

# Adoption News

A Newsletter From:

## Adoptions From The Heart

### Celebrating 40 Years of AFTH: A Thank You to Our Community

This year marks a significant milestone for Adoptions From The Heart—40 years of dedicated service to the adoption community. Since our founding in 1985 by Maxine Chalker, an adoptee herself, we have remained committed to creating meaningful connections and guiding families through personalized adoption journeys. We want to take this moment to express our deepest gratitude to every birth parent, adoptive parent, adoptee, donor, supporter, and partnering professionals who have entrusted us to be part of their story. Without you, our mission would not be possible.

#### Reflecting on Our Journey Together

What began as a small initiative in Maxine's home has grown into an agency that has placed over 7,420 infants and toddlers into loving families. Maxine's unique perspective as an adoptee and her professional experience in public adoption welfare inspired her to create an agency that prioritizes open adoption. She saw the need for transparency, compassion, and unwavering support for both expecting and adoptive parents, and this vision continues to drive us forward today.



To celebrate this remarkable journey, our [Adoption & Beyond podcast](#) recently hosted a special episode, bringing together key voices from the AFTH community. Founder Maxine Chalker shared the story of how her personal experiences shaped the agency's mission. We also heard from Heidi Gonzalez, our Executive Director, who spoke about AFTH's impact and the exciting future ahead. Additionally, longtime social worker Stephanie Capriotti, adoption attorney Debbie Spivack, and adoptive mother and marketing director Kristy Hartley-Galbraith reflected on AFTH's legacy and the importance of centering birth parents' voices in adoption. This episode serves as a heartfelt tribute to everyone who has played a role in AFTH's success over the past four decades.



### In This Issue



- 2 Celebrating 40 Years of AFTH
- 3 Happy Social Work Month
- 4 Spring Educational Series
- 5 Welcoming New AFTH Staff
- 6 Find Their Footing 5k Run & Festival
- 7 Celebrating Generosity
- 8 AFTH's Stance
- 9 Triangle Time
- 10 Celebrating Stephanie Cappriotti
- 11 New OnDemand Webinars
- 12 Terry & Jared's Adoption Journey
- 13 Navigating the Cost of Adoption
- 14 Agency News
- 15 Upcoming Events
- 15 AFTH's Newest Families

## Locations

### *Allentown Office*

2212 Union Blvd. Allentown, PA 18109

**610.432.2384**

### *Central PA Office*

5630 Linglestown Road, #3012, Harrisburg, PA 17112

**717.399.7766**

### *Connecticut Office*

1 Regency Dr. #108, Bloomfield, CT 06002

**860.657.2626**

### *Delaware Office*

18-A Trolley Square Wilmington, DE 19806

**302.658.8883**

### *New Jersey Office*

523 Hollywood Avenue, Suite 209, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

**856.665.5655**

### *New York*

87 Mineola Blvd, Mineola, NY 11501

**800.355.5500**

### *Philadelphia Office*

30-31 Hampstead Circle Wynnewood, PA 19096

**610.642.7200**

### *Pittsburgh Office*

116 E. Pittsburgh St, Greensburg, PA 15601

**724.853.6533**

### *Virginia Office*

1403 Greenbrier Parkway Suite 560 Chesapeake, VA 23320

**757.361.0008**

**Toll Free: 800.355.5500**

**Website: [www.afth.org](http://www.afth.org)**

### ***What Makes AFTH Special?***

At AFTH, we believe that adoption is more than just a process—it is a lifelong journey. Our commitment to open adoption means we prioritize ongoing communication and relationships between birth and adoptive families. We also understand that adoption is complex, and we provide continuous education and support through in-person and on-demand courses, workshops, and seminars. Our team, which includes many adoptive parents and adoptees, brings firsthand experience and deep empathy to the work we do.

Unlike traditional closed adoption practices, AFTH ensures that birth parents are actively involved in the placement process. We empower expecting parents with options, guiding them through every step, whether they choose adoption or another path. Our goal is to continue being a trusted resource for families, offering not only placements but also lifelong support and advocacy.

### ***Looking Toward the Future***

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we also look forward to the future with hope and determination. Adoption is ever-evolving, and we remain committed to adapting, growing, and improving our services to meet the needs of families today and in the years to come. Our focus remains on providing ethical, compassionate, and inclusive adoption services to all individuals, regardless of background.

To every family who has been part of our journey—thank you. Your trust, resilience, and love inspire us every day. Whether you are a birth parent, an adoptive parent, or someone considering adoption, we are here for you.

Here's to another 40 years of building families, fostering connections, and supporting every individual touched by adoption.

Learn more about our mission and services at [afth.org](http://afth.org), or tune in to our [Adoption & Beyond podcast](#) to hear the voices behind our work.

