

Friends in Adoption journeys

Successfully creating families since 1982 through Compassionate Adoption Spring 2007



Overwhelming love, unbridled joy

Touched by your generosity

The Staff of FIA was sincerely touched by the compassion and generosity of our wonderful Alumni during the holiday season. An Alumni family of five suffered the unfortunate loss of their home this past fall in the flooding of the Southern Tier of New York. While the staff is appreciative of the yummy gifts we receive every holiday, we asked folks to consider donating to this family instead. Wow! Were we ever delighted when the donations of gift cards, clothes, books and cash started pouring in! The spirit of the holidays was amplified by the giving of our wonderful Alumni. It is a testament to the extension of the FIA family. We are happy to report the family who received these generous donations is getting back on their feet and life is starting to once again feel normal.

Heartfelt thanks goes to each and every one of you who donated!

Your FIA Family

The response!

Sam and I want to thank all of the wonderful families that so generously made a donation to help us get on our feet again. You have no idea how much this means to all of us! The kids were so excited to open the box and see all the goodies that were packed inside for them. We truly do feel like part of the FIA family. Your generosity has given us strength to cope with the enormous challenge that we face. Thank you!

Love, Lori



When we started our adoption journey, it was after years of trying to conceive on our own and then years of infertility treatments. By this time, we thought having a family of our own would never happen.

All that changed when Steve met a friend he used to work with and the topic of children turned to adoption. As it turns out, she and her husband were already talking to FIA and she highly recommended we do the same. After researching the adoption process and many agencies, we decided to attend the FIA Get Acquainted Weekend. Our frustration changed that one beautiful weekend in Vermont. We went to the Get Acquainted Weekend and we finally found the hope we were longing for. That weekend was just amazing! We met other families who were going

through the same thing that we were experiencing and it was reassuring to know that there was a light at the end of this very long tunnel.

We began the process of the home-study, background checks, fingerprints, medical backgrounds, etc., and, of course, the most important piece of this, our profile that potential birth mothers would see. This was the most time consuming and exciting part of the whole process. Gathering the photos of our families and the ones of ourselves made us realize even more how much family meant to us and that,

as great as our life together was, we were missing something. Once that was done, after many, many revisions, we were ready to become active with FIA. It happened around November 2005 and now all we had to do was wait!

We realized that there is no time frame for this process. It really is a situation of timing and "when your birth mother sees your profile, it really will be meant to be." That is no consolation when the post-cards come and the phone calls don't. During our wait we were mailed postcards indicating that twelve of our

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Second time around



Our last adoption had gone relatively quickly. We went to the Get Acquainted Weekend in October 1997 and by the following September our daughter Sami was born. However, the second time around seemed interminable. To get some perspective, we decided to start the adoption process again when Sami was about 2 1/2... she is now 7 1/2.

When you are waiting to adopt, you cannot imagine that your present life will ever change; the feeling of impotence can be quite overwhelming. After many discussions with Dawn, we decided to once again redo our profile (this was perhaps the

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dawn's desk

lessons learned

Recently one of our waiting families was placed with a beautiful baby. A few days after they arrived home, we had to call them to let them know that the biological mother wished to parent, but the biological father wished the adoption to move forward. When the birth parent decides to parent during the legally allowable time period, it is the policy of the agency to return the baby to the biological parent after the completion of a Safety Assessment. Despite the emotions surrounding this particular request, the response by the pre-adoptive Mother was one that I will never forget and one that we all need to remember: *"Dawn, Ben and I only want to parent with permission from the biological family; we would never want to think that we had taken a baby away from anyone who wanted to parent. Despite our sadness, we know that this baby will be well loved and well taken care of."* The baby is now being parented by the biological Mom and it is our hope that this young couple will celebrate in the joy of parenting for many years to come. And our pre-adoptive family remains on their journey to become parents through Compassionate Adoption.

Another one of our waiting families was faced with a similar situation and with their permission we are publishing the letter that they sent to their family and friends:

Thank you so much for, first, your well-wishes and secondly your thoughts and prayers when we had to bring Courtney back. This sort of thing is a risk that you are well aware of when you enter into a potential adoption though never prepared for. It certainly doesn't stop you from feeling the pain when the unimaginable happens, like it did, and it doesn't stop you from giving all of your heart and soul to that tiny miracle. Even though it was only two days, we love Courtney and we miss her more than words can say.

Traci and I believe that Courtney is where she belongs. For some reason, God needed us to care for her for those two days – perhaps it was better than her going into foster care. Because Traci and I have been blessed once with the addition of Brendan to our family, we have a strong belief that these babies find their way home – to where they are meant to be. That faith is what keeps us going and reminds us that we are part of a bigger plan. It doesn't eliminate the pain we feel, but it will get us through.

If anyone is wondering, Brendan is fine. Rather than telling him he was a big brother right away, we told him from the moment we brought Courtney home that we needed to take care of her for a little while. When we had to bring her back, we told him it was time to bring her back to her Mommy and Daddy because they were ready to take care of her. I am sure he misses her a bit – he really thought she was special – but at least it all makes sense to him.

I hope no one will feel too awkward or for a lack of words around us. Your simple well wishes are all we need. Pete

Adoption is about finding families for children who are in need of families. Both of these babies found their forever, loving families and though they were not with adoptive families, we know that children who are truly in need of adoptive families will find their way to the homes of these two (and other) waiting families. In the meantime, as an agency, we feel incredibly fortunate to have people who from the depth of their hearts truly understand the meaning of Compassionate Adoption.

