

Adoption News

A Newsletter From:

Adoptions From The Heart

National Adoption Month Series: Meet Nicole Fowler

About Nicole Fowler's Role and Work at AFTH:



Nicole is the Director of Social Services for Adoptions From The Heart, District Supervisor for Virginia, and Regional Supervisor for AFTH's Allentown & Connecticut offices. In this role, Fowler focuses on the development of educational courses, learning how to best suit the needs of all, current and future, AFTH families. She is dedicated to being a support for all team members, while working to be a lifeline to the team when challenges arise.

Nicole first came to AFTH over 15 years ago. Since then, she has learned that there is so much that goes into making an adoption plan, and she values the courage needed to make such plan. Understanding the gains and losses the adoption triad experiences, while boosting up the adoptee is a big inspiration to the work that she does. "Thinking of the children that are placed for adoption [is what keeps me motivated]," Fowler told us.

When it comes to her goals for AFTH, Fowler hopes to put an emphasis on education and support for all members of the adoption triad, and those considering adoption. "I want to have the best families and social workers to work with those that are considering adoption. I trust and believe in our program so much, that I want [families] to find us," she shared.

Since Nicole started as an intern and moved to administration, she has done a lot with AFTH. Now she focuses on the macro-level of AFTH as a whole. After 10+ years of casework, Fowler uses her experience to develop programming and works to review cases alongside the team, while supervising social services. She shared that she is constantly taking in new information through books and other media in order to educate herself.

November 2024



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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

As mentioned above, Nicole is all about education and this is why AFTH's educational resources are so important to her. When asked about AFTH's educational resources, Nicole shared that AFTH focuses much attention on educating about the fundamental aspects of adoption, leading adoptees to feel more comfortable and confident with their identity. Classes are available that focus on intersectionality, transracial adoption, and non-newborn adoption, among others. Educational series feature panels, lectures, and information for families considering adoption.

When it comes to advice, this is what Nicole has to say to perspective adoptive parents: there are so many ways to go about adoption. "It takes time," Fowler shared. It is important to connect with other members of the adoption triad to hear their stories. For expectant parents, it is important to have local support. Working with an agency that believes in open adoption and will provide services post-adoption planning is crucial to feel supported.

The Importance of National Adoption Month:



National Adoption Month is a time to celebrate everyone who has experienced the adoption process. There are positive and negative experiences in the process of adoption, but we need to share those stories to boost everyone up.

Always continue sharing information from those who have lived through adoption. "We all have to educate ourselves but listening and having a platform for all to share their experiences [allows people to feel confident and comfortable to speak out]."

Navigating The Unexpected: Morgan's Path to Open Adoption



When Morgan stepped into the hospital, she found herself in labor, completely unaware she was pregnant. While faced with the decision to parent her son, Morgan found strength, guidance, and support from Adoptions From The Heart (AFTH), alongside the hospital staff. Her journey went from fear, uncertainty, and confusion to a place of hope and confidence. Morgan's experience provides a first-hand glimpse into the impact of compassionate adoption support provided by AFTH.

Morgan's story is unique. In the hospital, with no prior knowledge of her pregnancy, she was presented with two options for placing her child for adoption: a law firm and AFTH. Morgan called AFTH, and Amanda Aliberti, Adoption From The Heart's Birthparent Services Manager, answered the phone in the middle of the night. From that first conversation, Morgan felt a sense of comfort due to the support system Amanda had begun to put in place.

Morgan recalls how Amanda walked her through each step with genuine compassion and clarity. *"Just the way [Amanda] talked to me, I knew it would all be okay,"* Morgan said. Initially, she leaned toward a closed adoption, fearing the open adoption requirements and processes. However, with the guidance of Amanda, the hospital nurses, and her other social worker, Christian Mayer, Morgan began to open herself to the idea of an open adoption. *"I was nervous about connecting to a family,"* she admitted, but the ongoing communication and reassurance helped her make a choice that benefitted her and her son.

