

# Adoption News

A quarterly newsletter from

## Adoptions From The Heart



### AFTH Holiday Gift Cards Help 64 Children and 31 Birth Mothers

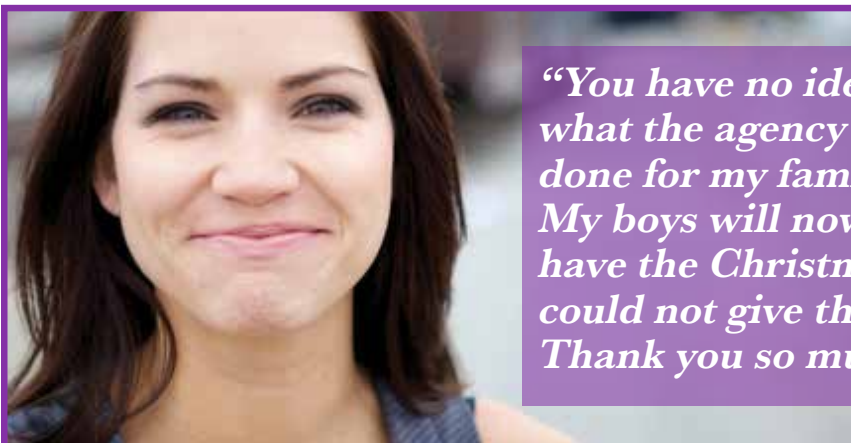
In December, AFTH donated nearly \$13,000 in gift cards to birth parents who facing financial hurdles during the holiday season.

A highlight for our staff each year is being able to hand deliver gift cards to birth parents in need. Our social workers often say how heartwarming it is to deliver the gift card. Many wished the generous donors could see the heartfelt reactions from the recipients.

Joan Smith, social worker from AFTH Pittsburgh Office, described a phone call from a birth mother on the day she received the gift card:

*She was so surprised and completely astounded that we thought to send her a gift for Christmas. She said that no one has ever done this for her and she had been really worried that she wouldn't be able to get anything for her son. She said we are like her guardian angels! She is very thankful that we understand how difficult life can be and she felt so happy to have our help.*

A social worker from our Central PA Office handed delivered giftcards to a birthmother. When she first opened it she was speechless. Then, through her tears she explained how grateful she was:



*“You have no idea what the agency has done for my family! My boys will now have the Christmas I could not give them. Thank you so much!”*

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### Special Insert:

Summer Picnic Details



## Locations

### Allentown Office

2212 Union Blvd. Allentown, PA 18109

610.432.2384

### Central PA Office

1525 Oregon Pike, Suite 402 Lancaster, PA 17601

717.399.7766

### Connecticut Office

703 Hebron Ave. 1st Floor Glastonbury, CT 06033

860.657.2626

### Delaware Office

18-A Trolley Square Wilmington, DE 19806

302.658.8883

### New Jersey Office

451 Woodland 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](http://www.afth.org)**

Below is a letter of thanks sent to AFTH from Tyler and her daughters who were helped through the fund over the holidays:



Our Delaware Office Supervisor got a call soon after dropping off gift cards:

*Thank you so much! This is such a tremendous help for us for the holidays! My kids will have such a good Christmas!*

AFTH's Assistant Director, Heidi Gonzalez, received the below email of thanks:

*Whoever else did this for me are Angels sent from Above. You don't know how much this means to me and my children, thank you so much!*

AFTH's goal is to support and encourage birthparents before, during and after placement and much of the assistance provided would not be possible without our generous charitable donors.

***If you are interested in learning how you can help visit [www.afth.org/support-our-mission](http://www.afth.org/support-our-mission).***

## Offering Free Social Work and Nurse CEUs

AFTH is offering free CEUS for our **Infant Adoption Awareness Training** to Nurses and Social Workers who provide services to pregnant women and adolescents.

### Training Topics Include:

How to Talk About Adoption • Your Role in Adoption  
Why Women Make Adoption Plans • The Rights of Biological Parents  
Adoption Language and Terms • Open Adoption

Adoption has changed drastically and AFTH's training was designed specifically for nurses and social workers who may come in contact with patients choosing adoption.

You choose the type and length of training and set the location, date and time convenient for your staff.

