

Adoption News

A Newsletter from:

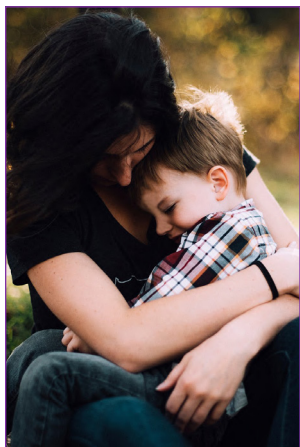
Adoptions From The Heart



Considering A Non-Infant Adoption Placement

There are many different reasons why someone who is parenting or taking care of a child might consider exploring a permanent option like adoption. There can often be shame or embarrassment felt for needing to even consider a permanent option like adoption, however, Adoptions From The Heart wants to break down the stigma of asking for help.

Just as there is absolutely no pressure or judgment when an expecting parent calls looking for information about adoption for their newborn, the same applies to anyone reaching out for help to explore their options for a child they are caring for who isn't a newborn. Our staff are here to learn about your individual needs and walk you through all your options. We are not here to just put paperwork in front of you and move forward with adoption. We will discuss your situation in-depth and explore alternative resources and support as well as adoption. Our hope is to empower you so you can make an informed decision that you feel is best from all your options.



"At the heart of all these difficult decisions, parents and caretakers are doing what they believe is best for the child long-term."

~ Adoptions From The Heart

Sometimes it's the first step of making the initial call that can be the hardest. Please know, we are here to help and provide guidance no matter what you ultimately choose to do. If you are nervous about talking on the phone, we are also available via text at 610-787-2453.

While Adoptions From The Heart is primarily an infant placing agency, over the past few years we have seen an increase in parents and guardians reaching out to explore their options in making an adoption plan for a non-newborn in their care. In some cases, a mother or father who may or may not have initially considered adoption, has been parenting for several months or even years and is now wanting or needing to consider adoption for their child.

In other situations, someone, typically a family member, has taken over guardianship for a child

and what was initially planned to be a temporary solution has turned into a more permanent situation. And so now for a variety of reasons, when considering what is

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March 2024

Considering A Non-Infant Adoption Placement Continued

best for the child, the guardian might choose to look into adoption. At the heart of all these difficult decisions, parents and caretakers are doing what they believe is best for the child long-term.

In these instances, open adoption relationships have an increased importance. Choosing adoption isn't the same as what it used to mean with closed adoptions. Open adoptions allow for the continued connection between a child and their biological family throughout their lives. [Here is a clip from birth family members who share what it's like maintaining their relationship with the child through open adoption. Click Here.](#)



Adoptions From The Heart educates prospective adoptive parents thoroughly and only accepts families who are seeking to have an open adoption and understand the benefits of open adoption to the child as well as the importance of the continued connection to the birth family. If a parent or guardian decides to move forward in considering adoption, our counselors will explain the process more in-depth and will only present prospective adoptive families who are seeking the same level of open adoption that parents and guardians desire.

When it comes to the prospective adoptive parents who are considering a non-infant placement, it's important to talk with your social worker as each situation will have a unique pace, openness and contact requests, and supplemental resources the child may need as well. The non-newborn placements we have been seeing recently are for children who are several months old up to age 7 or 8. It's important to understand that openness takes on a new level of importance when birth parents or guardians who had been parenting for some time are now considering adoption. We hope to also provide some additional resources that discuss non-infant adoptions

more in-depth. In both of these AFTHtv episodes (Season 13 [Episode 9](#) and Season 15 [Episode 1](#)), social workers share even more about both sides of the process in regard considering a non-infant adoption. We hope that it provides you with the information you need to better understand what our role is in helping birthparents and guardians explore all their adoptions and navigate the process if they choose to move forward with adoption.

If you are a professional who works with clients who might be in need of exploring their options, please contact us either by calling 800-355-5500 or email adoption@afth.org so that we are able to provide you with information and material.

Adoptions From The Heart Office Locations

Allentown
610.432.2384

Central PA
717.399.7766

Connecticut
860.657.2626

Delaware
302.658.8883

New Jersey
856.665.5655

New York
888.535.8833

Philadelphia
610.642.7200

Pittsburgh
724.853.6533

Virginia
757.361.0008

Toll Free: 800.355.5500
Website: www.afth.org

Thank You Will Never Be Enough

"Before our placement, Katie was our social worker and was everything we could have asked for and more. She guided us through every decision, answered our many questions, offered us hope during tough times, and truly became family.