Dawn, Director

welcome home

our family

welcomes

Doug & Steven	Luke
Tom & Jessica	Campbell
Jennifer & Sharon	Kieran
Kevin, Amanda & Rainer	Leo
Steve & Diane	Carter
Tricia	Julian
Chip & Ben	Elenor
Mark & Janice	Nicole
Scott & Leslie	Leah
Jeff & Angela	Sydney
Tom & Melissa	Allison
Elaine & Marie-Claire	Marcello
Ed, Sandy & Katie	Aiden
David & Becky	Stuart
Joe & Jean-Charles	Sara
Jeff & Patty	Benjamin
Steven & Mike	Evan
Jim & Sandy	Steele
Rob, Shelley & Justin	Lindsey
Gary & Geoffrey	AJ
Shane and Mitzie	Frances

Journeys is published two times a year by Friends in Adoption.

Send your letters, photos and comments to:

Mary Walsh Snyder

Friends in Adoption

653 Plank Road, Suite 200

Clifton Park, NY 12065

mary@friendsinadoption.org

Letters may be edited for space.

fia kids

Hi, my name is Justin and I am 14. Adopting my baby sister has been one of the best, if not the best experience I have ever had. When my parents said that they wanted to adopt I was skeptical at first. I didn't think that I would be able to love an adopted brother or sister as much as a biological brother or sister. Boy, was I wrong! The second that we got the phone call about a baby (my sister) being born in a few months I was ecstatic. After we hung up the phone the first thing that I did was go over to the calendar and count how many days we would have to wait until my sister was born. The wait seemed like it took 10 years, but it was all worth it.

The first time that I layed eyes on my sister I was amazed at how beautiful she was. I walked over to where she was and looked down at her. I went to touch her hand and she grabbed onto my finger (pretty tightly I might add). It was an instant bond. A bond that I feel will last forever. It is very hard to imagine what I would be doing right now if we had not adopted my sister. After even the hardest day, just one little smile can warm you up inside and make you feel like you just had the best day of your life. I feel that any baby can make life better. Think about your life now, then think about how much better it could be if you had a child that looked up to you and adored you every moment of every day.

Whether the child is a brother, sister, son, or daughter. I have had a great experience with FIA. They have given me the best sister that anyone could ask for.



justin

cassie

Hello! My name is Cassandra and I am 10 years old. I have an older sister Janae, a brother Jacob who is 8, and a sister Carly who is 6. Last March my family got an exciting call from FIA saying a baby was being born. We were so excited we stayed home from school to meet our new baby sister, Ella. She is so cute! We love playing with her and she loves to make us laugh. From the minute she came to our home she fit right in with our family. It doesn't feel any different that she is adopted. She is my little sister and she was meant to be here with my family. We are all so lucky to have our sister Ella!



Recent amendments to the Family Court Act and the Domestic Relations Law in NY

Recent amendments to the Family Court Act and the Domestic Relations Law in New York provide for court enforcement of the terms of post adoption contact agreements between adoptive parents and birth parents in agency adoptions in New York State. Although agreements for continued contact or communications between birth parents and adoptive parents are nothing new, until the new amendments, such agreements were considered "Good Faith" agreements because, ultimately, there was no mechanism or clear right to enforce the agreement against a breaching party.

The new law makes it explicit that when the requirements of the law are met, the Court which ordered the adoption maintains jurisdiction after finalization of the adoption to enforce an agreement for post adoption contact made by the parties at the time the adoptive child was surrendered to the agency. The court accomplishes this by incorporating the post adoption contact agreement into the Order of Adoption at the time of the finalization.

It is important to stress at the outset that the sanction for breach of a post adoption contact agreement is NEVER to overturn the adoption. Once an adoption is finalized it is as sacrosanct as ever and the legality and stability of the parental relationship established by the Order of Adoption is in no way diminished by allowing for enforcement of post adoption contact agreements.

What has changed, however, is that if an agreement is properly created and approved, it will become part of the Order of the Court and the parties to the agreement will be permitted to return to court to seek enforcement of the agreement even

after the final Order of Adoption.

In order for a post adoption contact agreement to be incorporated into an Order of Adoption, requirements set forth in the statute must be met:

1) Since it is considered a condition of the birth parent's surrender, the agreement must be made before or at the time of the surrender. Accordingly, a birth parent should not sign the surrender until the terms of the post adoption agreement have been agreed to and signed by the adoptive parents, the agency and the birth parent. The terms of the post adoption contact agreement should also be set forth in the surrender instrument itself.

2) After the post adoption contact agreement and the surrender have been signed, the agreement will not be enforceable unless both the surrender and the agreement are approved by a court. Under ideal circumstances, the agency will request a court to approve the surrender instrument and the post adoption contact agreement in a separate proceeding that takes place shortly after the surrender is signed. At the approval proceeding, the court will give the birth parent and anyone else whose consent to the adoption may be required an opportunity to be heard.

The court will approve a proper surrender if the Court feels it was knowingly and voluntarily made. However, the court will also scrutinize the post adoption contact agreement to determine if the agreement is in the best interests of the adoptive child. Typically, the

court will appoint a Law Guardian to represent the adoptive child's interest before the court. The Law Guardian should sign the agreement if, from the child's point of view, the agreement serves the child's best interest. If the Court determines the agreement to be in the child's best interest, the Court will issue an Order Approving the Surrender and the Agreement.