## Honoring Social Workers During National Social Work Month



March is National Social Work Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the incredible contributions of social workers across the country. At Adoptions From The Heart, we are especially grateful for the dedicated social workers who make a profound impact on the lives of the families we serve. Their commitment to guiding birth parents, adoptive parents, and adoptees through the adoption journey is truly invaluable.

ethical, compassionate, and informed adoption processes. Their work extends beyond placements; they provide emotional support, education, and advocacy to help individuals navigate the complexities of adoption. Their dedication to uplifting and empowering families is at the heart of everything we do.

We also want to extend our gratitude to the many social workers outside of our agency—those in hospitals, child welfare agencies, and community organizations—who collaborate with us to provide the best possible care and guidance to expecting and adoptive parents. Your expertise and compassion make a difference every day, and we are honored to work alongside you.



Social workers play an essential role in ensuring

This National Social Work Month, we celebrate you. Thank you for your unwavering dedication, your empathy, and your tireless efforts to create brighter futures for the families and children you serve.

### Quotes From Our Clients

"From the moment my husband, Zac, and I submitted our application to every step along the way, Jackie Zausner from the Cherry Hill branch has been by our side. Her passion for her work is evident—she's there for the good, the bad, and everything in between. Words can't fully express how much we appreciate her, but we hope she feels all the love and gratitude we send her way!"

— Danielle & Zachary

"Stephanie has always been there for us —calming our fears, answering our questions, and offering unwavering support. Her professionalism, kindness, empathy, and dedication truly set her apart. Over the years, we've had countless conversations, and we feel incredibly blessed—not only by the gift of adopting two wonderful children but also by the privilege of knowing Stephanie. She is truly a treasure, and we are forever grateful for all she has done for us."

— Laura & Kevin

Christian is incredibly communicative and always checks in, which we truly appreciate during this important chapter of our lives. He is quick to reach out in urgent situations, offering guidance and support while ensuring we feel comfortable and confident in moving forward. His dedication means so much to us.

— Sean & Greg

# 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

## ***Adoptive Parent Panel: Journey of Open Adoption Through the Years***

An AP panel featuring families placed over 5 years ago, sharing their journey of openness with birthparents and children. They'll discuss how their open adoptions began and evolved over the years.

**Wednesday, April 16th | 6:30-8:00 PM**

Registration deadline: April 9th

## ***Adopting an Older Child: What Adoptive Parents Need to Know***

For adoptive parents considering adopting a non-newborn, including toddlers and school age children, this ed series class will explore issues specific to older children including preplacement visits, medical history, day care and school enrollment, preparing the child to transition into the adoptive family, as well as the open adoption relationship with the birth family. Adoptive parents who have been placed with an older child will share their experiences and answer questions from attendees.

**Wednesday, April 23rd | 6:30-8:00 PM**

Registration deadline: April 16th

## ***Elevating Adoptee Voices: Adoptee Panel***

Come join us in lifting adoptee voices with a panel of adult adoptees of different backgrounds (International Adoption, Domestic Adoption, Transracial Adoption, etc.). You don't want to miss hearing from the most important members of the adoption triad on their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Panelists will be open for questions from attendees.

**Wednesday, May 7th | 6:00-7:30 PM**

Registration deadline: April 30th

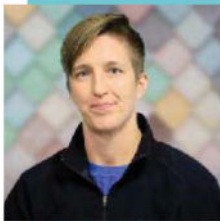
## ***Panel: Navigating Challenging Circumstances with Placement***

Hear from a panel of AFTH adoptive parents who had to navigate various challenging circumstances during their waiting and placement journeys. Panelists will be open to questions from attendees.

**Wednesday, May 14th | 6:00-7:30 PM**

Registration deadline: May 7th

## **Prenatal Drug & Alcohol Exposure - \$100/family**



AFTH aims to help families make informed decisions about their profile keys. Dr. Erin Meyer, a pediatric hospitalist who works in the neonatal intensive care unit and adoptive mom, will discuss the effects of prenatal drug and alcohol exposure, withdrawal symptoms, and short and long-term impacts. Families often feel more confident opening their keys after this class. Questions are welcome.

[Click for a Video Message from Dr. Meyer About the Class](#)

## **Upcoming Webinar Dates**

Link for webinar will be emailed 1-2 business days after registering

- **Tuesday, April 15th | 7 - 8:30 PM**
- **Saturday, July 26th | 10:30AM-Noon**
- **Tuesday, October 28th | 7 - 8:30 PM**

**DEADLINE: 1 week before webinar**

## **6-Hour ON-DEMAND CHILDCARE WEBINAR - \$247/family with AFTH discount**

In collaboration with AFTH, New Parents Academy created a 6-hour course covering Baby Gear, Newborn Care, Soothing, Newborn Sleep, Bonding, and more including five printable/checklists. Access for two years, so videos can be re-watched at any time. On-Demand Webinar [HERE](#)



**Classes are \$30/family unless otherwise noted. Click [HERE](#) to Register**

## NEW Adoptive Parent Support Group!

### LGBTQ+ ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP



We are excited to introduce a new LGBTQ+ Adoptive Parent Support Group designed to foster a welcoming and affirming space for families within the LGBTQ+ community. Whether you are a waiting family, have recently been placed, or have finalized your adoption, this group is open to all families working with any of our offices.

