project, please contact Ali at AlexandraP@afth.org or call 610-642-7200. Come November, we also encourage you to visit the businesses that will be announced as participating in this special project. Finally, your family can purchase a paper heart to be displayed in the AFTH Office of your choice. Paper hearts will be available to purchase at AFTH offices on online store at www.afth.org beginning on November 1st.



Recent Legislation



FEDERAL TAX CREDIT - On May 23, 2013 Senators Bob Casey and Mary Landrieu, and Rep. Bruce Braley of Iowa introduced the Adoption Tax Credit Refundability Act of 2013. These bills follow the successful effort to reinstate the adoption tax credit which Congress made permanent in late 2012. The Adoption Tax Credit Refundability Act of 2013 will expand the number of children benefiting from adoption by supporting adoptive families through full refundability

CHILD CITIZENSHIP ACT - On June 18, a Senate passed an amendment (S744) to the Child Citizenship Act of 2000. The measure would apply retroactively to all individuals adopted by a citizen of the USA in an international adoption. Previously this Act did not apply to those 18 years or older on its effective date. The debate will now move to the House where there is uncertainty around passage.

NEW JERSEY - On June 20, 2013 a bill was approved in the Senate that would allow people who were adopted in New Jersey to obtain their birth certificates and request information about their family history. The bill would allow the adopted person to contact the state registrar to obtain his or her birth certificate. In addition, the adopted person would receive any available information regarding contact preferences with their biological parent and family history information. Birth parents would be allowed to file documents with the state registrar indicating whether they want to be contacted directly, through an intermediary or not at all. The birth parent who does not want to be contacted will be encouraged to update the family history information every 10 years until the birth parent reaches the age of 40, and every five years thereafter, according to the bill, (S2814). The bill has not been acted on by the Assembly as yet.

AFTH Program Updates



DOMESTIC PROGRAMS - We hope that your family was able to attend one of the AFTH annual picnics as we had wonderful turn outs. The agency picnics are always a wonderful time for families to come together and celebrate adoption!

We were thrilled to see so many waiting families come join in the fun at our Fort Washington picnic. It is always great to see new families just starting the adoption process, families who just received placements as well as families who have been coming for years and years. We would like to thank everyone who came out to celebrate adoption with us for another year and making these events so special. We hope to see you again next year!

This fiscal year has been another success for AFTH! **We placed 167 children in loving homes between July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013.** Congratulations to all the new families and thank you for opening up your hearts to adoption!

Please take the time to review the newsletter insert for the Fall Education Classes being offered at various AFTH offices in the upcoming months. Topics include: Pre-Natal Effects of Drugs/Alcohol, Pizza Party & Adoption Discussions with Young Adoptees, Caring for Infants, Hair and Skin Care for Transracial Families, Explaining about Birth Siblings, and Vital Estate Planning Basics.

To All of Our Placed Families: You are now a part of the 60% of Americans that has been directly touched by adoption. We are so grateful that you chose AFTH to be a part of your adoption journey and even though you might be moving into a new phase of the journey, AFTH still has so much work to do to help the next generation of women, children and those prospective adoptive parents who are still waiting to be where you are now. AFTH remains dedicated to the adoption community 365 days a year (just ask our social workers who are working evenings and holidays) and the need for financial support is year round. Every penny donated to the Birthmother Fund aids pregnant women working with AFTH who are struggling to provide for their basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter.

Please consider showing your continued support for the Birthmother Fund, AFTH's Adoption Education and Awareness Campaign or AFTH in general. All donations are tax deductible. See page 3 for details.

To All of Our Waiting Families: More and more pregnant women are turning to the AFTH website for information on adoption. Those considering making an adoption plan for their babies are able to go on the AFTH website and view waiting prospective adoptive parents' profiles, letters, photos and even videos.

We continue to see an increase of expecting parents selecting adoptive families because they saw the family's profile on the AFTH website. It is a great resource for all waiting prospective adoptive families to increase their exposure. Profiles are not added to the website unless families have given specific permission. If you are not already on the website, now is the time to submit your profile page. It's FREE! Contact your social worker for details.



