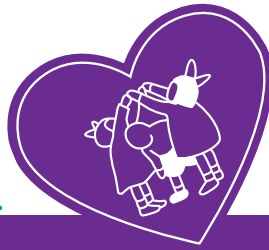


Adoption News



A Quarterly Newsletter from

Adoptions From The Heart

Fall 2012

National Adoption Month: Living in the “Triad”

November is National Adoption Month, a time to raise awareness about the adoption of children as well as the women who have chosen adoption for their children. A birthmother is not brave; she is not strong or tough. She is simply a mother—mothers by instinct protect and love their children. She had the most difficult decision to make, and in order to best protect and love her child; her decision was to place him in the arms of another family.

The decision was not one that she had dreamed of making since she was a little girl. She had not “planned” for this to happen. But it did. And she had to choose. She is a mother who put her child’s life before her own.

This month, it is our hope that the community will reflect on the choices these women made—that birthmothers will find support and understanding from those who otherwise may not have given it freely. But also, we hope to support our children, the adoptees who may have a childhood that is a little more unique than some.

The “adoption triad” describes the one-of-a-kind connection between three parties in an adoption—birth parents, adoptive family, and child. For people who do not have a direct link to adoption, the lifestyle of those involved in the “triad” can be incomprehensible. Those who simply don’t understand might ask a lot of questions because the “triad” relationship is so intimate and rare.

“What do you mean you have two Mommies?” “You are traveling across the country to visit who?” “How can you not know your family history, your heritage?” “You have a son but he lives with another family?” “Your child’s birth family—what’s that?”

This November get involved in spreading awareness about what it’s like to be a part of the “adoption triad”. Join one of our fundraising projects and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, or Wordpress for discussions, contests, and ways you can get involved. Let’s celebrate adoption, clear up some stereotypes and spread knowledge and awareness together!

Getting involved starts with *turning the page* to learn about AFTH’s special projects during National Adoption Month.

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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

Paper Heart Project

November 1st – 30th

Local small businesses will be showing their support for National Adoption Month and Adoptions From The Heart by joining in our Paper Heart Project this November.



How Can You Help?

For \$1 donation per heart, paper hearts will be displayed to spread adoption awareness. You can join the project by visiting supporting businesses, any of our office locations, or by purchasing a heart online in the AFTH store. For an updated list of participating businesses or to purchase a Paper Heart online, please visit us at www.afth.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

All proceeds raised by the Paper Heart Project will go to AFTH's Birthmother Fund which supports women in need who have chosen to place their child for adoption. This includes assistance in their education, counseling, medical care and guidance, living essentials, or other special needs.

Gift Card Drive

DEADLINE: November 20th

Just before the holiday season, AFTH identifies several birthmothers, parenting other children at home, as being in need of extra financial assistance. AFTH donates gift cards for groceries, clothing and toys for the children during the holidays. For many, this is the only way they can do something special for their children. Last year we were able to help 39 birthparents and 87 children. This year, with your support, we hope to help even more families!



How Can You Help?

AFTH will graciously be accepting Target, Acme, Walmart, and Visa gift cards ranging from \$25-\$200. Without these gift card donations, many of the birth mothers would not be able to provide a special meal, warm clothes, and a few presents for their children during the holiday season. If you or your company would like to make a monetary or gift card donation, you can send gift cards or checks for the "Gift Card Drive" to Adoptions From The Heart at 30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood, PA 19096. All donations are tax deductible.

2013 Building Beautiful Families Calendar

The 2013 calendars featuring children adopted through AFTH are now available for sale. All proceeds benefit the AFTH Birthmother Fund. See the first page of the newsletter insert for details. Already sold 250 copies - get yours today by ordering online at www.afth.org or mailing in the form found in the newsletter insert. They make great gifts AND support adoption!

Questions? Contact Ali at AlexandraP@afth.org or by calling 610-642-7200.

AFTH Website Has New Design

AFTH's website has had a face lift and looks brand new. In addition to the favorite tools that were on the old website including waiting family profiles and online meeting registration, additional resources for prospective adoptive parents, pregnant women, expecting fathers, and parents of those facing unplanned pregnancies have been added to the site. So take a moment to check out the new look at www.afth.org.

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

Some families who have adopted domestically in 2012 will not finalize before the end of the year which means that their child has not officially been issued a Social Security Number yet. So how do these families file taxes?

