

Adoption News



A quarterly newsletter from

Adoptions From The Heart

AFTH Awards 3 Birth Parents Scholarships for the Fall Semester

Twice a year, Adoptions From The Heart awards scholarships to several deserving birth parents to help them pursue a higher education. Since AFTH established the Birth Parent Scholarship Fund in 2014, 17 scholarships have been awarded, totaling over \$17,000. What makes this scholarship program special, is that it is not limited to birth parents who placed children through AFTH. Anyone (*men and women*) who has placed a child since 1985, and is attending a university, college or trade school is eligible to apply for the scholarship.

We are thrilled to announce AFTH's 2017 Fall scholarship winners are three strong, brave and intelligent women: Kisha, Brittany, and Christina.

Kisha - Grand Award Scholarship Winner

Her story is as heart-breaking as it is inspiring. Born into a broken family, Kisha became pregnant at a young age. Initially, she was excited to be starting the big loving family she had dream about but it wasn't long before she faced some major challenges. Although Kisha desperately wanted to parent, and took great strides to make sure her daughter was well cared for, she wanted so much more for her. Kisha explained, "while placing my child for adoption was the hardest thing I ever had to do, I knew I had to do it."

Today, Kisha is enrolled in college and has made the Dean's List every semester. "I made the decision to continue to pursue my education because although she is states away, I am determined to be a positive figure in her life."

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"I want to be a role model for my daughter. I want her to see, no matter how tough life becomes, you can get through it"

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Special Insert:

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Locations

Allentown Office

2212 Union Blvd. Allentown, PA 18109

610.432.2384

Central PA Office

1525 Oregon Pike, Suite 402 Lancaster, PA 17601

717.399.7766

Connecticut Office

703 Hebron Ave. Glastonbury, CT 06033

860.657.2626

Delaware Office

18-A Trolley Square Wilmington, DE 19806

302.658.8883

New Jersey Office

451 Woodland Ave. Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

856.665.5655

New York

800.355.5500

Philadelphia Office

30-31 Hampstead Circle Wynnewood, PA 19096

610.642.7200

Pittsburgh Office

1225 S. Main St. Suite 207 Greensburg, PA 15601

724.853.6533

Virginia Office

1407 Stephanie Way, Suite H

Chesapeake, VA 23320

757.361.0008

Toll Free: 800.355.5500

Website: www.afth.org

Brittany is a Pennsylvania native, and will be attending Lackawanna College as a freshman. At only 17, Brittany discovered she was pregnant. Like most women who become pregnant unexpectedly, she was confused and scared, but was determined to create a plan that was the best for her and the baby.

After meeting former AFTH social worker, Angel, she discovered open adoption. “I asked her a few questions about the process, and we made an appointment for her to come back.” Brittany explained, **“Little did I know she would become my rock through the entire process.”**

Today, her daughter is 9 and Brittany maintains a close relationship with her and considers her parents extended family. Brittany is pursuing a degree in psychology and wants to help others who are facing tough life choices. “Everything I’ve been through has made me stronger and helped me figure out who I am as a person. **I want to be a role model for my daughter. I want her to see, no matter how tough life becomes, you can get through it.**” Brittany aspires to support others the way her social worker Angel supported her. “Everyone needs an Angel. I’d like to be that angel for others.”

Christina hails from the Midwest. Already a young single mother of a little girl, Christina learned she was pregnant and immediately knew that adoption was the right decision. “I was already working hard to provide for myself and my daughter,” Christina shared. “I wanted my second child to have the best life possible...and have a family that could provide what I could not at the time.”

Christina has enrolled in Kaye’s Beauty College to pursue a concentration in esthetics, and hopes to work in a spa, salon, or the medical field.

You Helped Make a Difference

Because of support from generous donors like you, AFTH’s Scholarship Program is able to help guide birth parents to a brighter future. Thank you for your continued support. **www.afth.org/donate**

Seeking Local Businesses for 2017 Paper Heart Project

Become a Heart Holder

Be an adoption advocate by getting your business or organization involved in the project.

What is the Paper Heart Project?

November is National Adoption Month. To celebrate, AFTH created the Paper Heart Project to engage the community in supporting adoption. For \$1, businesses can offer their customers the opportunity to purchase a paper heart which will be displayed all month long. 100% of the donations benefit the AFTH Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund, which provides financial support to the men and women working with AFTH. Every little bit impacts their lives in big ways.