FORMER AFTH CHINA PROGRAM - A number of assignments were sent to CAS in early April by the CCCWA for our former China families whose log in date was 10/20/06. Although China had been informed of the former AFTH families who previously dropped out of the process a few were unexpectedly sent matches and two of the families accepted them. What a surprise! All together four former AFTH families will be traveling to China to bring three daughters and one son home. The next LID is 11/16/06 and families, world wide, with LID's through 10/26/06 have received assignments. It is hard to anticipate whether the CCCWA will get to our former families' log in date before the end of 2013.



HEARTBEATS - Families continue to show interest in the *Heartbeats Embryo Placement Assistance Program*, 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.

The next free informational webinar for the Embryo Placement Assistance Program is scheduled for 6pm on September 12. 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 September and October. These webinars address talking with children about embryo placement, potential contact with genetic relatives, and many other related topics.

Visit AFTH's online calendar of events at www.afth.org to register for any of the above meetings. Questions about Embryo Placement Services can be directed to Sam Wojnilower at SamW@afth.org or 610-642-7200.



FREE ONLINE WEBINARS

LEARN ABOUT AFTH'S PROGRAMS
FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME

DOMESTIC INFANT ADOPTION

AUGUST 6TH AT 7PM
SEPTEMBER 10TH AT 7PM

EMBRYO PLACEMENT PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 12TH AT 6PM

Registration Required
Calendar of Events at www.afth.org



Congratulations to Families Who Have Recently Adopted!

Sons

Jonathan & Andrea
Antonio & Angela
Stephen & Anita
Shaun & Heather
Mark & Lisa
Bobby & Michael
Glenn & Lisa
Sylvain & Linda
Ray & Esther
Michael & Maureen
Jason & Melissa
John & William
Edna
Richard & Susan
Matthew
Christopher & Karen
Patrick & Kara
Sean & Patty

Daughters

Gary & Samantha
Andres & Katherine
Raymond & Courtney
Chris & Renata
Dante & Monique
Ronald & Jodi
Robert & Ann Marie (twins)
Matthew & Kylene
Daniel & Anne
William & Debra
Stephan & Brenda
Nathan & Paula
James & Acelina
Scott & Lisa
Joseph & Lori
John & Travis





International Adoption News

Adoptions From The Heart prides itself on keeping abreast of international legislation and news regarding foreign adoption. While the agency no longer has any international placement programs, it offers Home Studies, Education, Post Adoption/Placement Reports and other assistance in support of international adoptions. AFTH works with many agencies across the country who do provide international adoption placements. Please contact your local office to see how we can assist you with your local service needs and refer you to one of these agencies. For details on specific countries or AFTH's international services, contact Sam Wojnilower at 610-642-7200 or SamW@afth.org.

Amid news of the continuing decline of intercountry adoption, Senator Mary Landrieu (Louisiana) announced in May a piece of legislation called Children in Families First (CHIFF), aimed toward ensuring "that U.S. foreign assistance puts into action the core American belief that all children have the right to grow up in a permanent, loving family." CHIFF is designed to "enhance U.S. Government action on behalf of children living without families." At a time when geopolitics sometimes contributes to the decreasing numbers of intercountry adoptions to the United States, it is hoped that the legislation Senator Landrieu will introduce can provide additional attention to the plight of orphaned children.

In country-specific news:

China: The U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou, which processes all U.S. immigrant visas in China, moved in July to the Zhujiang New Town area of Guangzhou. The new facility will house consular services for visa applicants and for U.S. citizens. Due to the move, the Consulate General expected it may cause some delays for several adoptive families.

Colombia: The Columbian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF), which is the Colombian Central Adoption Authority, has advised the U.S. State Department (DOS) and other "receiving" countries of a new policy. As of June, a temporary moratorium will be placed on the acceptance of new intercountry adoption applications from non-Colombian citizens interested in adopting a child up to 6 years old, unless a child has been characterized by ICBF as "difficult to adopt" due to having special needs. As explained by ICBF, there are currently more than 3,500 families worldwide waiting to adopt preschool age children from Colombia, resulting in processes that can last several years for such families. ICBF has indicated that the moratorium will not impact the status of these waiting families that

it has already "accepted" for adoption. ICBF hopes the moratorium will encourage prospective adoptive parents to consider applying to adopt one or more of the approximately 8,000 Colombian orphans who are over the age of 6, part of a sibling group of 3 or more children, and/or have special needs. As background, the number of adoptions from Colombia to the U.S. has decreased in each of the past 6 years, from 344 in 2006 to a total of 194 in 2012.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC):

The annual number of children adopted from the DRC to the U.S. had increased in each of the past 4 years, reaching a total of 240 in 2012. On May 2, 2013, however, the Congolese Ministry of Interior and Security, General Direction of Migration informed the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa that it had temporarily suspended issuance of exit permits to adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country with their adoptive parents. The reason given for this suspension was the "ongoing investigation of an adoption that may not have complied with Congolese law."