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



Families Seeking a Caucasian, Asian, or Hispanic Child
Families below only represent some of the available families. For a full list of families please contact us: 800-355-5500

Photo	Name	Number
	Dave & Suzanne We've been married for almost 4 years -- 5 years after Dave proposed to "Bless The Broken Road" by Rascal Flatts. It was the "broken road" of starting our family on our own and through fertility treatments, with no success, that led us to adoption. We believe everything happens for a reason and are so blessed that our paths have crossed today.	2368
	Larry & Shelli We're so excited to introduce ourselves to you. We hope our profile paints a picture for you of our deep desire and commitment to share our lives with a child. Adoption has touched us in many ways. Although this is our first time adopting (and this child will be our first), we have friends and family who are adopted or who have adopted.	2369
	Cheryl & Candy We would love for you to read our profile and learn a little about us! We can only imagine that you have many tough decisions ahead of you. It takes an incredibly brave and unselfish person to realize when a child would be best with another family. If you choose adoption, we hope that you will be at peace knowing your child is thriving and that you made the right decision.	2371
	Bill & Lisa We are Bill and Lisa, and we are so happy you are taking the time to learn more about us. We have been married for 9 years, and each of those years has been filled with laughter and love. We are surrounded by our extended family and friends, and we would love to share this happiness, love and laughter with a child.	2364
	Renee & Duane Here we are! You are taking the incredibly important step for your child's future reading these profiles. And, we are holding our breath, hoping someone believes that we would be the perfect couple to raise their child. Somehow, we ended up here together. And, together we can make it work!	4199

Info for Family Members
Your daughter or loved one is pregnant. What now?
When your child tells you he or she is experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, you have some decisions to make of your own. How are you going to support them? We understand this is a difficult time for both you and your child. We are here to provide support and information to help everyone focus on what they think is best for the baby.
Your child may feel scared and alone. Assure your child that you will be supportive and that you are there to listen.
If your daughter is pregnant, she will need to find a doctor to begin receiving medical care. Check and see if her prenatal care and delivery are covered under insurance. If not, there are other programs she may qualify for through local pregnancy centers or through Medicaid. We can help contact you.
Do not hesitate to contact our agency with any questions or concerns regarding the pregnancy or the adoption process. If your daughter is considering adoption, it is important that she make this decision on her own, yet with support, guidance and education on her options.
Suggestions when talking to Your Child about Adoption:
If your child is considering adoption for their baby, it is important to first gather information and to learn how the adoption process works. Know that the adoption plan is personal -- no adoption plan is the same. Your child can choose what is best for the baby including the family as well as the openness level for continued contact if they choose.
** Be kind, the mother can be wonderful.*

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

**Also Accepting
Online Donations:
www.afth.org**

How would you like your donation to be used?

Use my gift to help birth mothers in the U.S. Use my gift where it's needed most.

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

My employer has a matching gift program. Enclosed is the form.

Adoptions From The Heart is a registered, charitable organization. In accordance with PA law, we are required to advise you that a copy of our official registration and financial information may be obtained from either the PA Department of State by calling, toll-free within PA, (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.

Five Natural Hair Tips for New Parents



This article comes from Rory, adoptive mother and Chocolate Hair, Vanilla Hair blog author. Find Rory's blog and additional resources at: www.chocolatehairvanillacare.com

If you are a new parent, via adoption, and you're not sure what to do when it comes to hair, this article is for you. Not all children find their forever families at birth, so we not only address concerns that people might have with babies, but also the older children that come to us later in their young lives.

1. It Will Take Time, But You Can Do It

Although our daughter came home at 6 days old, we are well aware that not everyone gets to start caring for natural hair from birth. If you have been blessed with a baby, the natural hair care journey will be a learning experience for both of you, one that will be filled with much change and lots of trial-and-error. As your baby grows, you may encounter cradle cap, bald spots, a changing curl pattern, and/or changing texture. It's all totally normal and there really is no need to worry about "messing things up" at so young an age. Baby hair requires little maintenance and the less you fuss over it during the first year, the more likely it will grow. Keep things simple and enjoy that time as it will pass quickly.

By the time your child gets older, you will already have a foundational understanding of his or her hair when it comes to what it needs. You'll notice changes in how it feels and how it responds (or doesn't respond) to new products. You'll be at a good place to start establishing a styling routine and will have plenty of time to work up to more complicated hairstyles (if that's your goal). You can do it, just know that there will be plenty of time to learn as your child grows.

With older children, the dynamic of the journey will be different. You may be trying to solve past issues (like malnutrition, neglect, or transitioning from previous chemical treatments). Depending on the age of your child, it's always a great idea to get them involved; if your child is old enough to research with you, it's a great way to bond over your mutual learning experience. And as much as the immediacy of "fixing" a problem might

be pushing you to find a solution fast, the best path is to learn about your child's hair needs. With as much as we talk about hair here, and as closely as it is related to self-esteem, it's really important to keep hair in perspective when it comes to the overall well-being of your child. Just as you don't know whether or not your new child enjoys certain foods upon first meeting them, the same is true of hair; you're not going to know which products your child's hair likes until you get to know it a little better. And that will take time and patience.

2. Start with Loving the Unique Beauty of Natural Hair



How you approach your child's curls will have a direct affect on how they learn view their own hair. If you don't like them, if you find them difficult or frustrating, that angst can easily be passed on to your child. It's so much more helpful to learn to love curls in all of their chaos. I wrote an article about how we culturally view curls that will hopefully help shed some light on our relationship with them. We need to remember that when we use words like "tame," "control," or "behave" when talking about hair, we are in essence teaching our children that something is inherently wrong with the natural state of their hair. Our choice of words will definitely influence how our children will learn to view their curls and it's important to keep that in mind when approaching hair care.