Navigating parenthood and adoption as an LGBTQ+ family comes with unique experiences, and this support group aims to provide a safe and supportive environment where you can share your journey, gain insights from others, and connect with families who understand your path. We honor the diverse and intersecting experiences of LGBTQ+ adoptive parents and strive to create a space that nurtures meaningful connections and open discussions.

#### Upcoming Support Group Dates:

- April 8, 2025 – 7:00 PM EST
- June 10, 2025 – 7:00 PM EST
- August 12, 2025 – 7:00 PM EST

**This support group is online through zoom**

We invite you to join us in building a supportive community where shared experiences can foster understanding, strength, and connection. For more information or to sign up, please visit [calendar.afth.org](https://calendar.afth.org). We look forward to seeing you there!

## Did You Know?

Adoptions From The Heart offers over seven support groups designed for expectant and birth parents, adoptees, prospective adoptive parents, and placed families. Explore our full range of support groups by visiting our [calendar of events](https://calendar.afth.org) to learn more and find the right group for you!

## Welcoming New AFTH Family Members

Adoptions From The Heart is growing! We are thrilled to welcome two new members to our ever-expanding AFTH family. We are excited to have Kim and Katie as part of our community.

Together, we continue our mission of building loving families and providing compassionate support throughout the adoption journey.

### Kimberly Root, BS



Kimberly is the VA & CPA Professional Administrative Assistant. She returned to Adoptions From The Heart in January 2025. Kimberly's journey at Adoptions From The Heart started back in 2014 as she was completing an internship after earning her degree at Old Dominion University. After her internship

she worked at our Virginia office from 2015 to 2020 as an office manager. Kimberly is now back at AFTH and we are so happy to have her on our team again. Welcome back, Kim.

### Katie Quirico, MA



Katie joined the Adoptions From The Heart team in February and works as an adoption counselor at AFTH's Delaware office. She has been in the social services field for about fifteen years, with experience in both foster care and private adoption. Katie is also an adoptive mother. Welcome, Katie! We are so

happy to have you on our team.

## AFTH's Find Their Footing Festival & 5k Run/Walk

*Dashing Through The Decades to Celebrate Forty Years of AFTH.*



Join us for the **9th Annual Find Their Footing Festival & 5K/Walk** on **April 26, 2025**, at **Rose Tree Park in Media, PA**.

This year, we're celebrating **40 years of Adoptions From The Heart** with a day full of **fitness, fun, and community spirit!** Whether you're a seasoned runner or just looking for a great time with family and friends, this event has something for everyone—all while supporting **AFTH's Expecting & Birth Parent Support Fund**. Every dollar raised helps birth parents in need with housing, food, and transportation.

### **5K/Walk – Dashing Through the Decades:**

Get ready to race through time! Dress up in your best 80s, 90s, or 2000s outfit (optional but encouraged!) and enjoy a fun run/walk.

### **5k Run/Walk Perks**

- 2025 Find Their Footing T-Shirt
- Finisher Medal & Swag Bag
- 1 Free Raffle Ticket
- Awards for Overall & Age Groups (10-15, 16-20, 31-45, 46-60, 61+)
- **Register now:** [Run or Walk](#)
- **FREE Kids Dash** – A special race for kids under 10 at 9:15 AM! Be sure to register to secure a spot!

*Make your miles matter by [becoming a fundraiser](#) for the Find Their Footing 5k/Walk! Every step you take and every dollar raise with help us provide crucial support to our Expectant & Birth Parent Support Fund!*

### **Festival Fun for Everyone:**

After the race, stick around for a huge anniversary festival featuring.

- Guided Fitness Classes
- Craft Vendors & Food Trucks
- Raffles & Awards Ceremony
- Kids Activities & More!

### **Get Involved:**

We are looking for event sponsors. If you have a business and are looking for ways to market it, we have many opportunities for your business to shine throughout our event. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, you can email Julie Tran at [JulieT@afth.org](mailto:JulieT@afth.org).

If you want to participate but cannot attend the event, you can participating by donating through a [no-sweat donation](#).

### **Event Details**

April 26th, 2025

Rose Tree Park | 671 N Providence Rd, Media, PA

Registration Opens: 8:30 AM

Kids Dash: 9:15 AM

5k Race Begins: 9:30 AM

Festival: 10 AM - 3 PM | **Free Entry**

Tickets: \$35 before April 4 | \$40 after & day of

Any question about the event?