Getting Others Involved

- Schools & Preschools
- Dance Studios
- Karate Studios
- Churches
- Community Organizations
- Small Business
- Coworkers
- Friends & Family



Hearts will be available for purchase in AFTH's online store www.afth.org/store and in AFTH offices in addition to participating businesses starting November 1st.

Become Heart Holder for our 2017 Paper Heart Project! Sign up at www.afth.org/events/nam or email SaraM@afth.org for more details.

Birth Mothers Come Together In Support for Birth Mother's Day

Each year, a group of birth mothers who have worked through our Virginia Office come together in support for Birth Mother's Day. On May 13th, they joined an AFTH social worker at the Mermaid Factory. While they painted their mermaids, they shared stories and connected with each other. Throughout the year, AFTH holds birth parent support groups to provide an opportunity to come together with other women who have chosen adoption. It's wonderful to see the special bond these ladies have made with each other.



"Thank you to donors of the Expecting and Birth Parent Fund, you mad this amazing gathering possible!"

- Nicole, VA Swer





Adoptions From The Heart

adoption@afth.org | www.afth.org | Maxine Chalker, MSW/LSW, Executive Director

“Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.” - Booker T. Washington

Greetings Friends,

Because of our community of individual supporters, Adoptions From The Heart has been able to provide assistance year-round to women in your community who are facing unplanned pregnancies and considering adoption. This decision is one of the most difficult choices anyone may have to make in their life. More often than not, it is coupled with financial hardships.

AFTH is committed to coming to the aid of those in need whether or not they ultimately choose adoption. It's a time when obstacles financial and otherwise are piled high and expecting parents often feel alone. Some have family and friends who are supportive of their decision however, many do not. Adoption isn't only about creating beautiful families, it's about fully being there for expecting and birth parents and saying: *“We see you. We see your struggles and you are NOT alone.”*

With support from wonderful donors just like YOU, this past year AFTH...



- Assisted **Laura** in locating permanent housing so she didn't have to spend another night in the shelter questioning when her next warm meal would be.
- Helped **Donna** get back on her feet after an illness caused her to fall behind on medical bills.
- Prevented **Leigha** from being evicted with her toddler when she was unable to immediately return to work after an unexpected C-section causing her to fall behind in rent.

Financial scholarships awarded twice a year through AFTH's Birth Parent Scholarship Fund help birth parents break the cycle and forge a better and brighter future through education.



- **Jacob** is attending classes now pursuing his dream of a job in Communications.
- **Morgan** was only 16 credits away from her degree in HR and is now completing her final year.
- **Marisa** on well on her way to becoming a Case Manager for homeless and at-risk youth.

In addition to providing financial assistance through our Support and Scholarship Funds, AFTH provides adoption trainings to educate hospitals and clinics, subsidizes special needs adoptions, and hosts special events and support groups to bring adoptive parents and birth parents together.

The kindness of individuals like you makes it possible for us to fulfill our mission. **Your donation helps improve lives every day.** Because of your passion and dedication, AFTH can continue to offer valuable services and financial assistance to those reaching out who are in need. Any monetary commitment will go a long way in helping men and women working with AFTH get through difficult times.

**Help me to show expecting and birth parents that they are NOT ALONE.
There is a community standing beside them in support!**

P.S. Make your one-time tax-deductible gift online or sign up for reoccurring monthly giving at www.afth.org/donate

Sincerely,

Maxine Chalker
Founder & Executive Director

Continued Support for Adopted Children and Their Families

AFTH Connecticut Office Launching NEW Educational Adoption Group for Families with Children Age 5-9 Years Old

Our Connecticut Office is excited to announce a new group for adopted children ages **5-9 years** and their parents. This program is designed to help children answer questions about adoption. There will be **4 meetings on Mondays starting on September 18th.**

The program is designed to help children respond to adoption related questions from their peer's and classmates. Adoptees sometimes struggle to answer these questions, especially in early years. We want to better equip children and their parents through this education group.

Series Also Benefits Adoptive Parents

Children will participate in a group activity with an agency social worker while parents meet separately with Susan Myers, LMSW/MA-Counseling. Susan, who is also a Certified Adoption Competent Therapist will be leading parents in discussion and providing support.