#### **Nurses**

Trainings available in PA, DE & VA)  
1 Hour Training (1RN CE)

#### **Social Workers**

Trainings available in PA, DE, VA & CT)  
1 or 2 Hour Training Options (1 or 2 CEUS)

**Contact Ashley Kodet, MSW/LSW to set up your training: [AshleyK@afth.org](mailto:AshleyK@afth.org) - 640.642.7200**

*Program approved for 1 RN Continuing Education Credit Hour by the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing available in PA, DE and VA. Approved by the National Association of Social Workers for 1 CEU (approval #886529726-7830) and 2 CEUs (approval #886529726-7734), available in PA, DE, VA and CT.*



## AFTH's Birth Parent Scholarship Fund

### ***Deadline for Fall Semester - July 1st***

Established in the summer of 2014, the AFTH Birth Parent Scholarship Fund has provided scholarships to 14 birth mothers and fathers. From mathematics and conflict management, to communication and assisting the homeless and at-risk youth, the scholarship winners are working hard to pursue their dreams and make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

AFTH's Scholarship Committee meets twice a year to review applicants and award scholarships. The deadline for scholarship applicants for the Fall semester is July 1st. Eligible candidates include men and women who have placed children for adoption since 1985, and are currently enrolled in a college or trade school. Applicants are not required to have worked with AFTH. Candidates must also demonstrate financial need and submit an essay regarding their adoption story. Scholarship winners are able to re-apply for up to 8 semesters.

**To Apply for the Scholarship** visit [www.afth.org/pregnant/birthparent-scholarships](http://www.afth.org/pregnant/birthparent-scholarships)

**Supporters** wanting to make a donation to the Scholarship Fund can do so at [www.afth.org/donate](http://www.afth.org/donate)

*Together we can help change the world.*



## 5th Annual Find Her Footing 5K - **SUPER** Successful

*Over 250 Supporters Came Out to Raise Over \$6,500 to Help Expecting & Birth Parents*

On Sunday April 2nd, over 250 people came out in support for AFTH's 5th Annual Find Her Footing 5K. Once again the event was held at the Delaware County Community College in Media, Pa.

It was a team effort with more than 140 runners, 50+ staff & volunteers, and a crowd of family and friends cheering on the participants. The 1 Mile Super Fun Run was new this year and its Super Hero theme turned out to be a big hit! The themed run paid homage to Clark Kent; better known as Superman and his adoption story. Runners and walkers donned their favorite superhero attire and soared their way to the finish line. Superman even made a surprise appearance.

The morning began with a bit of a chill but soon warmed up as runners began to check in for the event. We had over 200 assorted bagels, a banana stand and limeade stand for runners to enjoy before and after the race. Since this year's theme was "Superman was adopted too", we had justice league and other super hero props for photos prior to the race.

Before runners took their mark at the starting line, our mini superheroes got a chance to run like the wind in the Kid's Dash, which was a short sprint around a loop. Afterwards, they each received certificates, superhero masks and superhero lollipops! After the race, they celebrated their victories by flying high in the moon bounce, provided by Boing Bouncy House Rentals!

In addition, one of AFTH's amazing birth mothers, Imani addressed the crowd and spoke of the importance of the Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund, and how it helped her during her pregnancy and after she gave birth.

The top finisher completed the 3.1 miles in under 19 minutes – while two others came close finishing shortly after. Family and friends of all participants were waiting at the finish line cheering on their loved ones.

We concluded the day by selecting raffle winners and presenting awards to the top finishers in each age category. Overall top male and female received an entry to Philadelphia's Color Run.



[This year's Find Her Footing 5K raised over \\$6,500 for the Fund.](#) About 1/3 of AFTH's birthparents are parenting other children and may be struggling to secure basic needs. AFTH created the Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund to provide financial assistance to help birthparents get back on their feet.

We cannot wait until next year's Find Her Footing 5k.

*5K Photos by Ryan Bonner and Brittany Brooks*



## **Sponsor Shout Out - We couldn't have done it without your support**

We want to thank all our generous sponsors. Their contributions helped us to host an amazing event and support the Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund. **Ag Conexus**, a leader in Internet marketing and SEO was this year's presenting sponsor.