3. Reject the Cultural Bias Against Curly Hair

It is just plain easier to buy products for straight hair than it is for curly hair because the industry caters to a cultural preference for straight hair. Although things

Cont'd on Next Page...

have changed dramatically since we first brought Boo home almost 5 years ago, it will really depend on where you live as to what you'll be able to find locally. Mainstream media has taken a slight glance toward natural hair by including more naturally curly children in ads. But when we go to find products that are specifically made for natural hair, they may be few and far between. That's why it's so important to understand not only the basic healthy hair steps you can take for natural hair care, but also what things like oils and butters are and how to use them. Believe it or not, you can actually use everyday, easily found oils for hair care. Further, if you know about how protein and moisture work together about the porosity of your child's hair if you're learning protective styles are teaching them to sleep with a sleep cap and/or satin pillow case you're on the right track. You will soon discover that even though the industry doesn't cater to curly hair, you can manage just fine. You can, in fact, care for hair without being sucked in to buying expensive, brand-name products, and it's much more easily done when those expensive products aren't even available!

4. Focus on What's Really Important

Hair is just one small aspect of your whole child's being. Hair and scalp health are what's really important, length, curl definition hairstyles, not so much. If you're bringing an older child home from another country, consider having his or her hair put into a protective style while in their birth country, that way you can spend the first several weeks together bonding instead of worrying about hair. I know that in many transracial adoptive families we struggle with making sure that our children have an "acceptable" appearance when out and about, but the truth is most people can tell healthy hair over non-healthy hair. Yes, you may get more comments if your child is rocking his or her afro than you would if they had some twists, but if your

child's hair is clean, healthy, and moisturized that's all that really matters. Your relationship with your kids comes first; how they look to everyone else is only as important as it affects their self-esteem. And if it's not affecting their self-esteem, then it's not an emergency. Like I mentioned above, time, patience, and a realistic expectation of what can and cannot be achieved immediately will help keep hair in perspective.

5. It's Okay to Ask for Help



People will judge you more for *not* asking for help if you really need it. If you just gave birth and were having problems breastfeeding, you'd ask for help right? If you didn't

know how to change a diaper, you'd have someone show you. Get connected. Get online. Research. Visit www.chocolatehairvanillacare.com and connect to a community of amazing people who will answer questions. Caring for the unique hair and skin needs of your child may require information that is not in your current mental database. If it's not there, find it. If you don't have people locally within your community who are immediately accessible, definitely ask online. And although you may find the answers here, I still encourage you to find people in your town with whom you can connect. This is really one of those "it takes a village" moments. It doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. It means you care enough about your child to do whatever is necessary to meet his or her needs. And that, right there, makes you a great parent.

Pittsburgh Office Idlewild Picnic Recap

The day at Idlewild was amazing. We had about 300 people attend this year's event. The weather was fabulous with just a little bit of rain to end the day. The soak zone was quite popular with many of our families. It was wonderful to see the families who come year after year as well as new families who joined us for the very first time. We even had several families hosting reunions with their children's birth mothers. It was a great day filled with fun and we hope to see everyone again next year!

AFTH Adoptive Parents & Community Organizations Show Support for the AFTH Birthmother Fund

Thank you to all the families and adoption advocates who have made donations to the AFTH Birthmother Fund this past year including those who have already participated in our most recent annual appeal. For details on how donations like yours have benefitted women in need over the past year, go to www.afth.org and read the front page article of the Summer 2012 AFTH Newsletter. Making a donation anytime of the year is as simple as clicking on the donate button on the AFTH webpage or by mailing the form on page 3 to AFTH's main office.

Steelers Vs. Eagles Ticket Raffle



AFTH would like to say a special thank you to James McMannes, an adoptive father from Virginia, for generously donating the tickets and organizing a fabulous ticket raffle and for his continued support to the agency and AFTH birthmothers. Together, we raised almost \$700 for the agency's Birthmother Fund!

And the winner is....

Congratulations to our raffle winner, Thomas, an adoptive father of two in New Jersey! Thomas won three tickets to the Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Philadelphia Eagles game on October 7th at Heinz Stadium in Pittsburgh, PA. His tickets, AFTH t-shirts, and Steelers gear are on their way! Thank you to everyone who made a donation for a chance to win the tickets.

AFTH Family Daughter's 1st Birthday Party Supports Birthmother Fund

Pam and Mike Powers decided to begin a tradition of giving back on their daughter Emma's first birthday and they generously selected the AFTH Birthmother Fund as the recipient this year. In lieu of gifts, they asked their guests to bring gift cards to go to the AFTH Birthmother Fund to assist women in need of a help providing for basic needs such as food and clothing. AFTH received 5 gift cards totaling \$170 as well as a large monetary donation for the AFTH Birthmother Fund. A very heartfelt thank you goes out to the Powers family and their family members and friends who generously gave donations in honor of Emma's first birthday.