Once placed, Jackie became our social worker for home visits, and she was equally as amazing. Having been adopted herself, she was able to empathize with everything we were experiencing. Her home visits were warm, friendly, and a chance to reflect on everything happening in our lives.

When it came time to finalize, we invited Katie and Jackie because our story wouldn't have been written without them. As I watched them cry tears of joy when the judge declared our daughter officially a part of our family, I knew we had also gained lifelong friends and mentors in these two ladies.

Whenever our daughter hits a new milestone or does something new, my first instinct is to send a photo or video to Katie. She and Jackie will always be a part of our life and story, and our love for them is immeasurable.

Ladies...thank you from the bottom of our hearts for bringing our family together and supporting us. Your work does not go unnoticed and while I'm sure some days can be grueling and challenging, always know that you are making a difference.

Thank you will never be enough."

~ Adoptive Father, Jeff

National Social Work Month

National Social Work Month serves as a time for us to recognize and honor the invaluable contributions that all social workers make to our communities. At Adoptions From The Heart, we honor our adoption social workers this month, and each one after, recognizing their crucial role in the adoption process and ultimately, to the agency. These professionals serve as pillars of support and guidance to all of our clients, assisting them through what can be an emotionally complex journey, as well as those who might contact our agency for information. Their ability to simultaneously listen, analyze, and offer practical solutions makes them a valuable source of information and support for people from all walks of life.



Our adoption social workers consistently ensure that the child's best interests are upheld while also providing helpful resources and assistance to all parties involved. This year, the national theme for social work month is "Empowering Social Workers." Since 1985, our social workers have empowered individuals to overcome challenges and reach for the stars. Now, it's our turn to do the same.

Our professionals here at Adoptions From The Heart have continued to inspire and empower every one of us, and for that, we thank you and dedicate the month of March to you. Be sure to follow our social media platforms @AdoptionsFromTheHeart for all we have in store this National Social Work Month. We encourage you to show your appreciation by commenting on our office shoutouts, your experiences with your social workers.

Real Quotes From AFTH Clients

"I was so lucky to work alongside you and learn SO much about adoption, social work, and life. You are one of the most dedicated people I have ever met and I know so many people are so grateful for the ways you have helped them through difficult and important times."

~ Adoptive Parent

"Thank goodness for my social worker, she was my rock. I never thought that I would get that kind of support from the agency and she really was there for me."

~ Birth Parent

Social Workers Discuss Talking to Your Child About Their Adoption



In a recent interview, AFTHtv host Amanda Aliberti sat down with Adoptee and Social Worker Marilyn Rich to discuss the advice she offers to adoptive families who ask, "When should I talk with my child about adoption?" ([Click Here](#) to watch the full interview)

In Marilyn's experience as a search coordinator, she's witnessed the effects of adoptive parents who shut down the adoption discussion when presented with the opportunity. She has seen how prolonging the talk could affect an adoptee's identity, confidence, and understanding of who they are. As an agency, we understand age sensitivity and how important it is for adoptees to know their stories, which is why our social workers are dedicated to guiding adoptive and birth families to have no secrets and share the child's history with them from infancy.

Our journey together does not end at placement. As tough conversations arise throughout the adoption process and well beyond, we are here to help navigate those discussions with sensitivity and care. Whether you are a birth parent or adoptive parent, we encourage you to reach out to our office or your social worker, as Adoptions From The Heart is available for

support years after placement to help all members of the triad continue to navigate their journeys together and as individuals.

*The Importance of
Keeping Promises*
Adoptions From The Heart

Adoptive parents play a crucial role in the lives of not only the children they adopt but also the birth parents who picked them. Keeping promises made to birth parents is of utmost importance as it helps build trust and respect among all parties. This isn't majority of situations, however, over the years, birth parents have been left devastated when promises made to them by adoptive parents were not kept. This can lead to feelings of betrayal and loss and, at times, even impact their emotional well-being significantly. Keeping promises is not our experience with the overwhelming majority of placements, but it's been known to be the experience of some birth parents. As an agency, we're devastated by this heartbreaking reality, being that much of the education and counseling prospective adoptive parents receive here focuses on ensuring all members of the triad have the best possible outcome.

Sometimes, prospective adoptive parents dive into the open adoption program with hesitation, which is okay. We understand that the idea of openness may be uncomfortable at first. Our social workers are trained to explore these feelings with families. The agency always attempts to remedy situations where promises might not be kept for whatever reason. We provide resources and counseling and act as a liaison. Most of the time, these interventions successfully get the open adoption back on track. Still, we urge each party in the adoption process, including prospective and adoptive parents, to empathize and understand what the other people in the triad might be feeling and experiencing. The goal is to create forever families, bridging parties together for a lifetime through open adoption which is built primarily on trust.