In addition, we had the pleasure of partnering with **Child Connect**, an open adoption software company. **The Law Offices of Deborah E. Spivack**, which offers high quality legal services to individuals and families throughout the Philadelphia region, DE, and NJ who are seeking to grow their family through adoption or assisted reproductive technology. **Goshen Mechanical Contractions**, which provides mechanical contracting services and construction to commercial customers. **Rittenhouse Women's Wellness Center**, a medical facility exclusive to the health of women. We also received the support of **Republic Bank** and **Mainline Health and Fitness Center!**

Thank you to **Today's 96.5** and **101.1 More FM** for providing tunes and games! As well as, a special thanks to **Zoe's Kitchen** for donating delicious limeade and to **Trader Joe's** for passing out yummy bananas to our runners as they crossed the finished line. And to **Original Bagels** for providing us with a variety of flavorful bagels.

We want to give a special thank you to **Kohl's**. Through their philanthropic program formally called Kohl's Cares, three local Kohl's stores donated their time to the 5k in volunteering and/or running. For the past few years, we have been grateful for Kohl's support and hope to continue this wonderful partnership in the future.





## Recent Legislation

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**FEDERAL** - H. Res. 41 – Supporting a uniform adoption process for foster youth - in 2005, the Uniform Laws Commission designated the Adoption Act from 1994 as a model rather than a uniform law keeping State adoption policies varied and incongruent. The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children has only been enacted by 9 States and cannot be considered nationally in effect until passed by 35 States. There is a need for coordination between ICPC, the Interstate Compact for Juveniles, the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance and other compacts affecting the placement of and which provide services to children. The Federal Government should provide for a State's continuing legal jurisdiction and responsibility for placement and care of a child that it would have had if the placement were intrastate. If approved this would create a more uniform process across states and promote the adoption of more children within the US.

**NEW JERSEY** - On Jan. 1 2017, under a law signed by Gov. Chris Christie in 2014, the records of some 300,000 adopted persons will be unsealed. By Dec. 31, a birth parent must have complete forms with the state Department of Health if she or he wants information redacted from the birth certificate.

**INDIANA** - HB 1245 authored by Rep Michael Karickhoff grants a notice of adoption to grandparents. This bill if passed would provide that a grandparent of a child sought to be adopted is entitled to notice of pending adoption proceedings.

SB 332 authored by Sen. Joseph Zakas & Sen. Rodric Bray amends provisions regarding adoption notices. Provides that a consent to an adoption is not required from the biological father of a child born out of wedlock who was conceived as a result of a crime in jurisdictions in which the elements of the crime are substantially similar to certain crimes under Indiana law. Amends provisions regarding: (1) when a putative father is not entitled to establish paternity; and (2) post adoption contact privileges. Prohibits any person from challenging an adoption decree after the expiration period.

## Book Reviews

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**99 Adoption Do's and Don'ts** by Russell Elkins - This is a short book packed with a lot of great advice. In fact, we liked it so much that we have started giving this book out to our clients! This book is really geared toward adopting infants through open adoption directly from the hospital. The advice is easy to read, and the book is only about 50 pages long. These are things we really want all prospective adoptive parents to know.

**99 Things You Wish You Knew Before Choosing Adoption** by Roberta & Jeffrey Kasky - A quick read with some good information about legal risk, termination of parental rights and what expenses you can and can't pay for in regards to potential birth parents. Additionally, there is information on special needs adoptions, future contact agreements, and surrogacy as well. The authors completed their adoption in Florida so check with your agency or attorney for explanations on the specific laws in your state.



**RAIN or  
SHINE!**



# Adoptions From The Heart hosts its 29th Annual Picnic

**Sunday, June 4th, 2017  
11am-2pm**

Fort Washington Park (Flourtown Picnic Area)

Those using GPS systems use:

**44 W. Mill Rd., Flourtown, PA 19031**

*it takes you directly across the street from the park*

We encourage all our families with **OPEN ADOPTIONS** to invite their child's birth parents to the picnic. It's a great place to have a visit surrounded by others who are also touched by adoption!

Send a letter of invitation for us to pass along. Please include a separate confidential note to our staff with your full name and birth parent's names. Be sure to send it in enough time for us to forward to your child's birth parents & receive a response. **NOTE: Birth parents will not be invited without consent.**



Arts & Crafts,  
Live Music, Snacks  
Face Painting, and Ice Cream  
for each child!