Email Julie Tran at [JulieT@afth.org](mailto:JulieT@afth.org)

## Celebrating Generosity: AFTH Fundraisers & Community Giving

At AFTH, we are continually inspired by the generosity of our community. From successful fundraisers to heartfelt donations from our clients, every contribution plays a vital role in supporting birth parents, adoptive families, and children. Over the past few months, we've witnessed incredible acts of kindness that have made a lasting impact. As we reflect on these moments, we also invite you to join us in continuing this mission of giving and support.

### *Painting with a Purpose*

Last month, we had an amazing time at Painting with a Twist in Media for our Painting with a Purpose fundraiser! Over 33 participants joined us for a fun, Valentine's-themed painting night, filling the room with creativity and community spirit. Together we raised \$750 for AFTH's programs and services. A huge thank you to everyone who attended and supported AFTH, as well as Painting with a Twist – Media for hosting this



fantastic event. Stay tuned for our next fundraiser, and let us know what type of event you'd love to see next!

### *A Special Bear Stuffed Donation*

We're excited to share a thoughtful donation from Jockey Being Family in Cherry Hill! They recently dropped off a generous supply of bears to be given to adoptive and birth parents during placements in New Jersey. The bears will serve as a meaningful connection between the two families at the time of placement, offering a tangible reminder of their shared bond. We look forward to seeing how these bears help foster connections and support the families we serve.



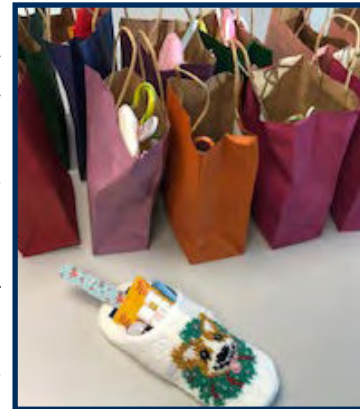
### *A Heartfelt Gift: Family Hosts Fundraiser for AFTH*

We were touched to receive a generous donation from a wonderful Home Study Only family that recently worked with CT social worker, Amran. This thoughtful family hosted a celebration and asked their guests to donate to

AFTH in lieu of gifts. Their kindness resulted in five donations totaling \$645—a beautiful way to give back! A special shoutout to Amran for building such a meaningful connection with this family. Their generosity will go a long way in supporting our Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund and making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

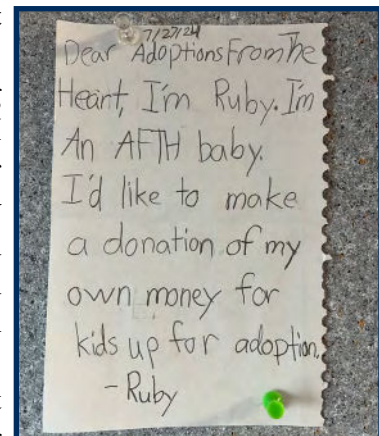
### *A Heartfelt Donation from a Birth Mother*

We recently received a thoughtful donation from a birth mother in New Jersey who placed her child for adoption in 2010. She generously sent gift bags filled with slippers, hand sanitizer, lip balm, hand lotion, and nail files, with the intention of paying it forward. These gift bags will be given to expectant and birth mothers we work with as a meaningful gesture of care and support.



### *A Generous Gesture from Ruby*

We recently received a heartfelt \$5 donation from baby Ruby, an AFTH adoptee. "After seeing and asking about the AFTH logo on the annual appeal her parents got in the mail, Ruby was inspired to contribute and grabbed her own money to send in a donation. Her thoughtful gesture, no matter the amount, makes a meaningful impact and reminds us of the lasting connections we share with those we serve. Thank you, Ruby, for your kindness and support!



## AFTH's Stance



# Adoptions From The Heart

For those worried or scared about the new US policy reversals and changes, we want to assure you that Adoptions From The Heart will continue to stand behind our core values of C.H.O.I.C.E.S.

- **Communication** – Listen well, be clear, respectful and inspiring
- **Honesty** – Be truthful and sincere
- **Opportunity** – Opportunity for growth and development
- **Integrity** – Make decisions that are consistent with the agency mission
- **Creativity** – Use imagination to transcend traditional ideas and create meaningful new ideas
- **Equality** – Treat all clients, employees, and their families with respect and dignity regardless of race, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, income level or title.
- **Support** – Support people's choices regarding family planning.

We have support groups for LGBTQ+ families that we encourage families to join as we navigate new and proposed laws.

We will continue to respect and use pronouns for families looking to place children and those waiting to adopt.

We will continue to be supportive and non-judgmental toward families seeking to place children for adoption and offer no-pressure options.

We will be looking for resources to provide educational information to answer immigration questions for those who have adopted internationally and are worried about their children's immigration status.

We will continue to educate families who are adopting transracially to be more prepared to navigate this changing culture while raising a child of a different race.