**Support group will meet in the Glastonbury Office between 4-5:30pm.
The first group will be on Monday, September 18th.**

**Additional support group sessions:
September 25th, October 2nd, and October 9th**

The cost is \$150/family for all four sessions.

Space is **LIMITED**. Contact Susan Myers to register: SusanM@afth.org or call 860-657-2626



Calo Programs for Adopted Teens, Young Adults and Their Families

Calo Programs is a network of world class, therapeutic programs created to serve young people and families that are experiencing the effects of early life stress often complicated by adoption. Our belief is that the majority of mental health and addiction issues are due to early, unresolved emotional traumas. We are therefore on a mission to not only provide the best treatment, but also increase awareness and understanding of the impact of adverse childhood experiences and to let people know there is hope and healing.

With that mission in mind, our hearts are full as we have had the opportunity to make a difference and serve hundreds of families across our programs. Our mission is clear; Heal Trauma and Save Families. To learn more go to www.caloprograms.com or contact Kathleen Goughler: kgoughler@caloprograms.com or 573-280-2065.

Programs Include:

- Calo Teens
- Calo Preteens
- Calo Young Adults
- New Vision Wilderness
- Embark by Calo

Recent Legislation

CITIZENSHIP FOR INTERNATIONALLY ADOPTED CHILDREN - In 2000, the Child Citizenship Act granted automatic citizenship to any child adopted by U.S. citizens. However, the law only applies to adoptees who were under the age of 18 when it came into effect. It is important to correct this disservice to older adoptees and close the covet in the law which can force international adoptees to be deported. Please visit www.adopteerightscampaign.org to sign their petition.

ACCESS TO ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES - Currently, only nine states give adoptees unrestricted access to their original birth certificates. Several other states provide limited access. And in 20 states including California, Texas, Florida and New York, there is no systematic access for adoptees at all. The fight continues as adoptees demand they be given the same access as all other citizens to this important information.

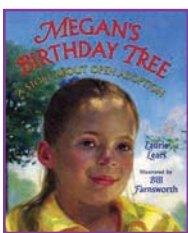
TEXAS - A spate of laws continues to sweep the country that create a series of roadblocks for individuals and couples in the LGBTQ community who wish to build their families through fostering and adoption. Most recently, the Governor of Texas approved a bill (HB 3859) that allows child welfare agencies to broadly discriminate against a wide range of individuals and couples, including members of the LGBTQ community, on the basis of “religious objection.”

Book Reviews



My Girlfriend's Pregnant!: A Teen's Guide to Becoming a Dad by Chloe Shantz - This is a short book, specifically geared to men, packed with really great information for teens and young adults facing unplanned pregnancy. Topics include handling stress, domestic violence, relationships, childbirth as well as adoption and abortion. It's rare to find a book that focus on the expecting father's experience and how it's ok to be scared and have mixed emotions. There are quotes throughout the book from fathers

that were interviewed on topics about discovering they were fathers-to-be, adoption, abortion, parenting, etc. The quotes validate that every person can feel differently about their own decisions and that it's important for the father to sift through his own feelings.



Megan's Birthday Tree: A Story about Open Adoption by Laurie Lears - Megan's birth mother, Kendra, and her adoptive parents share a loving connection. When Megan was born, her birthmother planted a tree in her backyard and sends photos of it each year on her birthday. Now, Kendra is getting married and moving. Megan is worried that without the tree as a reminder, her birthmother might forget about her.

She stumbles when trying to speak to her mom about it but when she does their discussion shows her that love has no boundaries. Kendra doesn't need a tree to reminder her, she keeps Megan close in her heart. Megan is then thrilled to see that Kendra actually dug up and replanted the tree at her new home. This book a great way to open dialogue about adoption and all the feelings children might have in regards to their adoption story.



AFTH Fall Festivals

Central Pennsylvania Office

Join AFTH staff and other waiting and placed families for a fun seasonal celebration. There will be activities for the children and some delicious goodies for everyone. We are asking for families to please bring a non-perishable food item for the local food bank.

Central PA Office in Lancaster, PA
October 14th from 11:00am-2:00pm

RSVP by October 10th to AmandaK@afth.org

Wynnewood Office

Join us for a Fall Family Fun event at Colonial Gardens in Phoenixville! Wear your Halloween costume and enjoy all that Colonial Gardens has to offer, including a pick-your-own pumpkin patch, Halloween funhouse, corn maze, and children's hayride. Snacks and crafts will be provided for no charge by AFTH and additional activities are available for a nominal fee.