In the event the Court does not feel the agreement is in the child's best interest, the Court could still approve the surrender but refuse to approve the agreement. If this happens, the birth parent MUST be given an opportunity to withdraw her/his surrender. This scenario creates the possibility that surrender could be withdrawn even after the 30 day revocation period has expired. Although unlikely to occur, this is a stern reminder that post adoption contact agreements should always be written with the best interests of the child being paramount.

3) When the Petition for Adoption is filed (after the three month period of supervision) if there has been an approval proceeding, the Order approving the Surrender and the post adoption agreement are submitted to the court where the Petition for Adoption is filed. The "finalization court" is bound by the "approval court's" prior Order and must accept the post adoption contact agreement. If the "finalization court" determines that the adoption by the adoptive parents is in the child's best interest, the finalizing court will issue an Order of

Adoption declaring the adoptive parents to be the legal parents of the child. The Order of Adoption will refer to the post adoption contact agreement and will incorporate it into its Order of Adoption. At the same time that the court issues the Order of Adoption, the court will also issue an Order Incorporation of Post-Adoption Contact Agreement and order that the adoptive parents the birth parents and any other parties that signed the agreement be served with a copy of the Order. This is the point at which the post adoption contact agreement truly becomes enforceable.

4) If at any time during the life of the agreement any party feels that another party is failing to live up to the terms of the agreement, the aggrieved party can return to the court that finalized the adoption with the Order of Incorporation and petition the Court to enforce the agreement against the breaching party. At this point the Court must determine whether enforcement of the terms of the agreement continues to be in the best interests of the adoptive child. If the court agrees that it is, it will order the breaching party to live up to the terms of the agreement.

There are many issues presented by these new procedures and the possibility of enforcing an agreement made at the time a child is placed for adoption. How to create an agreement that speaks to the needs of the birth parents, adoptive parents and the best interests of the adoptive child and can also stand the test of time will require thoughtfulness and flexibility on the part of all concerned.

Nina Rumbold is an attorney with offices in Yorktown Heights, New York. She can be reached at nrumbold@adoptionlawny.com or 1-914-962-3001.



The Adoption Educator: The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love...?



A familiar and favorite question that we often ask one another in our culture is, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Adults and children alike who ponder this question make certain assumptions about roles and the skills needed to perform their chosen roles. For example, we know that if you want to open a pastry shop, you need to learn to bake. If you want to be an architect, you need to learn to draw. If you want to teach ballet, you need to learn to dance. And if you want to become an adoptive parent, you need to learn to educate.

The prerequisite course for any adoptive parent seems to be the ability to be an ambassador for adoption so that others may have a profound understanding of its intricate realities. Becoming an adoption educator may be one of the most difficult and challenging career choices in the world – at times exhausting, at other times exhilarating. As an adoption educator, you take on the responsibility of ensuring that your own parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, neighbors, friends, and members of your community understand how adoption works across a lifetime. Most importantly, you become an educator for your children who will inevitably transform and evolve into the people they are destined to be through the teaching moments they have with you – their adoptive parent – the educator who is the center of their life.

But educating isn't always easy. Being an adoption educator doesn't simply mean that you understand the dynamics of adoption well enough to talk about them with others. It sometimes means that you have to put your own emotions, your own pain and suffering, behind you in order to shed light for others on a day in the life of an adoptive parent. If an adoptive parent experiences the heartbreak of a disruption, or the removal of their long-awaited child during the risk period, they are often required to immediately educate their loved ones as to how this horrific event happened in the first place. They are often compelled to provide information on legal risks, birth parent rights, best interests of the child, while in their hearts, what they want and need to do most is to simply grieve together and decide how they will survive.

When an adoptive parent's mother or father continues to make comments that the child they adopted looks "just like you!", an adoptive parent may feel the need to educate their own parents as to the role that their child's birth parent played in the adoption. They may feel inclined to share that some of their child's physical characteristics rightly belong to their child's birth parents, and acknowledging that is as important as acknowledging the ways that their child fits into his or her adoptive family. Educating extended family members as to the role of a birth parent in an adoption can be grueling. The fear that extended family members sometimes feel may stand in the way of their ability to learn the lesson

of the adoption educator. And if the adoptive parents choose not to advocate for their birth parent as an educator in any given moment, they may feel that they are betraying their birth parent in some way.

When a child asks his adoptive parents why his birth parents don't come to the agency picnic every summer the way they see others coming to share the day, it is the adoption educator's responsibility to tell their child the story of his or her adoption and to fill every line with empathy, honesty, and compassion for what is known and all that may be unknown. It becomes the adoption educator's job to hold their children through the sadness related to their adoption story, and to celebrate the joy that adoption has brought the family. Adoption educators recognize that their children are different because they have two sets of parents, and yet, they recognize that their children are not different at all. Adoption educators have to find the delicate balance between inviting the dialogue with their children about their adoption story and their birth parents, and letting their child take the lead in the dialogue. They have to educate their children so that they grow with confidence about their identities and can incorporate the facts of their adoption story at critical moments during development. Adoption educators have to teach, they have to listen, they have to weigh the costs and benefits, and they have to take a leap of faith – all in one teaching moment – for the sake of their child.

If you have joined the allied forces of Adoption Educators, remember that you are not alone. It may be the toughest job you'll ever love some days, and just the toughest job on other days. As parents, through birth or adoption, our most monumental task is to educate our children – to give them the tools and the information they need to grow to be happy and well-adjusted adults. So keep talking, keep reaching out for support, and keep remembering that educating others about adoption makes a difference in the world.