We will continue to encourage families of color to adopt to be able to provide choices of diverse families to expectant parents considering adoption.



## *Triangle Time: Building Community & Connection*

The first two Triangle Time sessions in Wynnewood were a resounding success. Led by Jacquelyn Fagioli—an adoptive parent and educator—this in-person gathering for placed adoptive families provided a warm and engaging space for connection, learning, and fun.

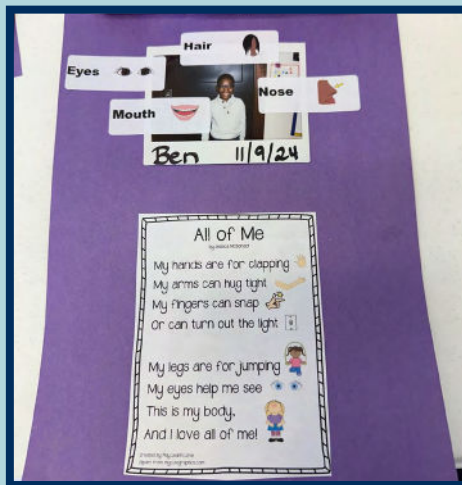
The first session welcomed eight families, who sat together for music, dancing, and a reading of "Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born". Jacquelyn facilitated meaningful discussions, encouraging parents to share their adoption stories in a natural and comforting way. She also surprised each child with a baby doll representing diverse racial backgrounds, adding a special touch to the experience.

The second session saw an even greater turnout, with families from multiple offices joining in. The room was alive with songs, stories, crafts, and

conversation. A highlight of the session was a balloon craft symbolizing the adoption triad, offering families a new way to represent their connections beyond the traditional tree and roots model.

With four sessions planned for this trial year, Triangle Time is proving to be a valuable resource for adoptive families looking to build community. One family was so moved by the experience that they immediately registered for all remaining 2025 sessions.

A huge thank you to Jacquelyn for her dedication and creativity, and to Sheila for bringing her warmth and energy to the group. We look forward to the next session in May 2025 and hope to expand this program to more AFTH locations. If you know families who might be interested, please help us spread the word.



### *Future Dates:*

**May 3, 2025**  
 10:00am - 11:00am  
 Wynnewood Office

**August 9, 2025**  
 10:00am - 11:00am  
 Wynnewood Office

This is a FREE event and is open to AFTH placed families only, with children up to 5yrs old. To RSVP please email Amanda Aliberti at [AmandaA@afth.org](mailto:AmandaA@afth.org)

## Celebrating Stephanie Capriotti

At Adoptions From The Heart (AFTH), we are privileged to have many devoted social workers on our team. This month, we celebrate Stephanie Capriotti, AFTH's longest-serving social worker, whose passion and dedication have left a lasting impact on countless lives.

### *Stephanie's Journey into Social Work*



Stephanie's path to social work was not linear. She began her studies at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania as a pre-med student, eager to work with and help people. However, she soon realized that doctors often don't get as much hands-on interaction with patients as she desired. Upon discussing this with a professor, she was encouraged to explore social work—and it was a perfect fit.

During her studies, Stephanie took an adoption course that sparked her interest in the field. The professor teaching the course was an adoptive mother and a board member at AFTH. She encouraged Stephanie to apply for a social work position at AFTH's newly opened Harrisburg office. Already familiar with the agency through her cousin's adoption, Stephanie applied, interviewed, and landed the job just weeks before graduating. As she puts it, "the rest was history!"

### *A Career Rooted in Passion*

Stephanie has been with AFTH for 24 years—more than half of the agency's 40-year history. She attributes the agency's success to its unwavering commitment to its mission, saying:

"We've never really lost sight of what Maxine truly wanted when she started the agency. So, I think that has just been our core and sort of our foundation in that openness is the most important thing. We never lost sight of making sure that for all the parties involved, we're doing what's in the best interest of them and the adoptees at the end of the day."

Over the years, Stephanie has witnessed significant growth at AFTH, particularly in the education and support services available to adoptive and birth parents. While counseling has always been a requirement, she notes that it has expanded to become an ongoing process. The introduction of various support groups for all members of the adoption triad—birth parents, adoptees, and adoptive parents—has also been a highlight of AFTH's evolution.

### *A Leader and Mentor*

Stephanie has advanced in her career, now serving as the Adoption Counselor & District Supervisor of the Central Pennsylvania office. While she still works closely with families, she also mentors and guides new social workers, helping them find their strengths and niche within the agency. Transitioning from hands-on social work to supervision required learning to step back and allow others to develop their own approaches. She finds it rewarding to watch new social workers grow in their roles, bringing fresh perspectives to the agency's mission.