Colonial Gardens in Phoenixville, PA
October 14th from 10:30am-1:00pm
Cost: Hayrides \$5/person, other activities similar cost

RSVP by October 6th to AshleyK@afth.org

Connecticut Office

Celebrate adoption with us at the Fall Festival at Robb's Farm, where families can enjoy a hayride to the pumpkin patch, a corn maze, bounce house, and apple cider plus farm-made ice cream and other treats available from Robb's Ice Cream Stand.

Robb's Farm in South Glastonbury, CT
October 21st from 1:00pm-4:00pm
Cost: \$12/child over age 1 (paid to farm on day of event)
RSVP by October 15th to SusanM@afth.org

Allentown Office

Enjoy a day with AFTH at Seiple Farms. Families can choose to from lots of activities for a nominal fee: straw maze, pony rides, hayrides, famous corn maze, pumpkin picking, rides and food! AFTH will provide some snacks. Open adoption reunions welcome.

Seiple Farms Located in Bath, PA
October 21st from 10:30am-12:30pm
Cost: Corn Maze \$6/child, other activities similar cost

RSVP by October 13th to JennaS@afth.org

Cherry Hill Office

Please join AFTH's New Jersey office for our Fall Festival to celebrate National Adoption Month at Johnson's Corner Farm! Families can purchase tickets to go on a hay ride, pick popcorn and sweet potatoes and tour the Animal Farm! Light snack will be provided but families can bring food as well as purchase fall treats at the farm.

Johnson's Corner Farm in Medford, NJ
November 4th from 10:00am-Noon
Cost: Hayrides \$4.50/person, other activities similar cost

RSVP by October 27th to ChristopherP@afth.org

Virginia Office

Please join our VA Fall Festival this year to celebrate adoption with birth families and adoptive families. We will be providing a main dish and fun activities for the kids. Please specify a side dish or dessert you are bringing to share when you RSVP.

Virginia Office Located in Chesapeake, VA
November 4th from Noon-3:00pm
RSVP by November 3rd to KimberlyR@afth.org

Fall Education Series

Classes Designed Specifically for the Needs of Adoptive Parents

Adoption is a lifelong journey. Regardless of what stage of the process families are in, our Education Series is designed to offer resources and discussions vital to properly equipping adoptive parents.

Prenatal Drug and Alcohol Exposure - \$25/person and \$35/couple

AFTH wants families to make informed decisions when completing their profile keys and this is a great opportunity to listen to medical professionals weigh in on prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol. It's up to each families to decide what situations they are best suited for however many families have walked away from these specific classes feeling more comfortable opening up their key in new ways. Bring any questions you may have for the doctors.

Central PA & Wynnewood Offices

Presenter Dr. Erin Meyer is an Internal Medicine and Pediatric Hospitalist who works in the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) at Christiana Hospital. She is also an adoptive mom through Adoptions From the Heart, so she can speak from both the professional and personal angles. She will be discussing the effects of drug and alcohol use during pregnancy on the newborn. Withdrawal symptoms and short and long term effects of exposure will also be discussed. This class is suitable for all prospective and current adoptive parents. There will be plenty of time for your questions.

Philadelphia Office in Wynnewood, PA
September 12th from 6:30-8:30pm

Central PA Office in Lancaster, PA
November 15th from 6:30-8:30pm

Register by 1 week prior to date. Classes fill up quickly. Call the hosting office with any questions.
Wynnewood 610-642-7200 - Central Pa 717-399-7766

New York - Hosted in Brooklyn

Please join us as Dr. Melissa Goldstein, MD from Carnegie Hill Pediatrics speaks about the effects of substance abuse exposure during pregnancy. Time will be spent reviewing the profile key and answering any questions regarding the effect on a child. This is a great opportunity to educate yourself and spend time with a professional working in the field of maternal health. Light refreshments will be served.

Brooklyn Library *Williamsburg Branch* in Brooklyn, NY
October 17th from 5:30-7:00pm

Register by October 10th. Classes fill up quickly. Call 610-432-2384 with any questions.