The Benefit of Adoptive Families Working With A Doula

At Adoptions From The Heart, we take pride in the wrap-around support and in-depth education we provide to everyone who enters our offices. This extends even further than the services we provide to families through our agency, consisting of relationships with professionals outside of open adoption that help make our clients lives easier in their adoption journeys. In S14Ep13 of AFTHtv, 'Adoptive Families Can Benefit from Working with a Doula too,' we sat down with Doula and Entrepreneur Valerie Trumbower to discuss working with AFTH adoptive families after being placed through our agency.

We discussed all the ways in which working with a Doula, post placement, can offer benefits to a new parent, despite the fact that the traditional role of a doula is often associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

Just like birth parents, adoptive parents also go through a transition period post-placement and working with a doula provides significant education and support, meeting new parents exactly where they need it most. In adoption, prospective adoptive parents often experience emergency placements, meaning everything is moving fast, and you often have no time to adjust to the changes as quickly as one might like. This is where a doula might come in handy.

We decided to explore a few ways you could benefit from working with a doula if you were considering it or didn't know it was an option for new adoptive parents. Let's get started!

Doulas can offer immense emotional and post-placement support. Unlike a midwife, a doula does not perform medical tasks, instead supports you by providing optimal solutions to things when it comes to your new baby and new role. The adoption process, in itself, is a journey full of excitement, anticipation, anxiety, and uncertainty. A new baby, whether it's your first or third, will be a different experience each time, and the transition period after a child is placed with you can be both joyful and challenging. Working with a doula can help you adjust to your new role and navigate

any challenges as you bond and establish a relationship with your new baby. In many instances, a doula would come during the day to assist newly placed parents with daily tasks like feeding techniques, and creating a routine for the baby. In other instances, a doula may come to a home overnight to provide assistance with overnight feedings, walking you through bath time, helping you settle in and most importantly, guiding you emotionally as a new mom/dad.

While the role of a doula in adoption may differ from that in childbirth, the support, guidance, and advocacy they provide can be invaluable for adoptive parents as they navigate the journey of building their family through adoption. A doula can also provide compassionate emotional support, validating some of the feelings you may be experiencing as you navigate the ins and outs. Most people do not know, but adoptive parents can also experience post-placement depression and feelings of guilt at one point or another. It's just as important to have someone there to guide you through some of these moments so that you know you have nothing to worry about.

Doulas are well-informed professionals who hold much information, education, and insightful tips about caring for newborns. They can provide valuable education and information to help you understand your rights, responsibilities, and options as you pursue adoption. And, according to Valarie Trumbower, you can reach out to a doula before you've been placed. Once your profile is live, you can begin the process and notify your doula once the baby girl or baby boy has arrived.

For more information on how a doula can assist you as an adoptive parent, [click here](#) to watch our full sit down with Valarie on AFTHtv.



Adoptions From The Heart SPRING ED SERIES

*AFTH's Spring Ed Series is held on Zoom to welcome families
from all over our service area to attend.*

Registration Closes 1 Week Before Classes- Classes Fill Up Quickly

Ed Series classes fulfill AFTH's CEU requirements



Post Adoption Do's and Don'ts

Join us to talk about the Dos and don'ts with openness and contact with birth families in adoption. We will explore contact from the "profile key" through meeting the expectant parent, placement, and after-placement contact.

Tuesday, April 23rd | 7:00-8:30 PM

Registration deadline: April 16th, 2024

Adoptive Parent Panel A to Z

Several placed adoptive families will lead a panel discussion on issues facing adoptive parents, including managing the wait, preparing for placement, navigating an open adoption relationship, and how to manage questions and issues with your child when the birth family does not participate in openness. Special attention will be given to LGBTQ+ and single adoptive parents.

Wednesday, April 24th | 7:00-8:30 PM

Registration deadline: April 17th, 2024

What You Need to Know About Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC)

The likelihood that you will be a part of the ICPC process is high and occurs when you cross state lines for placement. This can be a challenging time for many adoptive parents. This training is designed to assist prospective adoptive parents in having a better understanding of ICPC and preparing for the process once placed. This training will answer many common questions, such as: "What does ICPC mean?" "What does it do?" "How does the process work?" "How long will we have to wait?" "What is the difference between revocation, ICPC, and post-placement supervision periods?" We will also hear first-hand from a family what their experience was like being placed when an ICPC process was completed.