Placing a child for adoption is an emotional journey, especially when you do not know that you are pregnant. As Morgan was unaware she was going to be giving birth, she recalls, *"A lot of emotions [in such a short amount of time]."*

Morgan, already parenting one child, decided to

work with AFTH and selected one of the longest-waiting families. When she finally found a family for her son, she reminded herself, *"This is all about love and protection of a child,"* and knew in her heart, *"He was meant to be with them."*

Although her initial thought was to opt for a closed adoption, the support and resources from AFTH helped shift that mindset. *"At first, I thought a closed adoption would be the best option. But, it really wasn't."* She cherishes the open relationship she now has with the adoptive family, watching them grow and maintaining a loving connection with her son as his "bonus person." Morgan encourages adoptive families to keep an open line of communication and try to incorporate the birthparent into the child's life.

For Morgan, the support she received from Adoptions From The Heart extended far beyond placement. *"Every time I text [my social workers], they are more than happy to respond,"* she shared. AFTH's birth parent support group became a critical space for Morgan to connect, share, and cope with others who understood. *"You get to watch this family grow,"* she says of her son's adoptive family. Her gratitude for their openness and love is immense. *"I am more grateful to them for being so amazing."*

Morgan emphasizes that her journey is a story of love. Her hope is that every adoptive parent maintains open communication and offers opportunities for birth parents to remain a part of their children's lives. *"There are a lot of children that need to be loved,"* Morgan states, and she encourages others navigating this path not to lose hope in the process. Morgan enjoys receiving photos and updates from her adoptive family. The family has also maintained excellent open communication with Morgan, even sending her gifts to share their appreciation and love.

Morgan's journey is just one example of how compassionate adoption support and open adoption can provide so much to an individual. From fear and uncertainty, she found love, support, and community. Her story is a reminder that even the most unexpected journeys can lead to hope, strength, and meaningful connections.

Celebrating 20 years with Kristy Hartley-Galbraith

We are honored to celebrate a remarkable milestone: Kristy Hartley-Galbraith's 20th anniversary with Adoptions From The Heart! Kristy, our Director of Marketing and Communications, has been an unwavering source of support, not only for her team in marketing but for the entire AFTH family. As an adoptive mother herself, Kristy's dedication to adoption is both personal and profound.



Through this series, Kristy brings real-life experiences to the forefront, exploring both the joys and challenges that adoption entails. By giving a voice to all members of the adoption triad, she fosters understanding, openness, and respect, helping to reshape the public's

perception of adoption.

Kristy's leadership radiates throughout the agency. She continually strives to create a supportive, family-like environment for her team and is known for her unwavering commitment to AFTH's core values. She is an advocate for ethical adoption practices, which means empowering expectant parents with unbiased information to make informed decisions—not guiding them toward any specific outcome. Her work ensures that AFTH remains true to its founding principles, upholding the highest standards in adoption while adapting to the changing needs of the community.

With her unique insights, compassionate leadership, and unwavering dedication, Kristy Hartley-Galbraith embodies the heart of Adoptions From The Heart. We are grateful for the legacy she is building and the future she envisions for AFTH—one that remains rooted in respect, inclusivity, and genuine connection. Thank you, Kristy, for your extraordinary contributions and for being such an integral part of the AFTH family.



Please join us in celebrating Kristy's incredible journey with us and her ongoing commitment to making a meaningful impact in the world of adoption.



Kristy and Family

"I feel as though I've truly grown up within its walls. When I considered applying to non-profits in Philadelphia, I was immediately drawn to Adoptions From The Heart for several reasons. Adoption has always held a special

place in my heart; my siblings and I have expanded our families through a mix of domestic, international, and foster care adoption, as well as through biological children." said Kristy.

Kristy continues, "what set AFTH apart for me was its unique perspective, being founded by an adoptee. This origin profoundly influences the way AFTH provides services and supports all members of the adoption triad, as it incorporates the viewpoint of someone who has personally experienced adoption—a rarity among adoption agencies."

Kristy's journey with AFTH has been one of growth, commitment, and deep-rooted purpose. Beginning her career here in her early twenties, Kristy has spent two decades not only advancing our mission but growing alongside it. For Kristy, AFTH has been more than a workplace; it has been a family, a place of profound personal and professional development, and a platform where her passion for ethical adoption practices thrives.