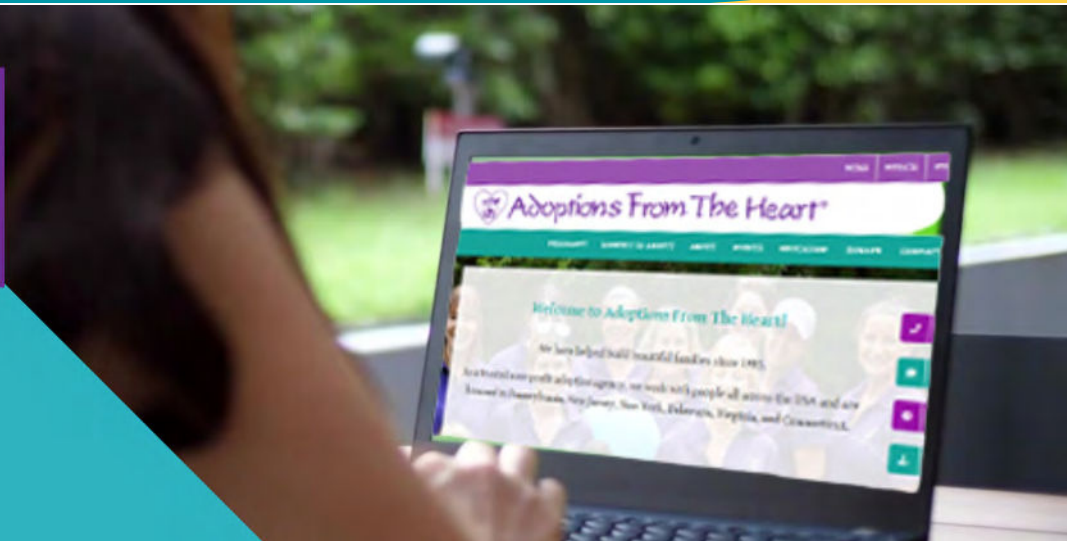


Through her years at AFTH, Stephanie has learned that patience and empathy are key. She explains that each person processes adoption differently, and it's essential to respect individual timelines and needs:

"There are so many processes at play in adoption—the hospital process, the legal process. It's crucial to remain patient and empathetic with families, allowing individuals space in these life-changing moments to make the best decision for them and their children."

After 24 years, Stephanie's passion for adoption and dedication to AFTH remain as strong as ever. She has been a pillar of support for so many families, ensuring they receive the guidance and compassion they need. Her unwavering commitment makes her an invaluable part of the AFTH community.

# On-Demand Video Series



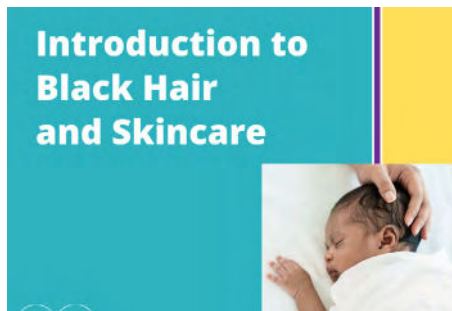
AFTH has easy-access on-demand webinars geared for waiting and adoptive parents as well as extended family members and professionals. The on-demand webinars not only count toward AFTH's waiting family yearly education requirement credits but are also a valuable way to spend the wait learning even more about adoption related topics.

## JUST ADDED ON-DEMAND WEBINARS:

*Longer (18mth+) Waiting Families Panel*

*Intro to Black Hair & Skincare*

*Conversations with Your Adoptee About Adoption Through Different Ages/Stages*



The wait time can be hard and often can be around the year and a half mark it can become more difficult. Join us as we hear from families who were placed with AFTH after at least 1.5 years of waiting. They will share what they “wish they knew then”, their experiences with waiting, being placed, and building relationships with their child’s birth family.

Join AFTH social workers for essential tips and techniques for caring for diverse hair textures & skin types. We will cover curl types as well as recommended products and tools. Additionally, a father who adopted transracially, shares his journey of learning how to care for his daughters' hair and skin.

Learn how to support your adopted child through different life stages in this webinar with social workers Jamie and Jennifer. They’ll share tips on age-appropriate conversations, from toddlerhood to adolescence. Remember, you’re not alone—lean on friends, family, and social workers for support.

We are always adding new topics to our webinar page. To discover all the classes currently available please visit our [OnDemand webinar page](#).

## Terry and Jared's Adoption Journey:

### *A Story of Love, Patience, and Hope*

Terry and Jared always knew they wanted to become parents. From the early days of their relationship, they envisioned a future filled with love, laughter, and the joy of raising a child together. Adoption had always been on their hearts as the right path to growing their family, and after researching different agencies, they were drawn to AFTH. Hearing firsthand experiences from friends who had worked with AFTH, they felt confident that this was the agency that could help them make their dreams a reality.

### *Embracing Adoption with Open Hearts*



As an interracial couple, Terry and Jared felt a deep connection to the idea of adopting a biracial child. They wanted their future child to feel embraced, understood, and supported in their identity.