The Fraternal Order of Eagles, Women's Auxiliary in Bethlehem Honors AFTH with a \$975 Grant Given to the Agency's Birthmother Fund



The Fraternal Order of Eagles # 284, Women's Auxiliary in Bethlehem was awarded two grants this year to local organizations making a difference in the community. Karen Friedman of the Allentown Office is a member of the organization and was asked about AFTH's services and needs. The Women's Auxiliary loved what the agency stood for and how we help women in need as well as create families and named AFTH as the newest grant recipient.

Our very own Karen Friedman was honored to be presented with the check at the organization's September meeting. AFTH is grateful to have been considered for and awarded this grant for the hard work we are doing within the local community. The grant will stretch a long way to help women in need who are choosing to make an adoption plan for their babies.

If you have a fundraiser that you would like to host in support of AFTH and in celebration of adoption, please contact Ali at AlexandraP@afth.org or by calling 610-642-7200.

Building Beautiful Families 2013 Calendar

CALENDARS SELL QUICKLY...
ORDER YOURS TODAY.

Available for Purchase at
AFTH Online Store.

Hurry and order your copies today as they are flying off the shelves. Help us have a record breaking year of calendar sales benefitting the Birthmother Fund. **Copy this form** for friends, family, church, co-workers, and spread the word in support of a great cause!

The calendars make wonderful gifts for family and friends. It is truly a gift that keeps on giving as **all the proceeds go towards the AFTH Birthmother Fund.** The fund provides financial assistance to women who are making an adoption plan and are struggling to provide for their basic needs during pregnancy - food, shelter, clothing, heat, etc.

The article "How Your Change Lives Through the AFTH Birthmother Fund" in the AFTH Summer Newsletter highlighted some of the specific ways the Birthmother Fund was used over the past year.

So spread the word and encourage others to support this fundraiser because each year there are **more and more women** who are struggling to make ends meet on so very little and could use a little financial assistance.

CALENDARS PRICES:

Purchased at an AFTH office - \$12.00
Orders Being Mailed - \$13.50



Building Beautiful Families **2013 Calendar**

COMPLETE FORM AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT

Name: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

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

_____ # of Calendars x \$12.00 (PICK UP at Office)

which office: _____

= \$ _____ **Total Enclosed**

Make Checks Payable to:
Adoptions From The Heart

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

Hints & Tips for a Safe Costume

With Halloween coming, your children are no doubt excited by the prospect of dressing up as their favorite animal, superhero, or character. Keep these safety tips and precautions in mind for costumes:

- Flame retardant materials are a must. Check the label on any costume you buy from a store. If you're making your child's outfit, use only synthetic, flame-retardant fabrics.
- Try costumes before the big night to allow time to make any necessary alterations. You want the costume to be loose enough for your children to wear a sweater on a chilly night, but not so baggy that they'll trip, or snag an arm or leg. Be careful of capes that might drag or trip a child.
- Don't blend into the dark. A bright, colorful costume is best, but if your child is determined to dress as Batman or the Grim Reaper, a few strips of reflective tape will help him or her show up more effectively in streetlights and car headlights.
- Avoid bulky masks. Makeup is usually better than a mask. Masks that are difficult to remove quickly can be hazardous in an emergency. If your child insists on a mask, make sure the ear, nose, and mouth openings are wide enough for him or her to see and breathe easily.
- Wear comfortable shoes. You don't want your little princess stumbling over high heels. Children walking door to door (accompanied by you or another adult, of course) should wear sneakers or some other reasonable footwear.



Other Safety Tips...

- If you set jack-o-lanterns out on your porch, make sure that they are far enough away from where children will be walking so that a costume will not catch on fire.
- Make sure that if your child is carrying a prop, such as a fake scythe or knife, that the ends are smooth and it is flexible enough not to cause injury if your child falls on it.
- Don't let small children carve pumpkins. You can let them scoop out the seeds and draw a face on the pumpkin, but an adult should do the carving.
- Have a fun, spooky dinner before you take your kids trick-or-treating—that way they won't eat as much of the candy they get later.
- Make sure you review basic safety rules with your kids before they set out, remind them not to talk to strangers, to look both ways before crossing a street or to only cross when they have a walk sign.
- Parents should always accompany younger children, even if they are just going next door.
- Parents should know the route their children plan to take if they will not be accompanied by an adult and make sure you give your child a specific time to check in or to be home.

Work Out Your Funny Bone
with These Jokes!

Why was the skeleton afraid
to cross the road?

He had no guts.

How do witches keep their
hair in place when they fly?