Her dedication goes beyond traditional marketing. As the producer of AFTHtv, Kristy has created a platform for voices that too often go unheard, tackling adoption's complexities with honesty and empathy.

Welcoming AFTH's New Staff in 2024

Julie Tran

Events & Public Relations Coordinator



Julie Tran joined the AFTH team in April of 2024 as the Events & PR Coordinator. Julie graduated from Penn State University in 2017 with a communications degree. Before joining the AFTH team, Julie worked in digital

marketing, property management, and she was a full-time small business owner.

During her free time, Julie owns a home decor company called Pure Bliss Home Decor, and she does pop markets around the greater Philadelphia area. Julie joined the AFTH team because she had always been interested in the non-profit world. She had been involved in Penn State's THON, Relay For Life with the American Cancer Society, and the Ronald McDonald House in Danville, PA.

"I am so happy that I am part of AFTH, and I get to work on fundraising initiatives, public relations and express my creative freedom. One of my favorite things I've done at AFTH so far was creating the AFTH Fall Fest and raising money for the agency and our Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund. I've been learning a lot at AFTH, and I enjoy the work that I do!" - Julie Tran.

Princess Fenner

VA/CPA Professional Administrative Assistant



Princess Fenner joined the AFTH team in February of 2024 as the VA/CPA Professional Administrative Assistant. Princess has been an administrative support professional for a little over five years. While working in

that role full time for several years, Princess was also a part-time student at the University of Maryland Global Campus and graduated in 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Princess' expertise involves a variety of clerical tasks such as scheduling meetings, preparing reports, maintaining files containing sensitive and confidential documents, communicating with clients on behalf of executives, and planning travel arrangements - supporting several different departments with multiple tasks as needed.

"While I typically do most of what I do behind the scenes, I value being hands-on in the actual processes of an organization so part of what made me drawn to AFTH was its collaborative environment. Everyone works together to achieve the goals of the agency. I get to see on a daily basis how my role is as vital as everyone else's and I feel recognized and extremely valued here." - Princess Fenner.

Cecilia Humphrey

Case Worker Trainee



Cecilia Humphrey joined the AFTH team in February of 2024 as a Case Worker Trainee. Cecilia graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelor of Social Work in 2023. AFTH is her first role as a social worker!

Cecilia waited entering the social work field, because she wanted to find a job that aligned with her values and working at AFTH really captured the kind of work that she wanted to do. She was drawn to the world of adoption through watching her father go through his own journey as an infant adoptee.

Her favorite part about working at AFTH is all the knowledge that she has gained over the course of her time here. She also enjoys the collaborative nature of her office.

Did You Know...

It's Beyond our Profession, It's Personal

AFTH has over nine staff members who are themselves members of the adoption triad: adoptive parent, birth parent or adoptee.

AFTH's First Annual Fall Fest:

A Heartfelt Celebration of Community, Artisanship, and Fun

On November 3rd, Adoptions From The Heart hosted its First Annual Fall Fest at Rose Tree Park in Media, PA, and it was a day full of joy, community, and support for a meaningful cause. From 11 am to 4 pm, the festival grounds buzzed with excitement as families and friends gathered to celebrate the fall season with local artisans, delicious food, and plenty of activities.

We were thrilled to have over 35 talented craft vendors who brought their best to this year's event! From hand-knitted plush toys and custom jewelry to cozy scarves, candles, and unique prints, the festival was the perfect opportunity to shop locally and discover one-of-a-kind treasures. It was a fantastic way to find holiday gifts and seasonal decorations while supporting local creators.

Food was a hit at Fall Fest. With Cousin's Maine Lobster food truck, Angie's Vietnamese Cuisine, Baked Tastic by Suhey, and the AFTH concession stand, festival-goers had a variety of delicious options to savor. Whether craving lobster rolls, Vietnamese specialties, or freshly baked treats, there was something to satisfy every taste.