Wednesday, May 1st | 6:00-7:30 PM

Registration deadline: April 24th, 2024

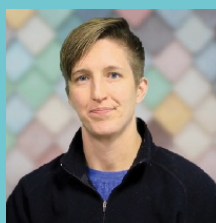
All Classes are **\$25/family** unless otherwise noted.
Click [HERE](#) to Register

Adoptive Parent Panel

Hear from a panel of past AFTH adoptive parents as they share their experiences of navigating openness (or a lack of openness) with their child's birth family.

Wednesday, May 22nd | 6:00-7:30 PM

Registration deadline: May 15th, 2024



Prenatal Drug & Alcohol Exposure \$50/family

[Click for a Video Message About the Class](#)

AFTH wants families to make informed decisions when completing their profile keys. Dr. Erin Meyer is an Internal Medicine and Pediatric Hospitalist who worked in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. She is also an adoptive mom, and can speak from both professional and personal angles. She will be discussing the effects of drug and alcohol use on the newborn during pregnancy as well as withdrawal symptoms and short and long term effects of exposure. Questions are welcomed. While each family needs to decide what is right for them, after this class, families often feel more comfortable opening their key.

Online Webinar Dates:

Link is emailed 1-2 business days after registering

- **Tuesday, April 16th, 2024 | 7- 8:30 PM**
- **Saturday, July 27th, 2024 | 10:30 AM - 12 PM**
- **Tuesday, October 22nd 2024 | 7 - 8:30 PM**

Registration DEADLINE is Noon the day prior

ON-DEMAND WEBINAR
6 hours on-demand access - \$247/family
(with Discount Code)

In collaboration with AFTH, New Parents Academy created a 6-hour course covering Baby Gear, Newborn Care, Soothing, Newborn Sleep, Bonding and more. Includes 5 printable/checklists. Access for 2 years so videos can be re-watched at any time.

Access from On-Demand Webinar [HERE](#).

All Things NEW Happening at Adoptions From The Heart

Premiere of Season 15 of AFTHtv



This season, we bring you new topics, insightful discussions, and captivating stories from wonderful clients like you! AFTHtv continues to push boundaries with each season and deliver content that touches on all the experiences one might face in an open adoption journey.

As this season unfolds, you can expect to see some of your favorite staff and adoption counselors and hear new stories from new clients, from placements of older children to traveling back in time to explore placements from over a decade ago. Season 15 promises to be another unforgettable chapter in the AFTHtv series. Get ready to tune in and immerse yourself in the journey through open adoption as we return to capture your screens once again.

S15Ep1 of AFTHtv is Out Now!

Considering Placing a Non-Infant for Adoption

[>> Watch Here<<](#)

New episodes will go live on Youtube and Facebook each Tuesday morning.



In this episode of AFTHtv, we hope to help break down the stigma associated with exploring options for placing non-infants for adoption. Social Workers Isatou and Christian talk about what options counseling looks like and how there is no judgment or pressure when someone reaches out to get information and explore their options so they can decide what is best for their child. They walk those who are parenting through all their options and connect them to other supportive care or wrap-around services that might be helpful.

Adoptions From The Heart Announces a Podcast Revamp



We are thrilled to share some big news! Our Adoptions From The Heart podcast is undergoing a major revamp. After careful consideration and feedback, we have decided to refresh our content for more engaging and insightful episodes.

Get ready for a fresh new look, exciting guest interviews, intriguing topics, and interactive segments that will keep you coming back for more. We can't wait to unveil the revamped podcast and embark on this new journey with you.

Stay tuned for the Premiere happening this March, and be sure to follow and subscribe so you don't miss out on the exciting changes coming your way.

ALL NEW Podcast Segments

The podcast will have three segments in addition to the regular conversation/interview that we will have with our guests:

- **#What's Buzzing:** This segment will be about what is happening in the adoption community. It will consist of anything from new legislation or viral stories to anything happening in the adoption world.
- **#Ask Anything:** In this segment, we will answer 1-3 questions from audience members wanting to learn more about adoption, the process, or any other questions related to adoption or the topic of discussion.
- **#Parting Thoughts:** This segment will end each episode with our host(s) sharing a parting thought from the episode related to the discussion.

Coming **March, 21st, 2024!** Click [here](#) to stream our podcast.