*Kate Kaufman Burns, MSW, LCSW
Friends in Adoption/Adoption
Resources & Counseling Center
518-462-7474*

An FIA Staff Must Read

Rhonda Roorda and Rita Simon's PART II is due out this fall and it covers the experiences of the adoptive parents and the adult transracial adoptees interviewed in the first book.

The first book was called In Their Own Voices. The next is In Their Parents' Voices. Both books were very powerful explorations of the issues surrounding and involved in transracial adoption.



family album



From a Birth Mom

I do not know what it feels like to become a family through adoption. I've never adopted before. I have never experienced the joy of bringing a child home into my house with the hope that he will soon – legally/officially be “my child.” I have had the opportunity to see the excitement in parents' eyes; I can tell their minds are racing with all the dreams and hopes any new parents wish for their child. It is probably one of the most important and exciting events in your life.

I was pregnant for nine months, carried a child who shared 50 percent of my biological characteristics — the other 50 percent from his biological father. My child did not go home with me. However, I could tell that the beautiful couple (that I chose) had the excitement of any new parent.

From the moment that I saw my child I was overwhelmed with joy. He was perfect. He looked just like my sister who was born three years prior. I know that my son's parents felt the same way. My mind was racing with ideas, hopes, dreams and opportunities that I wanted for my child. And theirs were too.

I placed my 3-day old child into the arms of this beautiful couple — whom I had grown to love. They went home as a family and I went home with empty arms.

The weeks to follow are a blur to me today. I would wake up for small amounts of time with aching arms, clutching onto my blanket as if it was my child. I was dependent on hugs, care, and support. But at the same time, I was trying to act ‘happy’, ‘positive’, and content. I returned to school quickly after the birth, but looking back, I realize that was how I filtered my grief. I would act as if I didn't need anything, but in reality, I longed for a phone conversation with my child's parents. I wasn't rethinking my decision at that point; I just needed to feel that I was cared about — by someone.

My child's parents were the most important support that I received during post-placement. I would say that this is true to this day. They have answers to all the questions I think about every day. They send me the most beautiful pictures of him. They told me all the wonderful stories and how he was adjusting wonderfully into their family. It made me feel so happy and proud. I want the best for him and I know that's exactly what he is getting.

Even though becoming a family through compassionate adoption is an exciting and joyful time, we as birth parents are experiencing a great deal of grief. Whether the adoption is open or closed, it is impossible for birth parents to forget. A simple card or a quick note can mean the most to these amazing and courageous individuals. After all, our children do share a part of each of his/her birth parents.

Our Birth Mother Support Group is held at Glens Falls Hospital the third Sunday of each month. If you are interested in attending please call 1-888-95ADOPT or e-mail Holly at Holly@friendsinadoption.org.

Donations

FOR THE ALUMNI FAMILY OF 5

Tammy & John

Gina & Rob

Glen & Ed

Al & Janice

Mary & Julio

Lori & Kris

Sue & Tad

Elaine & Marie-Claire

Naomi

Tom & Nan

Rich & Karen

Deborah

Mark & Steven

FIA in honor of 18 Attorneys

FOR FIA

Alan & Janice

Alison

Amy & Daniel

Ann & Seth

Barb & Ed

Barry & Brittany

Bill & Andrea in honor
of Teddy and Harry

Britt & Randall

Bryce & Jennifer

Buzz & Sarah

Christopher & Illyria

Dave & Deb

David & Ruth

Diana & Ken

Doug & Diane

Ed & Lynn

Edward & Mariann

Ellen

Gary & Geoffrey

George & Deborah

George & Teri

Gretchen & Gwyneth

Alvin & Cheryl

Ian & Daniel

James

Janet & Brian

Jeffrey & Colleen

Jennifer in honor
of Cliff, Conio, and Grace

Jo Anne & Jim

John & Susan

Jon & Katherine

Katherine in honor of Mary

Lee & Jill

Mark & Susan

Michael & Cynthia

Nina

Paul & Julie

Richard & Ellen

Rob & Vinnie

Robert & Maria

Roger & Rachelle

Roland & Karen

Scarlett & Jost

Simon & Stefanie

Steven & Jane

Steven & Susan

Susan

Ted & Melissa

Thomas & Eva

United Way

Walter

“There’s no place like home”

Capital Campaign News

Silent auction
fund raising
gala in NYC
raises \$60,000!



Thank you to
our campaign
donors!

\$800,000 has
been pledged:
just \$450,000
to go!

Our deepest appreciation to all of the volunteers, sponsors, donors, bidders, participants, promoters, and friends who made this event a huge success!

A “First Dig with Dawn” raised \$12,000 in the only live auction of the night! Egged on by emcee Ed Maynard and a rowdy crowd, one family’s winning bid of \$3,000 got matched by three others. Awarded engraved ceremonial shovels, the winning bidders will break ground with Dawn on FIA’s Family History Center addition when the Capital Campaign concludes. They will also enjoy a two-night stay at the Barrow’s House.



Left to right: FIA alumni Jeff Besselman & David Goldes, FIA attorney Kurt Hughes, FIA Executive Director Dawn Smith-Pliner, FIA alumni Elaine Comerford & Marie-Claire Martineau, and FIA grandparents Linda and George Long (also Board President).



FIA alumni Steven Frank and Mark Lerner celebrate the evening with their son Derek’s grandparents – Bill & Jackie Frank and Mel & Loretta Lerner.

FIA alumni Johna Harvey enjoys a moment with Tonia Lloyd, an event volunteer and close friend of Campaign Director Jacki Lappen.