"It was my first time attending an AFTH event, but I am so glad I went. I was able to shop local vendors that I have been super excited to shop from and I learned so much about the Birth Parent perspective from one of the Birth Mothers who was at the raffle station. My family and I will be there next year!"

- Monica, Community Member

The fun didn't stop with shopping and food. We had exciting inflatable activities for kids (and kids at heart) including a giant obstacle course and inflatable slides that kept everyone entertained. And for those looking to add a bit of magic to their day, face painting by Janine from Rise and Shine Face Painting brought out festival-inspired pumpkins, cats, and butterflies with a touch of glitter and artistry.

Fall Fest wouldn't have been possible without the support of our incredible sponsors—WFSF Bank, Kyndryl, Heiler Painting, Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union, and Michelle Cabrera—as well as our dedicated volunteers and donors. A huge thank you goes out to each and every one who contributed their time, energy, and resources.

Through this event, we were able to raise funds for AFTH's Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund, which provides resources and support to birth parents. It was heartwarming to see so many familiar faces and to welcome new friends, all joining together in the spirit of community.

We can't wait to make next year's Fall Fest even bigger and better. Thank you to everyone who came out to make the First Annual Fall Fest such a memorable success!

Cat's Adoption Story and Reflections on Identity

When we talk about adoption, we often explore themes of family, identity, and resilience. For Cat, being adopted was not a revelation that came at a particular moment but rather a fact she was raised knowing. *“I never really found out,” she said. “It was never a secret.”* Growing up as the only adopted person in her family, Cat recalls an overwhelmingly positive experience filled with love and support. Her adoptive family, a close-knit unit, made her feel right at home with her brother, a biological child. *“It never was a secretive, negative thing,”* she shared. This early openness about her story shaped how she perceived adoption—not as something to hide but as a unique and valued part of her identity.

Though she didn't know her birth family personally while growing up, Cat stayed connected to her birth mother through letters each year. This annual correspondence gave her a tangible connection to her roots, and she had photos that marked the beginnings of her story. She learned about her birth mother's background: a young woman in college, who, though she initially tried to raise her, decided adoption was the best path to ensure a better life.

For Cat, adoption was always “a cool, fun, and interesting fact” about herself. Growing up, she had friends who were also adoptees, which made the experience feel even more “normal.” Although she occasionally wondered about her biological roots

when she was younger, her primary focus was on the family she had—the one that had embraced her from infancy. As she grew older, any questions she had took a back seat to the present relationships and strong bonds with her adoptive family.

Cat's adoptive journey has influenced not only her outlook on family but also her goals and dreams. Her mother, who owns Heart & Soul'd Thrift Store, inspired Cat's desire to give back. This legacy of compassion and service is something she values deeply, and she now has the opportunity to share her experience with her younger cousin, who is also adopted. *“I get to help her with any questions about being adopted, so it is special,”* Cat reflected.

For those struggling with identity, Cat's advice is to *“look at the overall picture.”* She acknowledges that grappling with identity can be challenging, especially when the past feels uncertain. But Cat believes there's beauty in every adoption story. She says, *“Even though I know biologically that I'm not hers, my mom shaped me so much into the woman I am today.”* This sentiment highlights Cat's belief that family is not solely defined by biology but by the shared experiences that create lasting bonds.



National Adoption Month

National Adoption Month, an initiative of the Children's Bureau, shines a spotlight on adoption issues, highlights the urgent need for adoptive families for teens in the U.S. foster care system, and underscores the importance of youth engagement in the process. At Adoptions From The Heart, we are dedicated to using this month to raise awareness about every perspective within the adoption triad. Our goal is to emphasize the importance of providing resources to all members of the adoption community while educating the public about the diverse experiences and realities of adoption for everyone involved.

Raising Awareness During National Adoption Month

AFTH is bringing content all month long to share the experiences of the adoption triad - you can learn all about all sides of the triad through AFTHtv, Adoption & Beyond Podcast, AFTH Blogs, social media and much more.

AFTHtv Season 17



This National Adoption Month, AFTHtv is back with powerful stories from across the adoption community. Tune in on our [YouTube channel](#) to hear firsthand experiences from birth parents, adoptive parents, adoptees, and social workers. Don't miss these incredible voices sharing their unique journeys and insights!