ALL NEW Support Groups Available at Adoptions From The Heart



Adoptions From The Heart now holds support groups for Adoptees and Single (waiting or placed) Clients! Our support groups offer a safe space for adoptive parents, birth parents, and adoptees to share their unique experiences, challenges, and triumphs with others who can relate. We have built a community of understanding, comfort, and validation for individuals navigating the complexities of adoption. Our support groups aim to help reduce feelings of isolation and stigma often associated with adoption and promote mental and emotional well-being for all involved parties. These groups serve as a beacon of strength and solidarity for those involved, offering a sense of unity, understanding, and empowerment throughout their journey.



Single Parent Support Group

This support group occurs every other month, on the **Second Tuesday** beginning this March. It is open to single waiting and placed families working with AFTH.

Join AFTH social work staff and other single waiting and placed families for a time to connect and process the different aspects of your adoption journey as single adoptive parents. One credit hour will be given to waiting families for attendance. More Details [Here](#).

Older Adoptee Support Group

(must be age 15+)
group led by fellow adoptees

This Support group will occur **Monthly**. Adoptions From The Heart has started an adoptee support group, for adoptees to hear the stories of others and share their own in a safe environment that promotes adoptees finding their own voice.

This support group is not limited to AFTH adoptees. More Details [Here](#).



You can reach out to your social worker if you are or know someone interested in joining these support groups. Otherwise, visit our [Calendar of Events](#) or click the links above to register.

Services for Expecting and Birth Parents

In addition to providing support through pregnancy and placement process, AFTH provides many other wrap-around services free to expecting and birth parents to provide support and foster long-term development.



Connecting with Other Expecting and Birth Parents Who “Get It”



Birth Parent Mentoring Program

The birth parent mentoring program is a resource to connect expecting and birth parents and provide support by sharing their personal experiences.

Birth Parent Advocacy Projects

A program designed to provide a platform for birth parents who want to volunteer time to share their experiences to help spread awareness about adoption and open adoption through a variety of different ways, including but not limited to the following:

- Social media adoption content
- Sharing your story
- Helping with outreach to local referral sources

Free Workshops via Zoom

We offer free workshops for expecting and birth parents focusing on a wide range of topics geared toward personal and professional development. This past year we had the following topics:

Understanding Cycles of change

- Goals: How to Set Yourself Up for Success
- 411 On Delaware Resources
- Speaking Success Over Your Life
- Befriending Your Inner Critic

To learn more or to share topics you would to suggest for future workshops, email Amanda Aliberti at AmandaA@afth.org

Birth Parent Support Groups

Online Support Group (Zoom)

Free monthly meetings

An opportunity to come together, lean on other birth parents and share your thoughts, feelings, and concerns with others with similar experiences. Beginning in 2024, the Support Groups will be switching to evenings to welcome even more expecting and birthparents to the conversation. Reach out to Amanda Aliberti at AmandaA@afth.org or 516-316-2845 for more information.

Facebook Support Group

AFTH has a Facebook group created for Expecting and Birth Parents to come together in support. [Click to join.](#)

In Person Support Group (Virginia)

In-person with a special holiday event in December. Email NicoleF@afth.org to learn more.

"At first, I didn't want to come to the support group- I was nervous and didn't want to be judged... After coming a few times, I learned we all have different situations, but they are all the same. I felt understood."

- Ayanna, Birth Mother

A Heart-To-Heart With Transracial Adoption Voices



Thursday, February 22nd, 2024, Adoptions From The Heart hosted our live Heart To Heart panel discussion on Transracial Adoption Voices. We were joined by birth parents and an older adoptee, all of whom shared their experiences as part of transracial adoption triads.

This event was truly one of the most informative discussions we've had, shedding light on the experiences of each individual as they shared personal stories, challenges, and successes. They highlighted the importance of cultural identity, belonging, and the need for support and understanding. We dove into the significance of open communication, education, and embracing diversity within the family unit. And most importantly, the panelists emphasized the need for ongoing conversations, efforts, and learning to provide inclusive, safe environments for these conversations to be had.

Take a look at our amazing panelists:

Se'Ayra | Birth Mother

Se'Ayra, who was already parenting a daughter at the time of placement, placed her son for adoption through Adoptions From The Heart in 2016. She opted for open adoption because she wanted to maintain contact with her son and track his progress throughout his life.

Although her chosen adoptive family is of a different race than Se'Ayra and her son, she selected her family based on their love for her son and the stability they could provide him. Today, Se'Aya serves on the Board at Adoptions From The Heart and actively advocates for open adoption.