Their circle of friends, many of whom were part of interracial families themselves, became an essential source of inspiration and reassurance. They knew that their child would grow up with a strong sense of belonging, surrounded by people who shared similar backgrounds and experiences. Their extended family also played a crucial role, offering unwavering support and affirmations that their child's unique heritage would always be honored and cherished.

While their hearts were full of excitement, the waiting period proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of their journey.

*“The unknown is the hardest part,” Terry admits. “There were moments of doubt, anxiety, and the emotional rollercoaster of not knowing when we would be matched.”*

To cope with the stress and uncertainty, Terry

and Jared found comfort in keeping busy. They immersed themselves in hobbies, spent time with loved ones, and leaned on each other for support. They also connected with other waiting families through AFTH, finding solace in shared experiences and the reassurance that they were not alone.

### *The Life-Changing Moment*

After months of waiting, the moment they had been dreaming of finally arrived—they were selected by a birth parent. The news filled them with overwhelming joy and gratitude.

*“We were over the moon,” they recall. “It was surreal to know that we were finally taking the next step toward parenthood.”*

Jared offers heartfelt advice to other hopeful adoptive parents navigating the waiting process:

*“Try not to overthink, and stop negative thought cycles before they spiral. It’s so easy to go down a black hole, but you have to trust that your time will come.”*

As their journey unfolded, Jared found himself deeply moved by the strength and courage of their child's birth parent.

*“I wasn’t prepared for the wave of emotions I felt on their behalf,” he shares. “The bravery it takes to make such a selfless decision is something I will always hold immense respect for.”*

The experience deepened their understanding of adoption as a journey built on love—not just their love for their child, but the love and sacrifice of the birth parents as well.

Today, they cherish every moment with their child, knowing that their family was brought together through a beautiful act of love and connection.

Their story serves as an inspiration to all hopeful adoptive parents: no matter how long or uncertain the road may seem, the joy of finally holding your child in your arms makes every challenge along the way worthwhile.

## Navigating the Cost of Adoption: Help Us Adopt Grants



HELPU.S.ADOPT.ORG

The journey to adoption is filled with excitement, anticipation, and sometimes financial hurdles. Many families pursuing adoption face significant expenses, which can make the process daunting. Fortunately, organizations like Help Us Adopt are dedicated to alleviating the financial burden for hopeful adoptive parents.

### ***What Is Help Us Adopt?***

Help Us Adopt is a nonprofit organization committed to making adoption more accessible by providing substantial financial grants to adopting families. Founded by Becky Fawcett, Help Us Adopt believes that financial constraints should not prevent loving families from growing through adoption.

### ***Grant Opportunities***

Help Us Adopt awards grants of up to \$30,000 to help cover the costs associated with adoption. This year alone, the organization plans to distribute an impressive \$3 million in grants to families in need.

One of the key aspects that sets Help Us Adopt apart is its commitment to inclusivity. The organization provides grants to:

- Same-Sex Couples
- Single Parents
- Married Couples

Their mission is to support families of all backgrounds without discrimination, ensuring that more children find their forever homes.

### ***Application Details***

Help Us Adopt offers grants six times per year, giving families multiple opportunities to secure financial assistance. The next application deadline is May 3rd, making now the perfect time for prospective adoptive parents to apply.

During a recent call with founder Becky Fawcett, she emphasized the importance of persistence. She strongly encourages families to apply for each grant cycle while they wait for placement. If a family does not receive a grant during one cycle, they should continue applying, as the selection process varies each time.

Month Award	Application Deadline	Grant Awarded
June Award	May 3	June 30th
August Award	July 5	August 31st
October Award	September 6	October 31st
December Award	November 1	December 31st

### ***How to Apply***

Applying for a grant through Help Us Adopt is a straightforward process. Interested families can find detailed information and application guidelines on their [website](#).

If you or someone you know is considering adoption and could benefit from financial assistance, be sure to explore Help Us Adopt. Remember, persistence is key—keep applying, stay hopeful, and take advantage of the incredible support available to help make your adoption dream a reality.

## Agency News

### **Domestic Program Update**

#### **Happy National Social Worker Month (March).**

We celebrate our AFTH Social Workers, Counselors, Case Workers, and Social Workers worldwide for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to families. Your efforts, especially in times of uncertainty and limited resources, are deeply appreciated. We hope each of you takes time to recognize your impact this month.

AFTH Social Workers, your work is valued; from counseling expectant parents on their options to “on call” time for emergency (and planned!) placements on nights, weekends, and holidays. From completing outreach in our community to ensure we know local resources for clients and local resources know about our services to hosting education courses, series, and support groups. From writing home studies, dictations, and reports following state regulations to agency wide meetings and participating in events. We appreciate all you do for AFTH families and the teamwork you have all shown.