Beaming for the camera are FIA alumni Charles and Geri Thoma Lemert.



Event Chair Glenn Palmer and W Hotel General Manager Ed Maynard – FIA alumni! – prepare items for the silent auction. A million thanks to both of you and to the rest of the hardworking event committee: Co-Chairs David Bowen and Jacki Lappen, Susan Crawford, Naomi Donne, David Goldes and Jeff Besselman, Barbara Gorman, Susan Haber, Johna Harvey, Dolores Hughes and Gary Pollard, Geri Thoma Lemert, Mark Lerner and Steven Frank, Gene Parseghian, Tom Petras, Robin Plevener, and Bennett Rink.

Meet the Staff of Friends In Adoption

Put a face with a name!



Dawn

Founder and Director
 • Middletown Springs, VT
 • responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency
 • acts as a resource for numerous post adoption issues
 • outreach and networking



Mary

Director of PR, Legal Liaison and Case Work Supervisor
 • Clifton Park, NY
 • works with FIA staff to ensure case work procedures and legal requirements for a successful adoption are met
 • manages FIA resources to promote adoption awareness throughout the community



Tara

Director of Finance & Personnel, IT Liaison
 • Middletown Springs, VT
 • maintains the life behind the scenes in the business section of our organization
 • in charge of the financial affairs of FIA; includes the accounting as well as managing client escrow accounts



Barb

Caseworker
 • Baldwinsville, NY
 • once a match is made, works with pregnant woman/couple and prospective adoptive parents to ensure a successful adoption plan is in place
 • outreach and networking



Kim

Adoption Coordinator
 • Middletown Springs, VT
 • works with pregnant women/ couples, from initial call to follow-up
 • coordinates FIA's Get Acquainted Workshops
 • profile review
 • outreach and networking



Dawn C.

Adoption Coordinator
 • Middletown Springs, VT
 • works with pregnant women/couples, from initial call to follow up
 • oversees clearances for our pre-adoptive families



Lisa

Adoption Coordinator
 • Middletown Springs, VT
 • works with pregnant women/couples, from initial call to follow-up
 • profile review



Lynn

Caseworker
 • Northville, NY
 • once a match is made, works with pregnant woman/couple and prospective adoptive parents to ensure a successful adoption plan is in place
 • outreach and networking



Kim B.

Caseworker
 • Rochester, NY
 • once a match is made, works with pregnant woman/couple and prospective adoptive parents to ensure a successful adoption plan is in place
 • outreach and networking



Holly

Birth Mother Liaison
 • Clifton Park, NY
 • a birth mom who made an adoption plan for her son in 2002
 • Social Work major who speaks at local high schools and with pregnant women about her experience making an adoption plan



Shannon

Public Relations Assistant
 • Clifton Park, NY
 • coordinates with FIA staff to effectively outreach in the community



Nancy

Office Assistant
 • Middletown Springs, VT
 • does general office work and maintains FIA's extensive files



Jan

Receptionist
 • Middletown Springs, VT
 • answers the phone and provides clerical support in the Vermont office



Kate

Licensed NYS Social Worker
 • Clifton Park, NY
 • provides optional counseling services to pregnant women/couples, birth families
 • prepares home studies for our pre-adoptive families living in the Albany/Clifton Park area of NY



Office Hours

9 am – 4 pm
Monday – Friday

During our office hours we will answer any questions and help solve adoption concerns. Please keep our office hours in mind and conduct your regular adoption business during this time.

Please note

On Fridays we try to catch up on paperwork. We can serve you best when calls to us on Fridays are limited to emergencies only. During office hours, we are also here to answer your incoming pregnant woman calls. After our working office hours, our trained answering service will be answering calls, with staff members serving as backup.

Email addresses

The staff may be reached via e-mail by typing in the first name of the individual and @friendsinadoption.org.

Financial questions

Contact Tara during office hours.

Get Acquainted Weekend

Contact Kim or Lisa during office hours.

Status of clerical or checklist requirements

In order to activate your file: Call the Vermont office during office hours.

Adoption questions

For advice on your resume, adoption ads, networking ideas and/or to check on potential calls, ask for Dawn, Mary, Barb, Lisa or Kim.



mail

Book recommendation

Hi Dawn,

Before I forget, I wanted to send you the name of a good book to recommend to any parents of the age 7-8+ set who are looking for an adoption-friendly treatment of the "birds and the bees." I was so pleased with this book that I ordered. I was prepared to add in my own adoption-speak to the explanation on reproduction, birth and families – thinking that it wouldn't be included enough or be adequately addressed.

I was certainly wrong, and no wonder this book gets good reviews: *It's So Amazing: A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families*, by Robie H. Harris and illustrated by Michael Emberley. You may already know of it. The index in the back – under adoption – has no less than five entries of how she has included adoption very naturally into the text. I ordered it from amazon.com – and then decided to see if it was in the Tapestry Books collection. It wasn't – so I e-mailed them a recommendation to check it out for consideration in their collection.

Love, Nan

An update

Dear Dawn and Everyone At FIA,

Enclosed is our holiday card for this year complete with picture. It has been 7½ years since we became a family through adoption with FIA's much needed help and support. We were always very sure that we wanted our adoption experience to be an open one.

Recently we have been in touch with Ryan's birth mother and it has been a wonderful thing. We've been talking about things that Ryan likes and his strengths and weaknesses. His birth mother loves telling me which traits are hers and which are Ryan's birth father's. Ryan had a wonderful conversation with her on the phone. It was amazing to hear.