Adoption & Beyond Podcast



The Adoption & Beyond Podcast comes out every third Thursday of the month and explores various topics in the adoption world and beyond. In this November episode, Nicole and Alyse sit down with Isaac Etter, a transracial adoptee, social entrepreneur, and the founder of Identity, a groundbreaking organization reimagining post-placement support for adoptive and foster families.

To listen to this episode or catch up on previous ones, visit our [YouTube](#) or [Spotify page](#) and search Adoption & Beyond Podcast.

AFTH Social Media



Check out Adoptions From The Heart's [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [TikTok](#) pages to stay updated on everything happening during National Adoption Month and the holidays. We are sharing educational content all month long, with resources for adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents.

We'd love to hear from you! Let us know what topics you'd like us to cover in the future by heading to our pages. Search @AdoptionsFromTheHeart on any social media platform and leave your feedback in the comments!

AFTH Blog Posts

Make sure to check out our [blog posts](#), published every Wednesday. You'll find inspiring client stories, helpful resources for families, and much more.

Are you an AFTH client interested in sharing your adoption story? We'd love to feature you!

Reach out to AFTH's Marketing Manager, Mayra Herrera, at MayraH@afth.org to learn more about how you can be highlighted in a blog post or on our social media platforms.

'Tis the Season of Giving

Partnering Together to Make a Bigger Difference

The impact that AFTH has is not limited to the work of the social workers and support staff. The aid that we have been able to give through the Expecting & Birth Parent Support Fund and Birth Parent Scholarship Fund would not have been the same this past year without generous partnerships with organizations and caring donors just like you. Whether you make a one time contribution or sign up for our monthly give online at afth.org/donate, you are coming together with others who want to help and sharing your heart with others in need. Thank you!

Heart & Soul'd Fundraised and Donated \$2,650

We are honored to have been chosen as one of Heart & Soul'd's Mission Matches this year! Founded by a sister duo who are also AFTH adoptive parents, Heart & Soul'd supports those in foster care and private adoption. We are so grateful for their dedication and generosity in helping make a difference.

Success With Honor - Penn State Watch Party

We are deeply grateful to Success With Honor for choosing Adoptions From The Heart as one of the beneficiaries of their Penn State Football Watch Party in Mechanicsburg, PA. Thanks to their generosity and the support of attendees, \$2,400 was raised for our AFTH Support Fund—what an incredible impact!

Rob Nash Golf Tournament in Potsmouth, VA

We are so grateful to the Rob Nash Golf Company for organizing their annual Rob Nash Golf Classic in support of Adoptions From The Heart. Started by AFTH adoptive parents, this incredible fundraiser unites the golf community to support expecting and birth parents. This year, their efforts raised \$465—thank you for making a difference.



Gift Card Drive 2024

The holidays can feel hopeless for someone living paycheck-to-paycheck, especially when there are children in the home. Each year, social workers identify birth parents who are parenting other children and are in need of a little help. Last winter, more than \$10,000 in gift cards were given to help birth parents and their families during the holidays.

"I wasn't going to be able to give my two little girls presents this year but YOU made it possible. There will never be enough ways to express how thankful I am for this." - Kristen D

If you would like to make a donation towards the Gift Card Drive. You can send your monetary donation to AFTH at 30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood, PA 19096 or donate online at afth.org/national-adoption-month.



AFTH's 2025 Building Beautiful Families Calendar



When You Purchase a Calendar, You Share Your Heart with Someone Facing a Difficult Time

Each and every calendar sold **moving forward** benefits AFTH's Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund. We are hoping to sell out again this year and have less than **30 calendars left to sell!**

All year long AFTH's Support Fund provides necessary financial assistance to expecting and birth parents facing hardships. At times, expecting parents working with AFTH are in need of some help securing food, housing, and clothing among other things. The Fund has also been used to help avoid eviction by paying back rent, restore heat by paying utility bills, and provide public transportation passes for travel to work

and doctor appointments. AFTH's Support Fund allows AFTH to meet all of those needs.