Ayanna | Birth Mother

At eighteen years old, birth mom Ayanna found herself faced with an unplanned pregnancy and made the decision to place her daughter Ella for adoption in April 2018 through Adoptions From The Heart. Ella was placed with a Delaware couple, and to this day, Ayanna

remains active in her open adoption. Ayanna is also a frequent attendee in the Birth Parent Support group and continues to spread adoption awareness alongside Adoptions From The Heart.

Christian | Adult Adoptee

Christian was born in Santiago, Chile, in 1995 and adopted by American parents. At age twenty, he found his birth certificate and adoption papers and sought help to locate his birth family, reuniting with his birth mother, brother, aunts, and uncle soon after.

In August of 2021, Christian moved to Chile with his girlfriend's family to immerse himself in Chilean culture and fill the voids left by adoption. Christian is now back in the U.S. as an adoption social worker at Adoptions From The Heart.

Samai | Birth Father

Samai placed his son for adoption in 2014 through our Delaware Office. He was hesitant about adoption in the beginning but took time to understand open adoption and what it meant to be a part of one. Today, Samai maintains a beautiful open adoption with his son and adoptive family and has an amazing career working with incarcerated men, transitioning back into their community.

Sharmaine | Birth Mother

Dr. Sharmaine placed her child for adoption in 2010 through our Pittsburgh Office. Although her adoption was not the easiest to cope with, Sharmaine used it as fuel to pursue her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Youngstown State University, her master's degree from the University of Akron, and, in 2020, her PsyD in Psychology. Today, Sharmaine enjoys reading, spending time with her Godson, and remaining an active member of her sorority.

On behalf of Adoptions From The Heart, we extend heartfelt gratitude to each of our attendees and speaker! Your invaluable insights and perspectives added significant value to our discussions and created an educational environment for our audience.

Be sure to join us this June for another Heart To Heart event, featuring members of the LGBTQ+2 Community.

Upcoming Heart-to-Heart Events

June 2024 | LGBTQIA Community & Adoption
November 2024 | Adoption and Mental Health

Agency News

Domestic Program Update

Heading into 2024, we have been working on a full 2024 schedule filled with support groups (new: Older Adoptee & Single Parent support groups), Education Courses (new to be implemented: Older Child Adoption Education), Education Series, 5k, Picnics, and Heart-to-Heart events. We hope to see your family at some of these events!!

Happy National Social Worker Month (March) to all our AFTH Social Workers and Social Workers worldwide. Your hard work, commitment, and dedication to families and those you serve are seen and appreciated.

A little “peek” into the days/weeks of an AFTH Social Worker:

- Counseling expectant parents on their options, often out in our community and a hefty drive away!
- “On call” time for emergency (and planned!) placements on nights, weekends, and holidays
- Completing “outreach” in our community to ensure we know local resources for clients and local resources know about our services
- Hosting Education Courses (Preparing for Open Adoption Courses, Transracial Education Courses, Intersectionality Courses)
- Planning, Implementing, and facilitating Education Series to present to families
- Planning, Implementing, and facilitating Support Groups (Waiting family, Transracial Adoption, Post-placement support, Single-family support, Older Adoptee support)
- Scheduling AP interviews, evaluation with supervision, writing Adoptive Parent Home Studies, and continued monitoring and updates
- Meeting with state licensing representatives who comb through files to ensure compliance with regulations
- Weekly and monthly supervision, office meetings, agency-wide meetings, and trainings
- Planning and participating in picnics, fall events, 5ks, fundraisers, and Heart-to-Heart events
- Writing “dictations” on all of the above!

Juggling these tasks while managing often challenging and emotional circumstances is not simple and takes passion, vigor, and determination.

I hope each Social Worker of the world can take some time to celebrate themselves this National Social Worker Month!

As an agency, we have had more interest in adoption counseling and options counseling with children older than “newborn”. We have an article in this newsletter ([see page 1](#)) and will be scheduling our first Older Child Adoption Education Course to consider special circumstances that may come along with children older than newborns (possible extended ICPC stay, keeping the child’s given first and middle names, trauma-informed care, etc.) If you’d like to discuss being considered for “older” child placement, please contact your social worker.

In closing, we have seen an increase in birth parents and children reaching out about “openness” promises that were not kept throughout the years. Showing your children that you honor their identity, biological family, history, and culture is crucial to creating a secure attachment and trusting relationship with your child. Please ([see page 4](#)) for more information. If you are struggling with openness, please reach out to your local offices to help you navigate keeping the promises you made to your child’s birth parents and, ultimately, to your child.