There have been things that have come up in Ryan's life that I wondered where they came from or how his birth parents dealt with them. When she calls I can tell her what is going on and she is so helpful and insightful.

I can see Ryan feeling great about himself because he knows that all these people love and care about him.

Just wanted to give you the update and thank you again and again for helping to make our family and lives complete.

Best Wishes! Barb, Ed and Ryan

Thank you

Dawn, Mary, Kate and Everyone at FIA,

Thank you so much for inviting Patty, Benjamin and I to the adoption fair last night and to your support group meeting on Sunday to share our story. I can't



begin to express in words how thankful we are to all of you for your caring and support throughout the entire process. You truly are all very special people and the passion that you have for what you do is rare and really amazing. You have helped to change our lives forever. Benjamin is an incredible blessing and we love him so much. The time and energy and thoughtfulness that Mary put into making sure Patty and I, and Laura were comfortable and informed throughout the entire process was unbelievable. It means so much to us that you still care and will always be there for Laura and us well after the adoption. Kate was so wonderful at making us feel positive and helping us understand why we were feeling the way we were at every stage. From the orientation weekend right up until now, we have always felt like we were part of your extended family and you have been in our corner every step of the way. Patty and I have gone from despair and hopelessness to uncontrollable happiness in the course of less than a year. We have learned so much and grown so much together with your help. Our gratitude to your agency is only eclipsed by the gratitude we have for Laura and the gift that she has given us. It is extremely rare these days to find people who truly care and dedicate themselves to helping others enrich their own lives. We are so thankful that we found you all at Friends In Adoption and we want you to know that we will always be there for you too! THANK YOU!

Love, Jeff, Patty, and Ben

It's done!

Hi Barb!

FYI – we finalized our adoption of Nathan last Friday, 12/22! Brendan O'Shea pulled some strings to get us scheduled before year's end. So IT IS DONE. I think we are still in shock, a bit. But it feels very natural and normal to have Nathan. He was already our son, and he knows it. It's just all legal and settled now.

Barb, thank you so much for everything you have done for us. Adopting Nathan is the culmination of our greatest dream and goal in life, and we doubt this would have happened without your involvement. As it turns out, we have several Christmas angels this year, and you are one of them. God bless you.

Love, Lisa and Phil

No words to express

Dear Dawn,

It was October when we attended the information weekend in Middletown Springs. ...October 2004. It's hard to believe it's been two years already – all the getting ready, the paperwork, the advertising, the waiting, Maryn's surprise arrival, the risk period, the picnic, the finalization, the birth certificate, and now the final payment – all \$15.89 of it. We have remarked on numerous occasions and to many people that, even with all of that, the process could not have gone more smoothly.



There just aren't words to express our gratitude for all that the FIA staff has done to make us a family. You clearly know your roles and perform them so proficiently. You somehow manage to provide for all – the adoptive hopefuls, the birth parents, and especially the babies – with apparent ease and confidence. When we were less than certain, you proved time and again the wisdom of your experience and the breadth of compassion. So this week, as we tuck Maryn's birth certificate, hot off the press, in a very safe place and send our last payment to you, we wanted to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude for making our dream come true. Though she's been with us just ten short months, it's impossible to imagine life without her.

We'd like to extend a special thank you to Mary. She just sort of popped into our lives on the day that Maryn was born, and she's been the voice of good will and sunshine ever since. Her energy and genuine love of bringing families together set the stage for a good beginning with Maryn's birth parents, one that we feel will result in a lifelong relationship for both Maryn and ourselves. We hope that Maryn will someday appreciate how very precious that is, and we will remind her of the people who made that happen for us.

Though we had agreed to wait until Maryn turned one before making any decisions about a sibling, we find it already on our minds. You've spoiled us in making the first placement come about so quickly, so we'll try to keep our expectations in check, but you'll likely be hearing from us in the not too distant future.

*Richest blessings to you all,
Kris and Lauri*

An amazing week

Hi Barb,

Thank you again for all your help during this amazing whirlwind week! It was inspiring and truly reinforced our choice of FIA to see how compassionately you worked with all of us.

Really we can never thank you enough.

Leah is doing great. Eating, sleeping well – and so alert and coordinated! Amazing!

We came home today. Ah! Now a month of babysitting.

We received a very sweet e-mail from Leah's birth father on Wednesday. We are guardedly optimistic....

Thought you might like a couple photos.

Hope you're resting up!

Les, Scott & Leah



Happy New Year

Dear Dawn,

Happy New Year! We are so grateful that FIA continues to be our son's link to his heritage after all these years (16?!). But, then again in my heart I knew that you and FIA would always be a part of our family.



Enclosed is a small donation for your "Forever Home" fund. I wish it were more.

I am looking into a match donation from my employer. Does FIA receive any funds from the United Way? If so, can we direct a donation to you from the United Way?

I will be in touch again soon.

Warm Blessings to All,

Love, The Jalettes: Paul, Jo-Ann & Paul Ryan

Dear Mary,

It was so nice to hear from you. Just to update you. My client was a no-show – but she did call later to say she was making another plan and would need counseling and would call us later. Since she was definitely abortion minded we hope that she cancelled that appointment and that we will still see her. If I get to talk to her I'll be in touch with you – this gal needs Holly.

Thank you so much for the Christmas presents – all the Alight staff enjoyed the candy. We have a lot of new staff and some are asking me about Adoption Awareness Training. Are you still doing trainings?

Be in touch. It is so nice to know that you are out there. My best to Holly.