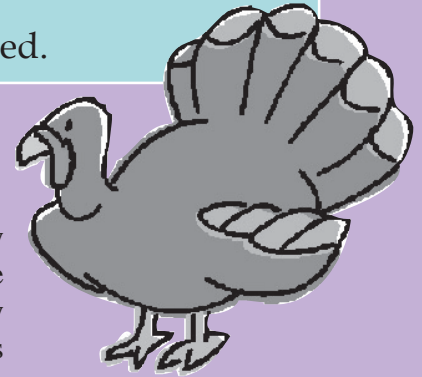
With scare spray.

What is Dracula's favorite
kind of coffee?

Decoffinated.



Who is not hungry at Thanksgiving?
The turkey –
he's already stuffed.



Staying Safe on Thanksgiving

When you fire up the oven to roast your Thanksgiving turkey, you're probably not thinking about tragedy. But home fires are the most common disaster in the United States, according to the American Red Cross—and one is reported every 79 seconds. Cooking is the leading cause of those fires, and Thanksgiving Day is the unfortunate host of about 4,000 fires each year. Here are some safety tips to keep your Thanksgiving fire-free:

- Stay in the kitchen and keep watch while you are cooking.
- Use a timer if you have something in the oven, or are boiling or simmering something on the stove.
- Don't wear loose sleeves or clothing when cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch on fire—pot holders, oven mitts—away from your stove top or oven.
- Turkey fryers are extremely dangerous, and most safety organizations do not recommend their use.
- Make sure you have a smoke alarm installed with working batteries. Push the button to check that it's working every month and install new batteries at least once a year.
- After your guests leave, do a home safety check to make sure that all candles and cigarettes are extinguished.

Thanksgiving Tale: No Pie, But Lots of Other Tasty Food

The first Thanksgiving didn't feature pies or cakes, because the Plymouth pilgrims had no ovens and a limited supply of sugar. But it may have included cranberries, which Native Americans used in a variety of foods (including pemmican, made from berries, dried venison, and melted fat) as well as for medicinal purposes.



So what was the “original” Thanksgiving really like? Although harvest feasts were common in what became known as the Commonwealth of Virginia throughout the 17th century, the Thanksgiving most Americans probably think of was held at the Plymouth Plantation in November 1621.

William Bradford, the governor of the plantation, organized a feast for colonists and their neighbors, the Wampanoag tribe, to celebrate a successful harvest. The harvest had thrived thanks in part to Squanto, a native of the Patuxet tribe who had learned English as a slave before returning to his native land. Squanto taught the pilgrims how to grow corn, catch eels and fish, and avoid poisonous plants in the surrounding forest, as well as helping them to forge a relationship with the Wampanoag and its chief, Massasoit.

This first Thanksgiving lasted three days, and probably did feature wild turkey as well as venison supplied by the Wampanoag—but no football.

AFTH Holiday Events & Activities

ALLENTOWN OFFICE

Holiday Cookie Exchange Party

The Allentown Office will be hosting their annual Holiday Cookie Exchange on December 1st. There will be plenty of activities and crafts for the children. Please bring a batch of your favorite cookies to share. We look forward to seeing everyone again this year!

Saturday, December 1st,

Time & Location: to be determined

RSVP by November 23rd by calling 610-432-2384 or emailing TammyC@afth.org



CENTRAL PA OFFICE

Holiday Party

Join us for a holiday celebration with staff and other AFTH families. Enjoy fun activities for all the children! In honor of the season of giving, each family is asked to bring a item to donate to the Water Street Mission, the only year-round emergency shelter in Lancaster, PA. Some of the highly needed items: diapers (size 4,5, and 6), baby wipes, alarm clocks, pajamas for women (new or gently used), twin bed sheets, blankets, toiletries, cereal, canned fruit, 5 lb bags of sugar, coffee, and dry pasta. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Thursday, December 6th from 5:00-8:00pm

Location: Central PA AFTH Office in Lancaster

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

CHERRY HILL OFFICE

Holiday Open House

Meet and greet other AFTH families and join AFTH staff for punch, holiday cookies, crafts and activities for the children and cheer to celebrate the holiday season.

Thursday, December 6th from 6:00-8:00pm

Location: Cherry Hill AFTH Office

RSVP by November 30th by calling 856-665-5655 or emailing TheresaG@afth.org



Wynnewood

Holiday Party

Our holiday party is a chance for all present and past families to join in celebrating the holiday season with the Wynnewood staff. This will be a great time to meet new people and for the children to enjoy games and arts and crafts. Please bring a snack to share with others.



Monday, December 3rd from 6:30-8:30pm

Location: Wynnewood Office

RSVP by November 26th by calling 610-642-7200 or emailing AshleyK@afth.org

CONNECTICUT OFFICE

Holiday Party

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

Cost Per Person:

\$17.50/person

Free - children under 2 years



Saturday, December 1st from 11am - 2pm

Location: Hilton Garden Inn in Glastonbury, CT

RSVP by November 27th - email BrendaS@afth.org or call 860-657-2626 or send payment to the CT Office.