Register Online at
www.afth.org/education

Navigating Open Adoption: Birth Parent Panel - \$10/person and \$15/couple

AFTH strongly encourages our families to seek out birth parent voices to learn the open adoption experience from another perspective. This class is a great opportunity to do so. "Listening to all the different birth parents share their diverse feelings and contact levels has really made me think deeply about what open adoption means to everyone in the triad. Because of it, I will be a much better participant in open adoption when we get the call."

Virginia Office

Come together with other prospective and current adoptive families for this unique opportunity. The class will be led by a panel of birth parents and birth grandparents. They will each share their experience with placement and discuss how adoptive families can interact with not just the birth parent but also the extended family as well. The importance of life long connections with a child's birth family will also be discussed.

Virginia Office in Chesapeake, VA
October 7th from Noon--2:00pm

Register by September 30th. Limited seats available.
Call 757-361-0008 with any questions.

Pittsburgh Office

Please join us for a Birth Parent Panel and hear several birth parents share their adoption stories and details of how they chose their respective adoptive families. Learn about how open adoption affects all parts of the adoption triad. Our panelists are also open to taking questions from families as part of our discussion.

Squirrel Hill Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh, PA
October 29th from 1:00-3:00pm

Register by October 22nd. Limited seats available.
Call 724-853-6533 with any questions.

Infant & Child Care Classes - \$25/person and \$35/couple

Child care classes are important for any expecting parent however it can be uncomfortable to be in a traditional class surrounded by pregnant women. Join us for a special child care class exclusively for adoptive parents.

Central Pennsylvania Office

This infant care class is especially for adoptive families and it will cover the basics of infant and child care. Join April Stambaugh, a Certified Childbirth Educator, to discuss topics including: newborn appearance, newborn behaviors, diapering and dressing, feeding, umbilical cord care, newborn health and safety basics, when to call your pediatrician, as well as other changes that may come with new parenthood.

Register by 1 week prior. Classes fill up without notice.

Central PA Office in Lancaster, PA
Choose August 28th, October 23rd or December 18th
All classes from 6:30-8:30pm
Call 717-399-7766 with questions.

Brooklyn, NY hosted by Allentown Office
Thursday, October 5 from 6:00-7:30pm
Call 610-432-2384 for details.



Register Online at
www.afth.org/education

AFTH Picnic Recap

Connecticut Annual Picnic

AFTH's CT office moved to a new location for our annual picnic this year – the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport. Everyone was delighted with the facilities and enjoyed this new venue, which is very family-friendly. Over 75 people of all ages came. There were 9 birth and adoptive family reunions, including a special celebration for the 1st birthday of one special little girl. Families traveled to the CT picnic from as far as Pittsburgh. We were thrilled to see so many happy children and parents come out to enjoy a beautiful summer day at the zoo.



Idlewild Annual Picnic in Pittsburgh

Idlewild Amusement Park and Soak Zone located in Ligonier, PA was again the site of AFTH's Pittsburgh Office's annual family picnic. On August 4 close to 300 tickets were sold to our families and people from as far away as Connecticut and Virginia joined in the fun. Three adoptive families spent the day with their children's birth families. Everyone enjoyed the rides and water park on a hot sunny day before the rain hit. Over \$220 was raised for AFTH's Expected and Birth Parent Support Fund through a raffle that included gifts such as Pittsburgh Pirate tickets, 31 totes and bags, free passes to the Pittsburgh Zoo, PG Aquarium, Pittsburgh Children's Museum, Triple B Farms, and a variety of other treasures. Our Pittsburgh staff enjoyed spending the day with their families and celebrating the special bond they have made throughout the years.

Virginia Annual Picnic

This year's Virginia summer picnic was a lot of fun! Our 100 guests joined AFTH staff at the Chesapeake City Park Fun. Families enjoyed cookies donated from Insomnia Cookies and got quite competitive when it came down for our amazing raffle prizes. Despite braving thunder, lightning and rain, all families stayed for the entire duration of the picnic and beyond! We love seeing our families interact and enjoy each other's company while embracing open adoption.

Fort Washington 29th Annual Picnic

On Sunday, June 4th, AFTH hosted our 29th Annual Family Picnic at the Fort Washington State Park in Flourtown, PA. Nice weather held out, despite the rain forecast. Hundreds of adoptive parents, birth parents and children came together to celebrate adoption.