Free Family  
Portraits!

## **What To Know Before You Go:**

- If you are meeting others, be sure to designate a specific area to meet  
(balloons are a great way to help connect with others)
- Mark all valuables with your name
- Please supervise children at all times

**We thank you for  
allowing us to be a  
part of bringing your  
family together.**

Join the AFTH staff and families  
(both domestic and international)  
as we celebrate families brought  
together by adoption.

**Bring a blanket & picnic lunch.  
Or choose to buy some of the  
delicious food from the food  
trucks who will be donating a  
portion of their sales to AFTH's  
Expecting and Birth Parent  
Support Fund.**

We will provide some drinks,  
snacks, and entertainment.

Make sure to check out the  
raffles. All proceeds raised benefit  
AFTH's Expecting and Birth  
Parent Support Fund



# Virginia Annual Picnic



• Fun & Activities  
for Kids of All Ages!  
• Playgrounds

"Fun Forest" is the ultimate playground with an imagination center & family adventure area.

*Check out the...*

- Shaky Bridge • Dolphin Tunnel
- Whisper Dishes • Plant Walk
- Underground Telephone
- Fossil Dig-a-dinosaur  
and MUCH MORE!!

Saturday, June 17th

Noon - 3:00 pm

Chesapeake City Park - Fun Forest

**Come and enjoy our annual adoption celebration!**

♥ Bring a picnic lunch (grills available for families to use)

♥ AFTH will provide paper products, drinks, and ice.

Come celebrate another year of open adoption and building families with us at our annual picnic. Please bring a lunch for your group. Drinks, ice, and paper products will be provided. There are also charcoal grills available for use at the park. *Note: If you are inviting your child's birth family, please send a mailing to them with enough time for coordination.*

Please RSVP by June 9th

Email [KimberlyR@afth.org](mailto:KimberlyR@afth.org) or call 757-361-0008



# Connecticut Annual Picnic



**NEW LOCATION!**  
Beardsley Zoo  
in Bridgeport, CT

*See over 300 animals representing North & South American species including the Red Panda, Amur Leopard and Giant Anteater!*

*Parking is free. Stroller rentals available! Easy access from I-95!*

**Join Us on:**  
Sunday, June 25th  
Noon - 3:00 pm

at the  
Beardsley Zoo

**ADMISSION COST:**  
**\$8/person**  
children under 3 Free

*Bring your own picnic lunch or order at the Peacock Cafe. Ride the Carousel and visit with other AFTH families.*

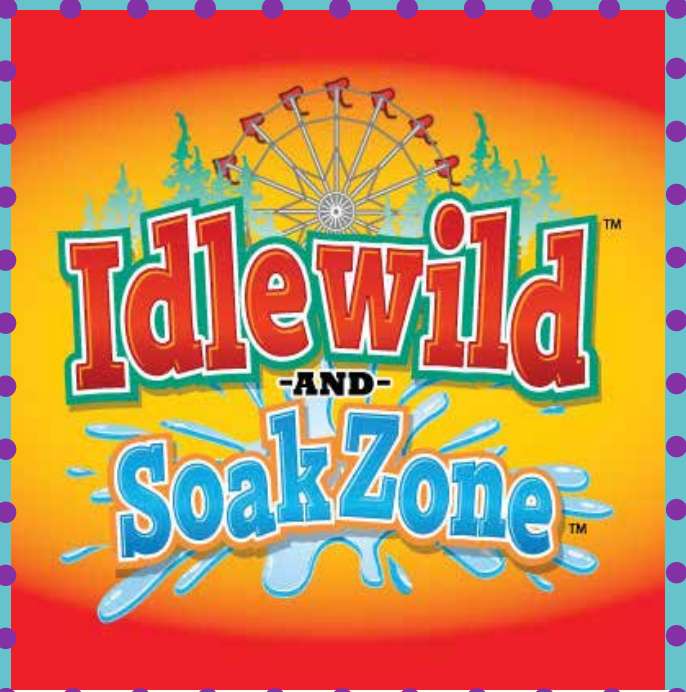
**ADMISSION MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE:**  
**Deadline: June 5th**

Checks (payable to Adoptions From The Heart) can be sent to  
703 Hebron Avenue Glastonbury, CT 06033

Note of the number of adults & children in your party when sending in payment and make sure to include your child's birth parents if you are having a visit.