We have seen an increase in adolescent and adult adoptees reaching out about questions about their background and biological connections and identity. As adoptive parents, showing our children that we honor their identity, biological family, history, and culture is crucial to creating a secure attachment and trusting relationship with your children; the hope is that they will come to their adoptive families for support and encouragement when searching for birth families. We have many educational opportunities available to learn more about navigating this throughout your child’s life. Please see education opportunities on [page 4](#) and [page 11](#) for more information if you are struggling with openness please reach out to your local offices to help you navigate keeping the promises made to your child and their birth families.

### **Agency Waiting Statistics**

Over the years, we have observed a significant reduction in the number of families experiencing extended wait times of over two years for placement. While extended waits can still pose challenges for

those affected, our current wait time statistics are notably lower compared to other agencies offering domestic adoption services.

As of March 1st, 82% of our waiting families have been waiting less than 2 years, 63% of AFTH’s waiting families have been waiting for 18 months or less and 39% a year or less.

### **Emergency Placement Statistics**

In the past fiscal year, 71% of placements have been emergencies. Please have a plan ready for children in the home, pets, car/travel, and your home in case you get “the call” and need to be states away within 24 hours!

### **Help Us Adopt Grants**

Help Us Adopt awards grants of up to \$30,000 to help cover the costs associated with adoption. Their mission is to support families of all backgrounds without discrimination, ensuring that more children find their forever homes. If you are interested in learning more about Help Us Adopt grants, check out [page 13](#).

### **Find Their Footing 5k Wish List**

Our community is coming together to support Adoptions From The Heart’s Find Their Footing 5K & Festival, and ***you can help us reach our fundraising goals!*** By donating items from our Amazon Wishlist, you’ll play a vital role in making this event a success. Every contribution helps us create an incredible experience while raising funds for the AFTH Expectant & Birth Parent Support Fund.



Check out our [wishlist](#) and be a part of something special!

## Congratulations to AFTH's Newest Families!

Wishing you all joyful days and endless happiness as you embark on this beautiful adventure together.

### Nov 2024 to Feb 2025 Families:

- Angela & Swati
- Charles & Brian
- Peter & Guy
- Donna
- Eli & Oliver
- Carmalena
- John & Margot
- Bruce & Tara
- Daniel & Vince
- Kelly
- Kevin & Christopher
- Andrew & Victoria
- Nathan & Matthew
- Charles & Edward (twins)
- William & Jennifer
- Tom & Brynn
- Christopher & Devon
- Kevin & Emily
- Edward & Joseph
- Daniel & Janna



## Upcoming Events

### Heart-to-Heart: Women in Adoption

In honor of Women's History Month, our next

**Heart-to-Heart** event will spotlight incredible women who have made a lasting impact in the adoption community.

Join us for a panel discussion featuring inspiring voices, including **AFTH** founder **Maxine Chalker**, who will share the story behind Adoptions From The

Heart and reflect on its 40th anniversary.

This is a wonderful opportunity to hear powerful stories and celebrate the contributions of women in adoption. **Registration is FREE**, and all donations will support AFTH programs and services.

### Heart-to-Heart: Women In Adoption

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Virtual Event Through Zoom

[Register Today](#)



### Summer Family Picnics

We're thrilled to bring back our Summer Family Picnics—a wonderful opportunity to reconnect, celebrate, and enjoy time together! These gatherings are a special tradition where AFTH families can meet, share stories, and create lasting memories.

#### Main Family Picnic (PA, NJ, & DE)

Sunday, June 8 | 11am - 2pm  
Lukens Park (Everybody's Playground)

#### Virginia

Saturday, June 7 | 11am - 1pm  
Chesapeake City Park Fun Forest

#### Connecticut

Sunday, June 8 | 12pm - 3pm  
Elizabeth Park (Meet at Pond House Café)

#### Pittsburgh

Sunday, June 22 | 11am - 1pm  
Hempfield Park

#### New York City

Sunday, August 9th | 11am - 2pm  
Billy Johnson Playground

For more details visit our picnic [page on our website](#).

30-31 Hampstead Circle  
Wynnewood, PA 19096

---

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

## Year Round Donor (YRD)



At Adoptions From The Heart we believe every expectant and birth parent should have the support they need to make informed choices. Your donation helps provide critical resources, counseling, and financial assistance to those navigating the adoption journey.

By giving today—or *becoming a Year-Round Donor (YRD)*—you ensure that expectant and birth parents have ongoing support, adoptive families receive the guidance they need, and children find safe and loving homes. A monthly commitment creates a ripple effect of lasting change!

Join us in making a difference. [Donate today](#) and become a YRD to help us build brighter futures, one adoption at a time.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WE HAVE MANY EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITITES FOR  
FAMILIES TO STAY INVOLVED

---

CHECK OUT ALL OF OUR EVENTS TODAY!

<https://calendar.afth.org/>