Warmly,

Connie, Alight Pregnancy Centre, Inc.

...continued from page 1

profiles had gone out, but we had never heard anything more from the pregnant women who received them. We were starting to second guess whether our profile was effective and toyed with the idea of re-doing it. Luckily we had Steve's friends who had gone through this process a year earlier to talk us "off the ledge" so to speak, and reassure us that when the time is right, it will happen. We can't thank them enough for the additional support they gave us through this journey.

As luck would have it, six months after we went active, we got the call we had been waiting for...a pregnant woman wanted to speak to us but she had not made her mind up yet about adoption. The agency warned us not to get our hopes up because this pregnant woman had been very ambivalent about adoption and they asked us to use this as a "practice run." We tried to keep this in mind as we called the pregnant woman, but try as we might, it was very difficult not to become emotionally involved...the idea of finally having a baby to love was just too great! The call went just wonderfully and then we were left to wait again for her to make contact with the agency. This took longer than anticipated and once again we were second guessing ourselves...we must have gone over the conversation piece by piece numerous times, called our friends and asked them if we had said anything wrong, did we offend her somehow...all kinds of crazy things can pop into your mind and they did. After another phone call not only to the pregnant woman but also to her mother, she finally decided that she would like to make an adoption plan with us!

By now she was only three weeks away from her due date so we went into high gear and started planning for the arrival of our little one. The pregnant woman did not know the sex of the baby so we bought all kinds of green and yellow things. As excited as we were, we had to try to be realistic and realize that there was a chance that the pregnant woman could still change her mind. The most difficult part was keeping our families from going completely wild. We told them to only get the necessities, after all we had to get through the birth and the 30-day waiting period. Everybody was so excited for us, we could barely keep them at bay. The wait was interminable and sleep was non-existent...I guess we were getting ready for the sleep deprivation that was to come.

Finally the day arrived when our baby was born! It was an unusually warm fall Sunday and we were out in the yard doing clean up...by this time the phone NEVER left our side so when it rang and we saw that it was Barb from FIA we started screaming and crying. She said that the pregnant woman had been in labor since early that morning and that the baby would be born today. As I am writing this, the chills just keep running up and down my spine because I can still remember exactly how I felt at that moment! There is just no way to explain the emotions that are running through you! Barb called later that evening and told us that it was a boy and the pure joy and love that was pouring out of us was completely overwhelming! Now was the time for naming our son. Not knowing what lay ahead for us this day, and as coincidence would have it, we woke up that Sunday morning and while still in bed, we finalized the names we would use for a boy or a

girl. We called our families and friends with the news and the night never seemed to end.

Now, once again we just had to sit and wait for the birth mother to decide when she wanted us to come to the hospital. Usually this is all planned beforehand, but in this situation, she did not choose us until near the end of her pregnancy, so she never had the chance to make the hospital plan.

Two very long days later we were on our way to finally meet our new little baby boy for the first time. Barb met us that morning at the hospital and just gave us a quick idea of what to possibly expect...we were going to meet the birth mother, her mother, her sister, her brother and best friend. They were all in the hospital room waiting for us. When we walked in everyone just started crying and I mean really crying...I asked the birth mother if I could hug her and we hugged for what seemed quite a long time. There really is no explaining how this situation felt...on one hand my husband and I were so incredibly thrilled and excited and happy and on the other you have this birth family that is just plain sad. It's really quite an amazing experience when you think about it. The birth mother knew that she could not give her son the life that she wanted him to have, but the pain she and her family felt that day must have been excruciating. For an hour and a half, we talked and laughed and cried a lot and then it was time to leave. We still had not laid our eyes on our son yet because he was still in the nursery. After what seemed to be hours and hours, Barb finally took us to the nursery to meet our son. What can I say...he is just perfect! His little face, hands, feet...it was absolute love at first sight for both of us. I picked him up and kissed his little face and couldn't stop staring or crying. We got to feed him and change him and then we took him home.

He has been with us for over three months now and this has been the most amazing journey for us. Our wish to have a family has finally been realized and the most amazing part is that we now have this incredibly beautiful baby boy in our lives...all the sadness, angst and anxiety that we felt before he came into our lives is now gone and has been replaced with the overwhelming love and unbridled joy that we feel everyday for our son. We often say how hard it is to imagine what our life was like before we had our son in our lives.

The entire staff at FIA was wonderful throughout this process. This was uncharted territory for us and was a very emotional time. FIA was there to guide us through the process whenever we had questions or concerns or needed emotional support. From our first meeting at the Get Acquainted Weekend through the birth and beyond, FIA gave us the support and guidance to make it through what seemed like a never-ending process. They mapped out every step to get us ready to go active and once active, gave us the tools to get our profile to potential birth mothers. One aspect that can't be measured is the extent of their contacts throughout the adoption community. We actually found our way to our birth mother through a referral from an attorney familiar with FIA. That was a direct result of the staff's commitment to getting their message out into the community through speaking engagements or seminars where adoption is the focus.

With the help of FIA and their commitment to adoption, we are now a family! Thank you to all.

Diane and Steve

Continued from page 1

fourth version). We were thinking that this time we were going to make it fancier, more pictures, more text, more bells and whistles...something that was going to catch someone's eye...after so many postcards and "no bites" we were sure that we had to do something different, eye catching...something...we were at our wit's end...we literally did not know what we could do to help the process along. We had been working on redoing our profile for three months and it was still not done. When my husband Alan asked me, "What do you want to do on Mother's Day this year?" I replied, "You know what I would really love to do?...Finish our profile." So we kept Sami occupied and we went about the unpleasant task of finishing that profile. We felt good when we were finally done and we immediately e-mailed it to Dawn before we sent it off to the profile wizard.