We welcomed the Cheese E Wagon this year as well as other vendors including 31 Bags and Texas Roadhouse. Tony Roni's Pizza generously donated tomato pies, Insomnia Cookies provided over 300 cookies and all the fruit was supplied by Wegmans.

Philadelphia's Under This Fire were a hit in their picnic debut playing cover songs and originals. Soccer Shots returned this year to run soccer drills with the children who also enjoyed face painting and toys from our giveaway table. Our talented 5k photographer, Ryan Bonner, returned to capture free family portraits.

The raffles are always a big hit and this year was no different. From Girls' Night Out and Family Fun to a week-long vacation giveaway, the baskets were full of donations from kind local businesses. With the generosity of our sponsors along with sales and raffles, over \$1,700 was raised for AFTH's Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund.

A Little Can Go a Long Way

Local Businesses and Communities Come Together In Support of Adoption

AFTH is proud to receive wonderful community support. Companies host mini-fundraisers to benefit the Expecting & Birth Parent Support Fund making a huge impact on women working with AFTH.

Iron Hill Give20 Night – Media & Ardmore (PA)

On Wednesday, March 29th, Iron Hill Brewery in Media and Ardmore simultaneously held a “Give 20” night to raise money for the Fund. Participants enjoyed great food while Iron Hill donated 20% of their bill (excluding alcohol) to the Fund. In total, over **\$250** was raised and served as a kick-off to the Find Her Footing 5k on Sunday, April 2nd.

Yapple Yogurt Night – Wynnewood (PA)

On Thursday, May 18th, Yapple Yogurt held a benefit night in their Wynnewood location. Customers who came between 3-8pm not only enjoyed delicious frozen yogurt but also supported a great cause. 20% of all sales that evening benefited AFTH. In just five hours, **\$207** was raised to benefit the Fund.

Penn Brewery We Care Wednesday–Pittsburgh (PA)

On Wednesday, July 5th, Penn Brewery in Pittsburgh hosted AFTH for a “We Care Wednesday” charity night. Between 5-9pm, families and AFTH staff enjoyed savory food knowing that 20% of their bill (excluding alcohol) would benefit women who are working with AFTH. At the end of the night over **\$140** was raised for the Fund.

Sweet Frog Night – Glastonbury (CT)

On Wednesday, August 9th, Sweet Frog Frozen Yogurt held a fundraiser for AFTH. From 4-7pm, participants chose their favorite flavors and toppings while Sweet Frog donated 20% of the sales back to the Fund. The total amount raised hasn't been calculated yet, but we are excited to see the outcome.

If your company would like to get involved, please contact SaraM@afth.org for more information.

United Way Giving



United Way improves lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world to advance the common good. Thousands of companies participate in the United Way Workplace Campaign.

AFTH is honored to be one of the non-profits eligible to receive contributions through the Donor Program. United Way contributions continue AFTH's mission to provide safe and loving homes for children and offer quality, comprehensive services to adoptive families, birth parents and children.

How to Contribute Through the United Way Donor Option Plan:

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

All donations are tax deductible and directly assist men and women who reach out to AFTH for help.



Agency News

The picnics are one of our staff's favorite events when hundreds of families come together to celebrate adoption. Seeing open adoption reunions is a great reminder of why we do what we do. Thank you to everyone who was able to join us this year.

Agency Waiting Statistics

One of the hardest parts of the adoption process is the wait. There are a number of factors that impact wait time for each family. However, as of July 1st, 71% of AFTH's waiting families have been waiting for 18 months or less and 55% a year or less

We highly encourage families to attend the waiting family support groups being hosted in their office. It's a time for families to come together in support and for social workers to touch base about recent statistics and situations as well as answer any questions families may have.

Families whose keys are open to an African-American child are often seeing shorter wait times. As of July 1st, 90% of families in the books who were open to African-American children were waiting 18 months or less, 71% 1 year or less, and 39% have been waiting for 6 months or less.

Shorter wait times are **not** a reason families should open up their keys to other racial backgrounds. If you are unsure about whether or not to open your key to other races, our Transracial Education Course can help. It's an in-depth course designed to help prepare prospective adoptive families who are considering adopting transracially.

Other Statistics

In the first half of 2017, there were 59 placements including 13 placements with same-sex couples and 5 placements with single women. Our emergency placement rate remains at 50% which means when a family gets the call that they would need to be available to arrive at the hospital within 24 hours.