Ethiopia: Effective September 1, the Government of Ethiopia will require 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. The new criterion will not affect pending adoption cases filed with the Ethiopian courts before the end of August. 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, thereby ensuring an adoptee will be eligible for a U.S. immigrant visa prior to his/her adoption.

International Adoption News Cont'd

Ghana: As of May 20, the Government of Ghana has temporarily suspended processing of all adoption cases, including intercountry adoptions, pending Ghana's review of its current adoption procedures. All adoption cases which have not yet received final approval by the Ghanaian Department of Social Welfare are subject to this suspension. A total of 170 children were adopted from Ghana to the U.S. in 2012.

Guatemala: Since 2008, U.S. citizens have been unable to initiate an application to adopt an orphaned child from Guatemala. Over the course of these past 5 years, the number of "pipeline" (ie. pending) cases from prior to 2008 has decreased to 94, from an original figure of almost 5,000. Of the remaining cases, 56 are either pending investigation by the Guatemalan Procuraduria General de la Nacion (PGN) or USCIS, 32 are classified as "pending conclusion," and the other 6 are listed as "pending referral." Attached to the cases of these children are prospective adoptive parents whose adoption processes have grown protracted beyond what any of them could have years ago imagined. The PGN has again stated a goal of completing all investigations by August. It is hoped that this can be so, in order to move closer to providing resolution for the involved children and families.

India: On March 28, the Indian Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) informed DOS that it was resuming its acceptance of applications for intercountry adoptions from prospective adoptive parents in foreign countries, including the U.S., for the adoption of Indian children classified as having "special needs." This classification includes children with a physical or mental disability, children older than 5 years of age, and children with twin siblings. At that time, CARA indicated that it might resume accepting intercountry adoption applications in June for children not classified as having special needs. As of the writing of this article, however, this has not yet occurred. In order to clear a reported backlog of cases, on November 30, 2012 India had placed a temporary freeze on its acceptance of new applications from foreign Adoption Service Providers.

Russia: Despite ongoing meetings between DOS and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there remains

little hope for any near-term resumption of adoptions from Russia to the U.S. Russian orphans that had been referred to American families for adoption in 2012 but who had not yet been adopted in court in Russia by the end of 2012, have been put back onto Russia's adoption registry so that they may again become eligible for adoption by Russian citizens, or by citizens of nations currently working with Russia.

South Korea: On May 24, South Korea became a signatory to the Hague Convention. While this is a first step toward the country becoming a Convention member, adoptions between South Korea and the U.S. are not at this time subject to the requirements of the Hague Convention. According to the South Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, there is no set date when the Convention will enter into force with respect to South Korea.

Ukraine: In an April meeting in Washington, the Ukrainian Special Envoy on Children's Issues stated Ukraine's ongoing desire to assess the status and welfare of Ukrainian children adopted by American citizens. The Envoy expressed concern regarding missing post-adoption reports for approximately 60% of these children. In response, AFTH sent a notice to all its clients that adopted children from Ukraine, reminding them that they committed to submit reports to the Ukrainian Consulate annually for 3 years, and then once per every 3 years thereafter until adopted children reach the age of 18.





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CONGRATS TO AFTH ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Heidi Gonzalez on her graduation from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine with an MS in Organizational Development & Leadership.



Upcoming Conferences

Check out the AFTH booth at the below events. Visit www.afth.org for event details.

August 19th

Pride in the Park in Allentown, PA

September 6th & 7th

Connecticut Women's Expo in Hartford, CT

September 21st & 22nd

Southern CT Women's Expo in Bridgeport, CT

October 22nd - AFTH Adoption Conference

Adoption in a Changing World: Tools for Professional & Families in Middletown, CT

November 2nd

Resolve of New England in Marlborough, MA

November 9th

CPFA NJ: Let's Talk Adoption Conference in Piscataway, NJ

November 24th

APC's Adoption Conference in Brooklyn, NY