VIRGINIA OFFICE

Holiday Party

Annual Virginia Holiday party with Santa and games for the children. Bring a dish to share (pot luck) and a token non-perishable item -or- two- for the church pantry. Adoptive families, if you would like to invite your child's birthparents, please send a letter of invitation to be forwarded along.

Saturday, December 8th from Noon - 2pm

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Williamsburg

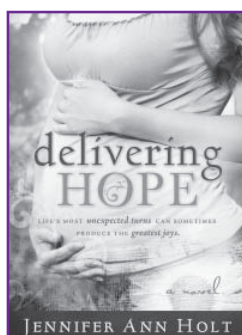
RSVP by December 5th by calling 757-361-0008 or emailing NicoleF@afth.org

Book Reviews



Infertility and Adoption: A Husband and Father's Perspective by Roy Sokol - This short read gives great insight into a man's perspective of the infertility journey. Roy Sokol describes his frustration in watching his wife go through the painful procedures, the helplessness of not knowing how to "fix" the problem, and trying to balance life and the all consuming task of starting their family. Once they decided on adoption, Sokol shares his journey including the ups and downs and ultimately the joy of adopting from Russia. Amazon.com price \$9.35 or Kindle Edition \$4.62

Adoption: Choosing It, Living It, Loving It - Straight Answers to Heartfelt Questions by Dr. Ray Guarendo - Relying on his experiences raising ten adopted children, Guarendo has written a book that asks some of the most common adoption questions. Each chapter is written in question and answer format that offers practical advice on topics such as: talking to your children about adoption, adoption self-image, why choose adoption, and much more. This is an easy read and great book to share with families members to help them understand adoption. Amazon.com price \$10.87, Kindle Edition \$9.99



Delivering Hope by Jennifer Ann Holt - In this book, Holt tells the story of a woman struggling with infertility and a high school teenager who finds herself pregnant, showing both sides of the adoption journey through each character's eyes. It is well written and insightful and helps the reader see that there are multiple sides to every adoption story. Amazon.com price \$11.69 (paperback), Kindle Edition \$3.82

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



Recent Legislation



TAX CREDIT - Senators Landrieu (D-LA), Blunt (R-MO), Hutchison (R-TX) and Cardin (D-MD) introduced S3616, the companion bill to HR4373, the Making Adoption Affordable Act, on Sept. 21. The bill would increase the tax credit to \$13,170 and make it permanent and refundable, beginning in tax year 2012. Without new legislation, the current \$12,650 credit will not be refundable for 2012 and will expire at year-end; in 2013, only those adopting children with special needs would be eligible for \$6,000 in qualifying expenses. According to the North American Council on Adoptable Children, the adoption tax credit is likely to be included in a tax credit package Congress will take up after the November election, but it is uncertain whether Congress will include the refundability provision. To support this effort, take just a moment to call your Senators and Representative and urge them to co-sponsor the Making Adoption Affordable Act. Enter your zip code to find your Senators' names here: <http://1.usa.gov/3UAs>, and Representatives here: <http://1.usa.gov/prsjA1>.

OBSTETRICIANS/GYNECOLOGISTS GET NEW ETHICS GUIDELINES ON ADOPTION
The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists' Committee on Ethics has issued updated guidelines for obstetricians and gynecologists who may be involved with adoptions. The publication discusses medical professionals' roles. Guidelines cover being aware of local adoption resources, providing accurate information free of personal bias/opinions, and avoiding becoming a broker in the adoption process. Read the full opinion: http://www.acog.org/Resources_And_Publications/Committee_Opinions/Committee_on_Ethics/Adoption

AFTH Program Updates



DOMESTIC PROGRAMS - As we begin to prepare for the upcoming holiday season, we hope many of our AFTH families will join us in celebration at our local office holiday parties. For details on the holiday parties, [see newsletter insert](#).

As many of you may know, November is National Adoption Month and AFTH is hosting some unique projects in honor of this special month celebrating adoption. Please see the article on [page 2](#) for details and how you can join in supporting AFTH's National Adoption Month Campaign.

During the first two months of our 2012-2013 fiscal year, AFTH has placed 30 infants through our Domestic Adoption Program. Social workers in each branch office promote the agency within the local community through outreach to spread awareness about AFTH's free services to pregnant women considering making an adoption plan for their infants. AFTH staff continues to work diligently to provide pregnant women with all the services and support they need as well as continuing to provide counseling, education, and pre and post placement services to our adoptive parents.

In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, Adoptions From The Heart has placed a total of 170 infants in adoptive homes which was an increase in 9 placements from the previous fiscal year!

AFTH is pleased to say that the agency averages a high percentage of waiting families who are placed with babies each month. In July, 18% of the families in the book were placed and an even higher percentage of 22% of waiting families in the book were placed in August. As an agency, AFTH does not give an average wait time to prospective adoptive parents because each situation is unique and often depends on the situations we are seeing and the openness of the parents key. However we are happy to say that as of the beginning of September, of all of the families in the books awaiting placement, only 12 families have been waiting for more than 1 year and only 4 of which have been waiting more than 18 months. Even more specifically, of those families open to being placed with children of African-American heritage, not one

family has been waiting more than 1 year and only 4 families have been waiting for more than 6 months.