# Pittsburgh Annual Picnic



Join us for a day of fun  
**Friday, August 4th**

**Park opens at 10:30am**  
**Join us at Pavilion C2**  
**from 11am-2pm**



7 Themed Areas with Exciting Rides.  
Splash Zone Includes : Water Slides,  
Wave Pool & Kiddie Pool

**Ticket Deadline:**  
**July 21st**

**Cost is \$21.75 per person. Children 2 & under are free.**

Tickets will be sent directly to you before the picnic.

**or Purchase Tickets ONLINE** (\$1 service fee)

Click on the Online Store at the bottom of [www.afth.org](http://www.afth.org) and go to Special Events

**Questions? Call Katie at (724) 853-6533 or email [KatieH@afth.org](mailto:KatieH@afth.org)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

# of people attending \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:  
Adoptions From The Heart  
Send this form & payment to:  
Adoptions From The Heart  
1225 South Main St. Suite 207  
Greensburg, PA 15601  
**Deadline: July 21st**

## What Open Adoption Means

Since Maxine Chalker started Adoptions From The Heart in 1985, the mission and goals of the organization have been focused on **open adoption**. AFTH emphasizes the importance of supporting everyone in the adoption triad. As an agency committed to these values, we wanted to share with you what open adoption means to AFTH staffers. You'll find that the staff expresses themes of love, respect, and compassion.

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"I believe that open adoption is not just one point in time, but rather a gradual growth. In my experience, both parties are normally nervous/cautious/hesitant at first. Meeting anyone initially is always a new experience, and trust is not given but rather earned. Open adoption allows for both sides to connect, with the ability to gradually grow that relationship into something that best fits everyone's comfort level. The ultimate goal is for a child to grow up knowing his or her story, and having all these amazing people to love him or her."

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"Openness means less doubt, less insecurity, and less questioning for the child, which in turn improves confidence and self esteem."

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"I believe open adoption is the ultimate way for a mother to say "I love you more." To me, it says "I love you more than I may be able to show you. I love you more than my own peace of mind, and I will continue to love you more with each day I watch you grow with your adoptive family."

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"Only the parts of the triad can have this journey together and believe in one another to make it work. I have had the privilege of watching families come together through open adoption for over 16 years. Open Adoption becomes a gift and not something scary or to hide from."

"Open Adoption to me is a beautiful word for family! As a social worker, when counseling with all parts of the adoption triad, the explanation to my clients on open adoption is family, trust, dedication and loyalty.

They are embarking on a journey like no other where they have not only gained another family to love, but a friendship that will last a lifetime. This one child has brought two families together in a unique way."

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"Open adoption means that our daughter, doesn't only have to hear how much her birthmother loves her and thinks about her but she can hear it directly from Momma Jess herself.

Open adoption means our family grew by many, not just one. It means, together we celebrate our diverse roles of motherhood in her life. It's about standing together in love for the same child."

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An AFTH staff member, also an adoptive mother, always goes back to this Jody Landers quote when people ask what open adoption means to her.

**"A child born to another woman calls me mommy. The MAGNITUDE of that tragedy and DEPTH of that privilege are not lost on me."**

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"Open adoption is not about getting what *you* want. It's about committing yourself to a life-long relationship each and every day for the sake of your child. It's about honoring the commitment you made to your child's birthparents when they choose you to raise their child."





## Domestic Program Update

We welcome all AFTH families (domestic and international) to join us in celebration at our annual summer picnics. The large agency picnic is held in Fort Washington, PA and has returned to its traditional first Sunday in June. We are thrilled to have Chef Donte's Delicious Dishes food truck returning again this year donating up to 25% of their profits for the day to AFTH's Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund. It's a win-win...great food, great cause!

Several of our outer offices also host annual summer picnics. Join us in June at Chesapeake's Fun Forest in Virginia where children will have a blast exploring the playground or come join us at the Beardsley Zoo for a day of fun in Connecticut. Travel to Idlewild outside of Pittsburgh in August for a splashing good time at Idlewild Amusement Park and Splash Zone. All of the picnic details can be found in the [newsletter insert](#).