Domestic Program Update

In order to create more exposure for our families, AFTH has partnered with ParentFinder, an online resource which helps to connect expecting parents and prospective adoptive parents. Participation in ParentFinder is voluntary but has many benefits to families. You can use ParentFinder services to create or update your profile as well as creating an individualized online presence which may increase your opportunity to be selected.

AFTH has streamlined the profile key to fit the culture of society and trends social workers are currently seeing. As the expectant parent situations change over time, the choices provided to prospective adoptive families are adjusted to ensure that families will have greater opportunity to be selected.

In the past, changes to fees and profile keys were made frequently throughout the year. To offer families more predictability, contracts will now be sent out twice a year and there will be no changes to the fees or profile key except during those times.

AFTH social workers are continuing high levels of outreach to community partners and potential referral sources in order to maintain relationships as well as build new ones. Many of those partners have taken advantage of the free continuing education trainings offered to nurses and social workers. In the year since AFTH has been approved to provide CEUs, we have held 12 trainings at various locations including hospitals, Planned Parenthoods, and OBGYN clinics. Additionally, the agency is beginning to host centralized trainings in order to offer an opportunity for nurses and social workers whose employers may not be able to host a group training.

Fall Festival

Families had so much fun visiting with each other at the summer picnics that we are all looking forward to our upcoming Fall Festivals. Many of our offices are hosting fall family-friendly gatherings. See the newsletter insert for details and RSVP information.



New Adoption Loan Program

Adoption.com recently teamed up with Prosper to provide a new adoption loan program to help hopeful adoptive parents access to more options for financing adoption.

To learn more about the new loan program, visit www.adoption.com/loans. Provide basic information about your credit, income and ability to repay the loan and get pre-qualified for an adoption loan in as little as two minutes.

Fall Education Series

Twice a year AFTH hosts special Education Series offering a variety of classes for prospective and current adoptive parents. This time around, the classes being held are some of the most popular topics. Families who are in process of completing or updating their profile keys really value the Prenatal Drug and Alcohol Exposure classes. The Infant and Childcare Classes offer vital information to adoptive parents-to-be without the awkwardness of attending a class in a room filled with pregnant women. And finally, the Birth Parent Panels are recommended to all of our families as the panelists reveal what open adoption is like from other side of the experience. Hear all about positive and challenging aspects of open adoption from birth mothers and birth grandmothers. For complete details about our Fall Education Series, see the newsletter insert or visit www.aftth.org/education.

Staff News

We would like to congratulate our staff members who are celebrating anniversaries. Amanda Aliberti of our Delaware Office has just recently celebrated her 5th year at AFTH and Joan Smith of our Pittsburgh Office will be celebrating her 5th year in October. We applaud both of these women for all their hard work over the years.

Other News

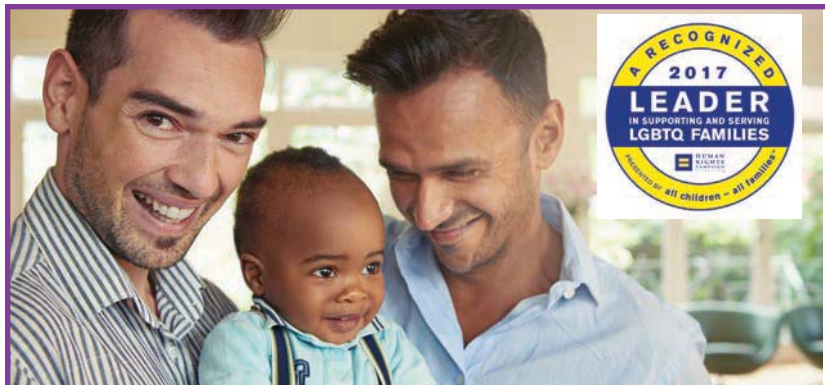
AFTH is proud to again be awarded the Human Rights Campaign seal recognizing our agency for our LGBTQ Cultural Competency.

AFTH Birth Parent Support Groups

One of the most helpful healing tips that many birth parents have found is to connect to others who have gone through similar circumstances. Support groups bring together women who have made the difficult choice to place their child. This can bring a level of comfort, understanding and empathy that those who haven't personally placed a child are unable to truly provide. Call your local office for details.