The calendar features photos submitted by families of children who were adopted through AFTH - ranging from just a few months old to teenagers and represent both domestic and past international adoption programs. The calendar honors adoption while raising money to help those are putting their child's needs above their own.

Cost: \$15.00 + \$2.00 shipping

How to Purchase Your Calendars:

- 1) Online at the AFTH Online Store at <https://tinyurl.com/AFTHCalendar>
- 2) Complete the below form and mail in with payment

Building Beautiful Families 2025 Calendar

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Please SHIP ____ # Calendars x \$17.00 = \$ _____ Total Enclosed

Make Checks Payable to: Adoptions From The Heart

Mail Payment and Form To: 30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood, PA 19096

A New In-Person Resource for Adoptive Families

Triangle Time Launches in Wynnewood.

On Saturday, November 9, 2024, Adoptions From The Heart's Wynnewood office proudly hosted its first-ever Triangle Time session for placed adoptive parents and their children. This exciting new program brought families together in a warm and supportive setting to connect, learn, and share experiences.

Jacquelyn Fagioli, an adoptive mom via transracial adoption and an educator, led the session with an extraordinary blend of energy, positivity, and thoughtfulness. Drawing on her personal and professional experience, Jacquelyn carefully designed the program to incorporate key adoption-related concepts in a way that felt engaging and natural for both parents and children. Her efforts were a resounding success, creating a welcoming adoption community for all who attended.

Highlights of the Event

- **Strong Attendance:** Eight families joined the session, sitting together on floor mats for a cozy and interactive experience.
- **Interactive Activities:** Jacquelyn led the group through music, dancing, and storytelling. A highlight of the session was a reading of *Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born* by Jamie Lee Curtis.
- **Personal Storytelling:** Using the book as a springboard, parents shared snippets of their adoption stories with their children in a gentle and accessible way.
- **Thoughtful Surprises:** Each child received a surprise bag containing a baby doll, carefully chosen to represent diverse racial backgrounds, adding a special and meaningful touch to the day.

This inaugural session was part of a yearlong pilot program, with four sessions planned through 2025. The overwhelmingly positive feedback suggests Triangle Time could become a long-term resource for families.

We're already looking forward to the next session in February 2025! For families interested in attending future sessions or learning more about this initiative, feel free to contact your office or sign up on [AFTH's calendar of events](#).

This is just the beginning of what promises to be an invaluable resource for the adoption community. Together, we are building connections that matter and creating spaces where families can thrive.



Agency News

AFTH Holiday Closure

AFTH offices will be closed for the holidays starting at 4pm on Friday, December 20th and re-opening on Thursday, January 2nd. **Social workers will be available to hospitals for emergency placements during the break and will continue working with women who may deliver during that time.**

Each year, AFTH sends postcards the week before the holidays to hospitals, clinics and other referral sources to let them know AFTH staff are available and ready to help even during the holidays. And every year, we receive calls for placements during the holidays as a direct result.

Domestic Program Update

We hope all of our AFTH families have had a wonderful 2024! As we go into our 40th year celebration of AFTH in 2025, we want to reiterate our values and mission at Adoptions From The Heart. We support parent's rights to all options in pregnancy. We support all members of the adoption triad with "the best interest of the child" at the forefront. We recognize, and do not celebrate, the losses and grief that come with adoption, but believe in our program and families enough to wish that every parent considering adoption finds our agency for support and services. We want to work with our communities to gather information that is helpful to our clients and will also reach others with our information. We believe in the power and heart that goes into having openness with children in adoption, regardless of circumstances. We appreciate all who have joined us in this; your support, evaluations, and constructive feedback are taken into esteemed consideration.

New contracts and policies will be going out early December, please get these back to your Social Worker by the due date to avoid a hold on profiles. Profiles will go on hold if there is a delay in return and we want as many families to be active as possible over the holidays!