We encourage all AFTH families to invite their child's birth parents as it's a great time to visit together surrounded by other AFTH families and staff. Please make sure to send your letter of invite to the agency ASAP so that it can be passed along giving time for a response. Make sure to include a note with your name as well as birth parent's names for internal use so that we can pass it along.

AFTH is now accepting photos of your beautiful children adopted through the agency for the 2018 Building Beautiful Families calendar. Details on [page 9](#).

A special thank you to everyone who was able to make it out on April 2nd for our 5th annual Find Her Footing 5K. The event raised over \$6,500 for the Expecting and Birth Parent Support Fund (details on [page 5](#)).

### ***AFTH Support***

We understand how important it is to have guidance during your adoption journey. We also know that adoptees, birthparents and adoptive parents need post-placement support as well.

The adoption process can bring forth an array of emotion. Our social workers are available to provide any assistance that is needed. If you are a couple, you and your partner's needs may differ. Our social workers are trained to address any issues and can help you and your partner reach a consensus. Talk to your social worker about anything you might have questions or concerns about. The process is a unique and personal journey for each person and our staff are dedicated to being there for you along the way.

We encourage all of our waiting families to attend their office's support group. Our offices also offer support groups and one-on-one support for birthparents during and after placement. We believe connecting with other men and women who have chosen adoption is important. Contact your social worker or visit [www.afth.org/calendar](http://www.afth.org/calendar) for upcoming support groups.

March was National Social Work month. We were humbled by the wonderful things clients were saying about our staff. Our social workers are pivotal in helping our clients through difficult times. They are also there to share the blissful moments. AFTH is proud to have some of the most caring and passionate social workers. Our heartfelt thank you to each and every AFTH social worker who goes into work each day and goes above and beyond to make a difference.





## Accepting Photos for the 2018 AFTH Building Beautiful Families Calendar

**Submit your photos by July 1st, 2017**

**Email your photos to [KristyG@afth.org](mailto:KristyG@afth.org)**

*(Kristy will respond with confirmation of receipt)*

If sending multiple emails due to file size, # the emails (eg. 1 of 4)

**Include: parents name & address, child's name, age, & birth country**

*Or Mail Photos to: Marketing Team Calendar Search - Adoptions From The Heart  
30-31 Hampstead Circle Wynnewood, PA 19096*

### **Tips:**

- \* horizontal pictures preferred
- \* seasonal photos a plus
- \* send a variety of photos
- \* Use highest pixel setting on camera/phone
- \* No adults in photos please
- \* Siblings (adopted or not) can be included in some photos as well

### **Calendar Year Statistics**

In 2016, AFTH placed 140 children into their forever homes. Last year, we placed 10 children with single adoptive parents and 16 children with same-sex couples. Again, AFTH has been awarded the HRC seal for our LGBTQ Cultural Competency.

As of April 1, 2017, 75% of AFTH families have been waiting less than 18 months and 56% less than a year.

Last year, more than half (55%) of our placements were emergencies. And we have seen that trend continue. So if you are a waiting family and are unsure of what to do in an emergency placement, contact your social worker so they can explain the process to help you feel more prepared. Additionally, make sure to talk with your social worker if at any point you are unable to change plans and travel to a hospital for a placement within 24 hours as you may need to go on hold.

## AFTH Waiting Family Support Groups

AFTH understands the waiting process can be hard. 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.afth.org](http://www.afth.org) for details.

## 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.



## 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.*

### General International News

If a U.S. Hague accredited agency or ASP (Adoption Service Provider) is debarred from operating, loses its accreditation or is suspended, it “must execute the plans required by 96.33(e) and 96.42 (d) of the Hague Convention under the oversight of the accrediting entity, and transfer its intercountry adoption cases and adoption records to other accredited agencies, approved persons, or a State archive, as appropriate.” Families can go to this link for details: <https://travel.state.gov/content/adoptionsabroad/en/about-us/newsroom/CaseTransferResponsibilitiesofIntercountryAdoptionServiceProviders.html>

### China

One of our transferred families whose log in date to China was 1/16/07 received an assignment through Carolina Adoption Services in December. The family, who worked through our Allentown Office, were matched with a three year old boy. For the past ten years, they have maintained their immigration clearances. This couple deserves our congratulations and respect for their tenacity and patience!