The agency is excited to make a special announcement! AFTH is expanding its services and is now accepting couples and singles from anywhere in the United States into our growing Domestic Adoption Program. We are thrilled to be able to expand this program nationwide.

If you or someone you know would like to apply for our Domestic Program and do not live in our service area (PA, NJ, DE, VA, CT, or NY), the first step is to contact AFTH either by calling 800-355-5500 or emailing adoption@afth.org. We also would encourage you to register for one of our free monthly online webinars to learn more about our agency's Domestic Adoption Program. Visit our calendar of events at www.afth.org to register. The next step would be to have a home study completed by an agency licensed in the state where you reside. Once your home study is complete, AFTH will provide education regarding open adoption and help you create your profile book (pictures and letters of your family that is presented to the pregnant woman). Once you enter the books, we will continue to assist you in being match with an expecting mother.

Upcoming Conferences

Visit the AFTH booth at the following events. For details on these events, visit our [online calendar of events at www.afth.org](http://www.afth.org).

October 20th

Philly Family Pride in Glenside, PA

October 25th

Girl's Night Out in Wallingford, CT

November 3rd

CPFA Conference in Piscataway, NJ
Paths to Parenthood in Malborough, MA

November 21st

APC Conference in Brooklyn, NY



HEARTBEATS - AFTH continues to host free online webinars every other month for anyone interested in learning more about our *Surrogacy in India Program*. The next webinar is scheduled for Monday, November 12 at 7:00pm. To register for this webinar, visit our online calendar of events at www.afth.org or contact Roberta Evantash at (610) 642-7200 or RobertaE@afth.org with any questions you may have regarding this program.

Families continue to show interest in the *Heartbeats Embryo Placement Assistance Program*, with several couples 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 are approximately 1-2 months.

The next free informational webinar for the Embryo Placement Assistance Program is scheduled for 6pm on November 29. This webinar is a great way to learn about the program and to ask any questions you may have regarding the process.

The next Embryo Education Series will be offered in January and February. These in-depth classes address talking with children about embryo placement, potential contact with genetic relatives, and many other related topics unique to embryo placement.

Please visit AFTH's online calendar at www.afth.org to register for any of the above meetings. Any questions about AFTH's embryo placement services can be directed to Sam Wojnilower at SamW@afth.org or 610-642-7200.



AFTH Support Groups

CENTRAL PA

Small, informal gathering for birthparents to come together, chat, and get to know each other while sharing their stories and experiences.

Wednesday, November 7th from 6:00-8:00pm

Call (717) 399-7766 or email AmandaK@afth.org by November 2nd to Register.

VIRGINIA

Adoptive parent support groups bring AFTH waiting families together.

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

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.

Wednesday, November 14th from 6:30-8:30pm

Call (856) 665-5655 or email TheresaG@afth.org by November 9th to register.

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

Call 856-665-5655 or Email TheresaG@afth.org

DELAWARE

Support groups bring AFTH waiting families together.

Call 302-658-8883 for information.

WYNNEWOOD

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

Email AshleyK@afth.org for upcoming dates

CONNECTICUT

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

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

ALLENTOWN

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

Saturday, October 27th from 11:00am-1:00pm

Call (610) 432-2384 or email TammyC@afth.org by October 19th to register.

International Adoption News



China: For more than two decades Chinese orphans under State care have been eligible for adoption, including intercountry adoption. In July, the China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA)

announced that it was drawing up regulations that may additionally promote the adoption, both domestic and intercountry, of what it deems "Children in Plight." This term refers to orphaned or abandoned children who are not under State care, but who cannot receive basic care from their parents or relatives. Research conducted by China's Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2009 found there were at that time more than 600,000 Chinese children who had lost their parents but lived outside of formal State care. Via pilot programs, approximately 100 Children in Plight have been adopted to date by foreign families.

Haiti: The Haitian government, which ratified the Hague Convention in June of 2012, has announced new administrative adoption procedures, scheduled to take effect on October 1, 2012. These procedures establish criteria for accreditation of foreign adoption agencies wishing to provide adoption services in Haiti. Indications are that Haiti will limit the number of agencies it will accredit. At the time of writing the article, adoptions from Haiti to the U.S. are not yet governed by the Hague Convention. The Haitian government has delayed its taking of final steps to allow for the Hague Treaty to enter in force, as it continues to develop adoption processes that would hopefully allow for the continuation of intercountry adoption between Haiti and the U.S. once Haiti becomes a full member of the Convention.