2024 AFTH FAMILY PICNICS

Locations, Dates & Times:

PA, NJ, DE

Lukens Park

540 Dresher Rd, Horsham, PA 19044

Saturday, June 9th, 2024 | 10 AM - 2 PM EST

VIRGINIA

Chesapeake City Park

900 City Park Drive, Chesapeake, VA 23320

Saturday, June 1st, 2024 | 11 AM - 1 PM EST

CONNECTICUT

Location To Be Announced

Date To Be Announced

PITTSBURGH

Location To Be Announced

Sunday, June 9th, 2024 | 11 AM - 1 PM EST

For more information, on the 2024 AFTH Family Picnics, email Adoption@afth.org

AFTH Adoptive Parent Support Groups

Support Groups allow birth parents, waiting, and adoptive families to connect about their shared experiences. Come with others who truly "get it" and can understand your questions and concerns and celebrate the joys with you.

Waiting Family Support Group (Zoom)

Free bi-monthly event

Join AFTH's waiting families as we share the highs and lows of the adoption process. 1 CE hour is provided for attending. [Click to register.](#)

Waiting Family Support Group (Facebook)

Facebook support group moderated by AFTH social workers to help waiting families come together in support. [Click to join.](#)

Transracial Adoption Support Group (Zoom)

Free bi-monthly event

This support group is to connect adoptive parents who have also adopted transracially. It is a safe space to discuss thoughts and concerns. [Click to register.](#)

Placed Family Support Group (Zoom)

Join AFTH social work staff and families in post placement. Parenting itself is a challenge, when adding adoption issues, support and guidance may be required to assist in navigating these struggles. [Click to register.](#)



Get Involved with AFTH Programs and Services

Getting more involved with the agency can provide more education about adoption and help keep busy during the wait. If you aren't already signed up for AFTH email blasts, reach out to your social worker to register. We want families to take advantage of all of our fantastic learning opportunities.

Ways You Can Get Involved

- OnDemand classes available with of plethora of adoption topics
- Four Educational Series are offered throughout the year to learn about different adoption topics
- Three Heart-to-Heart event series are offered each year to hear from the experiences of members of the triad
- Three support groups are available for adoptive parents to meet others with similar experiences
- Watch AFTHtv episodes! We have 14 Seasons full of stories from all members of the triad
- Heart-to-Heart Podcast has over 40 episodes with adoption professionals, members of the triad, and more.

Reach out to your social worker about how you can get involved at AFTH.



Recent Legislation



Virginia

HB550 | Capitol Coalition for Adoptee Rights

Bill HB550, which relates to an adoptees rights to receive original birth certificates, has moved through the Virginia House Committee very quickly. This bill would restore the right for adult adoptees born in Virginia to request and obtain their original birth certificates. More details [here](#).

California

SB1274 | A Simple Bill with a Powerful Promise

Bill SB1274 was introduced in the California Senate this past February, eliminating any discriminatory provisions in California law. The Bill states that any person over the age of 18 is eligible to retrieve a copy of the original birth certificate and records. More details [here](#).

International Adoption

While AFTH no longer provides international adoption programs, we provide Home Studies, Education, Post-Adoption/Placement Reports and Services, and other assistance in support of international adoptions. Email adoption@afth.org to see how we can help you.

Seeking International Adoptees Adopted Through AFTH to Share Their Stories

We would love to hear from AFTH international adoptees. We hope to highlight their stories in our blogs, newsletters, or on AFTHtv, welcoming your unique story and all the joys and challenges. Please email JadaM@afth.org with question or entries.

Congratulations To AFTH'S Newest Families

Congratulations to all the newly formed families. Your journey together is just beginning, filled with love, laughter, and countless precious moments. Wishing you all joyful days and endless happiness as you embark on this beautiful adventure together.

- ♥ **Danielle**
- ♥ **Christopher & Brian**
- ♥ **Paul & Erin (twins)**
- ♥ **Monique**
- ♥ **Gentry & Gretchen**
- ♥ **Jack & Paul**
- ♥ **Anthony & Christina**
- ♥ **Maggie & Jane**
- ♥ **Scott & David**



Employee Retirement Announcement

Wishing Marilyn and Michaelina The Best On Their Retirement



Adoptions From The Heart wishes both Marilyn and Michaelina a wonderful retirement filled with relaxation, joy, and cherished moments with your loved ones. Over the last few decades, you both have given so much. Your dedication and kindness have impacted countless lives, from staff and families to professionals, peers, and beyond!

Their unwavering commitment to supporting clients every step of the adoption journey has left an indelible mark on countless hearts and will leave a lasting impact on our agency, having touched so many, all while making lasting memories that we will cherish. As they embark on this new chapter, may their legacy of compassion continue to shine brightly, inspiring generations to come.