The number of Chinese children adopted by

foreigners has decreased by 80% in ten years. In 2005, 15,000 Chinese children were adopted internationally and in 2014, it dropped to only 2,800. Between 2004 and 2014 the number of children placed through intercountry adoption in 24 major countries dropped by 70%. The U.S. continues to be the world’s largest internationally oriented adopters but those figures are rapidly declining from about 23,000 in 2004 to around 5,000 in 2014. It is still dropping to new lows.

### Ethiopia (Suspension of Adoptions)

On April 21, an official from Ethiopia’s Ministry of Women and Children (MOWA) informed U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa that it is suspending its processing of intercountry adoption cases, effective immediately. The U.S. DOS does not yet know how long this suspension will last.

### Ghana

On January 1, 2017, the Hague Convention entered into force for Ghana. After reviewing Ghana’s Amended Children’s Act of 2016, and confirming the establishment of Ghana’s Central Authority, the United States has determined it will now be able to issue Hague Adoption Certificates for adoptions from Ghana. The DOS cautions U.S. adoptive parents that there may be delays in the adoption process while Ghana works to implement its new adoption laws, regulations and procedures.

### Guatemala

Guatemala requests missing post placement reports. On 1/12/17 the state.gov website issued a reminder to ASPs and adoptive parents that Guatemala requires





post-adoption reports for cases processed under the National Adoption Council's (CAN) Acuerdo process. The Acuerdo is the process under which certain transition cases are processed.

### The Kyrgyz Republic

Adoptions from Kyrgyz will begin under the Hague Adoption Convention on 11/1/16. Currently only adoptions to the United States are possible.

### Russia

A provisional ruling from Europe's human rights court has ordered Russia to pay damages and legal costs to Americans who were barred from adopting Russian children. Russian has three months to appeal the decision.

The case was brought by 45 Americans who had been in the final stages of the adoption procedure when Russia banned Americans from adopting.

A court press release indicated it awarded \$3,180 in damages to each pair of prospective parents plus \$600 in legal costs.

### Sierra Leone

The U.S. Embassy in Freetown confirmed with Sierra Leone's Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) that the MSWGCA has not authorized or designated any particular individual or individuals to facilitate adoptions from Sierra Leone. The Embassy also confirmed there are many adoption service providers registered in Sierra Leone and working directly with MSWGCA. Prospective adoptive parents seeking information about accredited ASPs with Sierra Leone adoption programs may wish to review the Council on Accreditation's (COA) website, which has a search function.



## Congratulations to AFTH's New Families

### Sons

Robert & Amanda  
Michael & Lisa  
Andrew & Lauren  
Larry & Michael  
Michael & Jennifer  
Sean & Jennifer  
Adam & Anna  
Jaime  
Manny & Jennifer  
Derek & Anna  
David & Joshua  
John & Somphit  
John & Summer  
Keith & Karen  
Kathy  
Joseph & Heather  
David & Samantha

David & Jessica  
Jeffrey & Nicole  
Michael & Laura  
Kenneth & Gregory  
Jonathan & Valerie  
Vincent & Jocelyn  
Jessica & Elena  
Christopher & Stacy  
John & Candice  
Douglas & Erin  
Clifford & Stephanie  
Mendel & Malka  
Bryan & Melissa  
Eugene & Danielle  
Jeffrey & Samantha  
Christopher & Shawn  
Tara  
Joseph & Emily

### Daughters

Rory & Matthew  
Adam & Anna  
Daniel & Elise (twins)  
Michael & Susan  
Christopher & Victoria  
Michael & Casey  
Joshua & Jesse  
Eiran & Corie  
Ryan & Cheri  
James & Heather  
Bruce & Jill  
Vorrice & Marci  
David & Keta

Gary & Michaela  
Dennis & Madelyn  
Nicole  
Brian & Alexis  
Kimberly & Ghows  
Eric & Heather  
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## AFTH Summer Picnics

*We are beginning to gear up for our summer picnics and we would love to see you there. Picnic details in the newsletter insert.*



*Fort Washington, PA Agency Picnic  
Pittsburgh Picnic - Idlewild  
Connecticut Picnic - Beardsley Zoo  
Virginia Picnic - Chesapeake Fun Forest*



## FREE ONLINE WEBINARS

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