The Wait During The Holidays

We recognize the holidays can be a particularly difficult time in the "waiting" part of the adoption journey. We offer many different supports in forms of groups or one-on-one meetings to discuss the "what if's", "how to talk to family members and friends", frustrations, joys, questions, concerns! Please do not suffer in silence, make connections in your supporting community now! Please see information throughout this newsletter and connect with your Social Worker for ideas. In addition, we always look forward to connecting families to support through events such as our picnics and Education Series.

Emergency Placement Statistics

Since the beginning of the year, 63% 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!

Families picked for emergency placements have a lot to process in a short period of time and so it's important for families to understand the expectations for them at the hospital. You might have questions about what to and not to do in an emergency placement. If you would like a refresher "preparedness" flyer with ideas from adoptive parents who have been there before, please contact your Social Worker.



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. In the past, it was not uncommon for some families to remain active for three or even four years. 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 November 1st, 67% of AFTH's waiting families have been waiting for 18 months or less and 54% a year or less.

Adoptee Support Group Continues To Grow

This year, we proudly launched the Adoptee Support Group, a collaborative effort led by adoptees and social workers Christian Mayer from our Wynnewood office and Jackie Zausner from our New Jersey office. The group has welcomed adoptees aged 15 and older, providing a safe and supportive space for them to share their experiences, feelings, and stories with others who understand their journey.

As we look ahead to 2025, our goal is to expand the group and reach even more adoptees who can benefit from this vital platform. If you are an adoptee aged 15 or older, or if you know someone who might find this group helpful, we encourage you to share this information with them.

Dates for the 2025 sessions are already available on the AFTH Calendar of Events. We hope to see new and returning members as we continue fostering connection and support within the adoptee community.

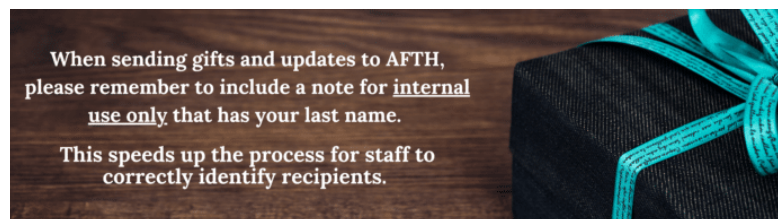


During the holiday season, AFTH receives gifts to forward along to members of the adoption triad. When doing this, we request that adoptive families include funds to cover the postage to repackage and send the gift from our office to their child's birth family.

A friendly reminder: The December 1st deadline is fast approaching! To allow for any potential mail delays, please ensure all packages are delivered to the office by Friday, December 1st.

Gifts received after this date cannot be guaranteed to ship before AFTH's holiday closing.

We also ask that packages remain under 5-7 pounds and 12 inches. With packages of this size, AFTH is able to stamp these from the office and avoid traveling to post offices. We suggest gifts such as photos, books, jewelry, artwork, gift cards, etc. If you have a package that is much heavier, please call the local office you are sending the package to. Our local offices have UPS accounts and can give you a price to ship this way.



If your birth parent office is..

CT, NY or Allentown please mail gift to:
2212 Union Blvd, Allentown, PA 18190

Pittsburgh or Delaware please mail gift to:
18-A Trolley Square, Wilmington, DE 19806

Wynnewood please mail gift to:
30-31 Hampstead Circle, Wynnewood PA 19096

New Jersey please mail your gift to:
523 Hollywood Ave, Suite 209, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

Central PA (Harrisburg/Lancaster) or Virginia please contact [Nicole Fowler](mailto:Nicole.F@afth.org) at Nicole F@afth.org before sending your gift.

Winter Ed Series



AFTH's Winter 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

411 on Placement: What to Expect at the Hospital and How to Prepare for Birth Parent Connection

Learn the basic 411 on Hospital Placement, including the "Who/What/Where/When/How." Additionally, prepare yourself for meeting birth parents and possible extended birth family and the importance of building birth family connection.

Tuesday, January 28th | 6:30-8:00 PM

Registration deadline: January 21, 2025

Voices of the Adoption Triad

AFTH will be sitting down with all members of an adoption triad to hear about how adoption has shaped their lives and how their relationship has developed since placement over 16 years ago. Please join us for this touching journey. We look forward to having you join us!