AFTH Waiting Family Support Groups

The waiting process can be difficult. AFTH local offices host support groups for waiting families to come together to connect. Support groups are led by AFTH staff and cover a variety of topics designed for waiting families. Contact your office or visit our events calendar at www.aftth.org for details.



International Adoption News

AFTH prides itself on keeping abreast of news regarding inter-country adoption. We collaborate with agencies across the U.S. that do provide inter-country adoption placement services. AFTH is able to provide Home Studies, Education, Post-Adoption/Placement Reports and Services, and other assistance in support of international adoptions. Contact Roberta Evantash at 610.642.7200 or RobertaE@afth.org to see how we can help you with your adoption process, including referring you to one of these partner agencies.

China Post Placement Reports

We want to let all families who may have post placement reports yet to be completed that the two year report, which previously could be self-written, must now be done by the agency. Three and five year reports may be self-written.

The China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA) recently announced changes to requirements of adoption application dossiers submitted by foreigners.

Key changes include:

- Youngest child in the home must be 3-years-old before a family may apply to adopt.
- Single females may still adopt, but may have only two children living at home, not including the adopted child.
- Married couples may have up to five children, under the age of 18, in the home, not including the adopted child.
- Families must wait one full year after an adoption is complete before applying to adopt another child.
- Only one child may be adopted at a time (unless a sibling).

Kazakhstan Post Placement Reports

Families who have adopted from Kazakhstan may no longer send their reports to AFTH. They need to be sent directly to the Kazakhstan embassy in Washington, D.C. The ministry recently simplified reporting requirements to make reporting easier. The reports should include the parents' names, the child's name and D.O.B. and the region where the child was adopted. Also include a summary on each of the following: health and development, education activities (sports and hobbies) and family adjustment. Include recent photos but the reports should be apostilled and notarized. These reports can be submitted to: Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Visa and Consular Section, 1401 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202 232-5488).

Haiti

The DOS advises U.S. prospective adoptive parents (PAP) of current delays in the processing time for adoption completion because of a strike initiated by court clerks and bailiffs throughout the country. Courts have been closed since July 3, 2017.



AFTH Board of Directors



AFTH's Board of Directors were photographed as they gathered together for their annual meeting to wrap up the fiscal year and prepare for the new one. From left to right: Dan Hall, Heidi Gonzalez, Maxine Chalker, Lisa O'Mahony, Marjorie Gordon and in front Stephen Facenda and Thom Rossi. Missing from the photo is McKenzie Frankel, Michael Offord and Rita Roitman.

During this yearly meeting the Board Members approve the proposed annual budget, review and approve any policy changes and vote on new and returning Board Members.

They are proud of the work the agency has done this past year and are looking forward to the things to come in the new fiscal year.

Adoption Today Magazine

Adoption Today has recently shared some great news. Beginning with their June 2017 edition, their digital publication will now be free. Subscribers will still enjoy the same great content, as well many of the covers featuring children adopted through AFTH. If you aren't already receiving this award-winning publication, visit www.adoptinfo.net/subscribe

Congratulations to AFTH's New Families

Sons

Jason & Stacey
Devin & Jeremy
Matthew & Jolene
Eric & James
Chad & Elsa
Kristin
Gelio & Grace
Elizabeth & Gina
Thomas & Amanda
Courtney & Elyse
Alejandro & Mathieu
Anthony & Jessica
Thomas & Guillaume
David & Renee

Matthew & Celia
Glennon & Jennifer
William & Maria
Michael & Elizabeth
Greg & Chaz



Daughters

Joshua & David
Blaine & Nina
William & Karen
Marica
Ryan & Elisabeth
Scott & Amy
Michael & Torey
Alexander & Fathima
Daniel & Christopher
Nicholas & Christine



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Wynnewood, PA 19096

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Are your name and address incorrect? Want to be removed from mailings? Are you receiving more than one copy? Let us know: adoption@afth.org

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Events & Conferences

AFTH is happy to be a part of many different local events and conferences.

We would love for you to visit our table at these upcoming events:

Community Partners Day

September 28, 2017 from 9:00am-3:30pm
Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Pennsylvania Conference for Women

October 3, 2017 from 7:30am-5:00pm
Pennsylvania Convention Center
1101 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107



FREE ONLINE WEBINARS

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

DOMESTIC INFANT ADOPTION

SEPT 5TH, OCT 3RD & NOV 14TH AT 7PM

Registration Required

www.afth.org