In the meantime, Haiti's adoption authority, l'Institut du Bien Etre Social et de Recherches (IBESR), lifted the suspension of processing of new adoption cases, and resumed accepting dossiers from foreign families as of August 16, 2012. IBESR also has informed the U.S. Government that it will continue to process adoption cases submitted prior to May 7, 2012 under pre-existing adoption procedures, and that it would review new cases submitted through September 15, 2012 to determine if they can be processed under the old procedures.

Kazakhstan: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan informed the U.S. Embassy in Astana on August 9, 2012 that Kazakhstan was again suspending intercountry adoptions to the United States. The Ministry stated that this suspension involved a pause in adoption referrals, but did not affect Kazakhstan's ongoing process to authorize U.S. adoption service providers (ASP's). As background, it had been only three months earlier that the Kazakhstan Ministry of Education and Science had confirmed approval of 2 U.S. ASP's to process intercountry adoptions, which had effectively lifted a 2 year suspension of applications for adoption from American families.

Romania: The Romanian Office for Adoptions has reported to the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest that it will begin accepting transmission of intercountry adoption documents and procedures from ASP's that would like to work on behalf of U.S. prospective adoptive parents. In support of such applications, Romania published a list of required documents for interested ASP's to submit. It remains the case, however, that Romania's new adoption law only allows for intercountry adoption of Romanian children by relatives within the fourth degree of kinship, the spouse of the child's biological parent, and Romanian citizens habitually resident abroad.

Russia: The bilateral adoption agreement signed between the Russian and U.S. governments in 2011 was approved by the Russian State Duma on July 10, 2012, and by the Russian Federation Council on July 18, 2012. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the Agreement into law on July 28, 2012. The U.S. and Russia are now establishing procedures to implement the Agreement. Once this step is completed, the Agreement will enter into force between the two nations. After that point, American ASP's would be able to apply to the Russia Ministry of Education for accreditation to provide services to families seeking to adopt Russian orphans.

While procedures in regard to the Agreement have yet to be finalized, it is expected that American families seeking to adopt from Russia will now be required to obtain additional pre-adoption training, totaling as much as 80 hours. It remains unclear at this time how

International Adoption News Cont'd

many of these required hours will need to be completed in-person, and how many hours will be able to be fulfilled via “distance” learning, reading, and otherwise.

In the meantime, adoptions from Russia to the United States do continue to occur according to existing procedures.

Adoptions From The Heart provides Home Studies, Education, Post-Adoption/Placement Reports, and other assistance in support of international adoptions. Contact Sam Wojnilower at 610-642-7200 or SamW@afth.org with any questions about the agency's international adoption services.

AFTH Welcomes Three New Board Members

Adoptions From The Heart is pleased to welcome three new board members:

Lisa O'Mahony, M.D. is a board certified pediatrician at Broomall Pediatric Associates. She has 27 years of experience and graduated from the Medical College of Pennsylvania. Her special interests are international and domestic adoption, adolescent medicine and eating disorders. Lisa has worked with AFTH adoptive families for many years.

Thom Rossi is an adopted parent of two children from AFTH. He works for Project Management Institute as their Manager in Emerging Technologies and his experience is in technology trends and usage, mobile devices and applications and research. He is married and his hobbies include strategy games, computers and research.

Dan Hall joins us with a very young adopted son from our CT office. Dan works for LevLane Advertising as the Media Director. He has expertise in marketing and advertising, especially in media planning and placement. He is married and his hobbies include surfing, photography and traveling.

The agency is still looking for an attorney, preferably one familiar with family law, to join the board. Please contact Maxine Chalker at MaxineC@afth.org with your interest.



Congratulations to Families Who Have Recently Adopted!

Sons

April
John & Deborah
Eric & Kristina
Malcolm & Taney
Jill
John & Jean Marie
Troy & Jacqueline
Vernon & Ruth
Samuel & Dolores
Jambu & Penny
Michael & Sally
Gregory & Donelle
William & Robin
Joseph & Rose Marie
Larry & Stephanie
Owen & Kimberly
Guy & Elizabeth
Garry & Jodie
David & Keta
Jeremy & Tara
Eric & Michelle
John & Barbara
John & Vicki Lynn

Daughters

James & Elizabeth
Robert & Viola
Stephen & Paul
Daniel & Jackie
Thomas & Kathryn
William & Karen
Alexander & Beatrix
Ravi & Samuel
Derek & Jennifer
John & Heather
Christopher & Amanda
James & Dennika
George & Cathy
Thomas & Shauna
Stephanie
Robert & Katherine
John & Jason
Jason & Maureen
Jennifer





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FREE ONLINE WEBINARS

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

DOMESTIC INFANT ADOPTION

NOVEMBER 6TH AT 7PM

DECEMBER 4TH AT 7PM

SURROGACY IN INDIA

NOVEMBER 12 AT 7PM

EMBRYO PLACEMENT PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 29TH AT 6PM

Registration Required

Visit the Calendar of Events at www.afth.org

Find AFTH On...

Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest,
Google+ and WordPress

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@yahoo.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@yahoo.com