KIND WORDS
FROM CLIENTS

"Congratulations Michaelina! The best phone call I ever received came from you! Addy and I became a family because of you. Your support and help through everything was so appreciated! Enjoy your retirement. You deserve every minute of it."

~Jeanie M.

"Congratulations Michaelina! You forever hold a place in my heart. You saw us through home studies, paperwork, and adoptions. You helped console us when things seemed dire, and you shared our joy and elation when things worked out. You are a part of the story when we tell our children about their adoption story."

~Marie K.

"Marilyn, we will be forever grateful for how you walked alongside us on our journey. You always had a compassionate heart and listening ear. You will be truly missed! Enjoy this new season of life. You deserve nothing but the best."

~Gerri G.

"Marilyn was with us through some of the best and worst days of our lives. We worked with her for both of our adoptions. She is kind, compassionate, encouraging, honest, and genuine in everything she does. She will forever be a part of our family's story, and we are so grateful for all she did for us."

~Beth J.

Fall 2024 Birth Parent Scholarship



We are excited to announce that we had **two winners** chosen for the Spring 2024 Birth parent Scholarship. This is only the beginning. The AFTH Birth Parent Scholarship Application for Fall 2024 is currently **open**!

This is an excellent time to embrace new opportunities. If you have or know anyone who has placed a child with Adoptions From The Heart, that could benefit from this scholarship, visit our website to [apply here](#) today or reach out to your adoption social worker with any questions.

Apply today! Applicants **must** already be enrolled in a trade program/college/university.

Only completed applications will be considered.

The Fall '24 Birth Parent Scholarship Deadline is **July 1st, 2024**.

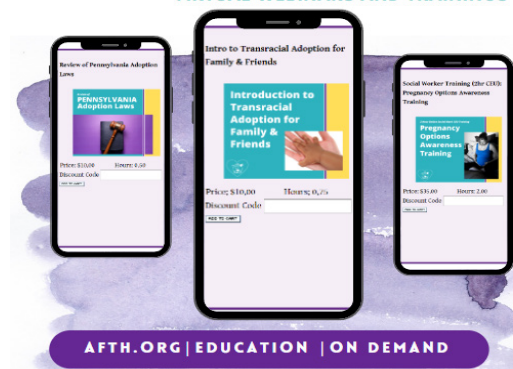


Become a Year Round Supporter

All year round, Adoptions From The Heart works hard to provide free programs and services to Expecting and Birth Parents. We can provide all these services thanks to our great supporters. You can become a YRS (year-round supporter) today and help us provide support and education to Expecting and Birth Parents.

"With the gift card we were able to get food and a few other household items that we needed. We can't thank you enough for your generosity! It made my day and took stress away from us."

Donate today by going to: www.afth.org/donate. Any amount is appreciated, and it changes the life of an Expecting or Birth Parent.



Our On-Demand webinars are open to Social Workers, prospective and adoptive parents, Expecting and birth mothers and fathers, family, friends, and any other persons who would like to dive into what adoption is.

*30-31 Hampstead Circle
Wynnewood, PA 19096*

Adoption News is a publication of Adoptions From The Heart, a private, non-profit, licensed agency.

What to Do For Taxes In 2024

Some families who adopted this past year may have yet to be finalized; this means some children will not officially be issued a Social Security Number in time for tax season. Families unable to finalize their adoption before the end of the calendar year of their placement should file for an ATIN for tax purposes by November, in time for next year's tax season.

Here Is What Those Families Need To Know Come Tax Time:

The IRS can issue families an Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number (ATIN), a temporary nine-digit number for a child who does not yet have a social security number. The form can be obtained at an IRS walk-in office, by calling 1-800-829-3676, or by visiting the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

Documentation describing your child's placement will need to accompany the form. You may require a letter from an AFTH office confirming your placement, so please reach out to obtain this letter.

It can take up to eight weeks to receive an ATIN, so families may want to start the process now. ATINs are valid for two years and can be used to claim dependency



Each year, Adoptions From The Heart hosts an annual Find Their Footing 5k, where families are invited to walk or run for a cause. This year, we are changing things up a bit.

This Spring, the AFTH 5k is converting to a walk, and we are seeking local ambassadors to host pop-up walks in their area. We're hoping to have walks happening in lots of locations all over. If you are or know someone who might be interested in being an ambassador, email Mayra Herrera at MayraH@AFTH.org.

This year's walk will take place
April 26th- April 28th