Wednesday, January 22nd | 7:00-8:00 PM

Registration deadline: January 15, 2024

Supporting Siblings Through Adoption Transitions

Join the NY office as we provide discussion and key tools to adoptive parents about the aspect of assisting sibling groups as they navigate the changes the adoption journey brings, while building their sibling relationships and emotional resilience.

Monday, February 10th | 7:00-8:30 PM

Registration deadline: February 3, 2025

How To Prepare for an Emergency Placement

Learn the 411 on Emergency Placements. How to prepare and what exactly happens at placement.

Tuesday, February 25th | 6:30-8:00 PM

Registration deadline: February 18, 2025



Prenatal Drug & Alcohol Exposure

\$100/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 works 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.

Online Webinar Dates:

Link is emailed 1-2 business days after registering

- January 25, 2025 | 10:30AM - 12:00PM
- April 15, 2025 | 7:00PM - 8:30PM
- July 26, 2025 | 10:30AM - 12:00PM
- October 28, 2025 | 7:00PM - 8:30PM

Registration DEADLINE is Noon the day prior

Be Sure To Contact Your Adoption Social Worker with any questions

All Classes are **\$30/family** unless otherwise noted.

Click [HERE](#) to Register

The Importance of Obtaining Certificates of Citizenship



In light of recent reports, international adoptees in the U.S. face risks of deportation due to incomplete or missing citizenship documentation, an issue that underscores the critical importance of adoptive parents ensuring proper filing of Certificates of Citizenship.

Thousands of intercountry adoptees in the U.S. face deportation due to a lack of citizenship caused by legal oversights. Despite being adopted by American families, many didn't receive automatic citizenship. The Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2024 aims to address this loophole. Advocacy remains vital, highlighting the need for compassionate immigration policy and recognizing adoptees' rights as American family members.

As a new administration prepares to take office in January, adoption advocacy groups stress the need for families to verify and address citizenship documentation early to avoid potential complications for adoptees.

Congratulations to AFTH's Newest Families!

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

July to October '24 Families:

- Joshua & Jeremy
- Amy
- Melody & Angelo
- Vita
- Todd & Victoria
- Robert & Abigail
- Samuel & Heather
- Perry & Shandra
- Elizabeth
- Michael & Julie
- Catherine
- Kristen
- Drew & Rachel
- Michael & Marie
- Timothy & Caitlyn
- Michael and Lauren
- Luke & Morgan
- Michael & Emily
- Joel & Rebekah
- Rakshita & Ashley (siblings)
- Philip & Lawrence

AFTH's Support Groups coming this 2025

Adoptions From The Heart is excited to continue offering a variety of support groups in the coming year, providing spaces for connection, understanding, and growth within the adoption community. Whether you are a birth parent, waiting family, adoptee, single parent, LGBTQ+ adoptive parent (new next year!), or navigating post-placement or transracial adoption, there's a group designed for you.

Support groups play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and offering shared experiences, guidance, and encouragement. They are safe spaces to explore challenges, celebrate successes, and build lasting connections with others who truly understand the journey.

We can't wait to welcome you in 2025. Stay tuned for meeting dates and more details about each group. Let's continue building a strong, supportive community together.

To learn more about support groups, reach out to your social worker or check our [AFTH's calendar of events](#) for all the upcoming support groups.

*30-31 Hampstead Circle
Wynnewood, PA 19096*

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Before you jump into Cyber Monday deals, make sure to **designate Adoptions From The Heart as your charity of choice** when using Amazon Smile and all of your online shopping can support our mission at no cost to you.

How to Choose AFTH:

- 1) Visit www.smile.amazon.com & sign into your Amazon account
- 2) Use the search toolbar to select Adoptions From The Heart
- 3) Begin all your online shopping with Amazon Smile (www.smile.amazon.com)



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*LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT ADOPTION TOPICS FROM
THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME.*

**NEW ONDEMAND WEBINARS ARE BRING
ADDED TO THE WEBSITE IN 2025.**

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