Monday, May 15 started out as an ordinary day for us. Except for the fact that it was the day after Mother's Day and it had been a particularly rough one for me this year. Alan and I even exchanged some cross words...when we made up he said to me, "if a baby comes tomorrow, will that make things better?" (Little did I know how prophetic this statement was.)

The next day we all went to work and school as usual. After work, I went to get a haircut and then I came home. Sami had just gotten home from school and Alan had recently returned home from work as well. At around 3:40 pm, the phone rang. I picked it up in the kitchen and said "Hello". I heard on the other end, "Hello, Janice." But then the phone disconnected. The phone then rang again, "Hello", same thing, the phone disconnected. The third time I went upstairs to another phone. Finally I heard, "Hi, Janice... it's Dawn."

I did not realize at the time that this was "the call." Naturally, my first thought was that Dawn was calling me to discuss the profile that we had just sent her the day before. So when she started with, "Janice... a baby has been born..." I did not at first comprehend what she was saying. Then when I realized that we were not going to discuss the profile and we were going to discuss something much more incredible, I yelled to Alan to pick up the phone.

Dawn explained to us that a baby had been born and that we should immediately go to such and such hospital in such and such city...her last words were, "leave now"...there were no discussions, no ponderings, no ruminations...it was time to go.

Somewhere in the conversation, Dawn gave us some details about the baby and the birth mother but what I did hear clearly was that it was a girl.

After Dawn's instructions, we hung up and took ten minutes to figure out what we had to do in the next 20 minutes. Cancel the babysitter (we had a meeting that night at Sami's school) set up our cat Mel with food and drink for a few days, pack our bags, make some phone calls. What is so wonderful about Dawn is that through all this excitement, she was concerned about what we would tell Sami.

Alan and I explained to Sami that a friend had called us (Dawn) to ask us a very big favor. Dawn asked us to watch a baby for a while because the baby needs to be looked after. We explained to Sami that we don't know if eventually this baby will live with us or not, or become her sister or not, but right now we need to do this very big "good deed." We told Sami that we would have to leave town for a few days and that she would need to miss school. Normally a kid loves those words, only in this case she had a special event in her school the next day. She began to cry when we told her that she would need to miss this event, but when Alan said, "You will have to pack a suitcase with a bathing suit because there may be a swim-

ming pool at the hotel," her tears immediately went away and she became very excited about packing a suitcase and leaving.

The trip took about two hours and when we got to the hospital we called Dawn as she had instructed us. At the hospital nursery, we were ushered in by a nurse who was expecting us. The nursing staff was kind and hospitable; we

could not have asked for a more wonderful situation. I immediately told the head nurse that we had explained to Sami that this was not yet her sister, but only someone we were watching. She then informed the other nurses and everyone was on board. Then for the first time, we met our new baby girl. It was a thrilling moment, hard to explain. We spent time with her, holding her, cooing with her and talking to the nurses and making arrangements as to where to stay that evening. The hospital staff helped us find a hotel for the night and asked us when we would be returning to visit the baby. At that point we did not expect to meet the birth mother, so the nurse filled us in on whatever details she could. I told her that whatever she is telling me now, is the only thing that I will ever be able to tell this baby about her birth and birth mother.

We visited the baby the next day; the nurses put the four of us in a special room so we could spend time alone with the baby. They gave us a much appreciated "refresher" course (after all it had been seven years) on infant care. The nurses made us feel very comfortable there.

After many phone calls with Barb Monahan, our caseworker, and Dawn, we were informed that the birth mother did indeed want to meet us. Naturally we were a little nervous about this, but Barb and Dawn were very encouraging and very supportive. The only stipulation we made was that Sami not be involved in this. We arranged it such that the lawyer would meet us upstairs in the nursery with the birth mother and Barb would stay downstairs with Sami in the hospital cafeteria. Barb will forever be known as the "ice-cream" lady, because every time we refer to Barb Monahan, we say to Sami, "Oh, you remember her, she was in the hospital cafeteria with you...remember she bought you two ice creams (within the course of 1 hour and 15 minutes)." Meetings with a birth parent are singular moments...there is no hallmark card to describe it, no other situation that comes close to it. A woman is handing you her child, a child that she has carried for nine months, and entrusting you to take care of her forever...meeting the birth mother was a very emotional experience, but we are very glad that we did. When I hugged her at the end, I assured her that we will take very good care of the baby, and I told her to take good care of herself. (We liked the birth mother very much; she really was a very sweet, decent and strong young woman and we commend her for making such a brave decision to put the baby first and foremost.)

That day we got to take the baby home. The nurse put her in our car, and we were off for the first time as a family of four. We feel so blessed that this baby made her way to our home. What seemed like an endless wait could not have been any different, because this baby was not ready



Continued on page 15

2007 events

March 7 - 10	American Adoption Congress 28th International Conference	Sheraton Hotel and Golf Club Wakefield, MA	www.americanadoptioncongress.org
March 11 1 - 4 pm	Options for Adoption Expo VI	Quinnipiac University Hamden, CT	www.optionsforadoption.org
March 12 7 - 9 pm March 26 7 - 9 pm April 9 7 - 9 pm	Adoption Resources & Counseling Center <i>Parenting the Hurt Child: Understanding Attachment Disorder</i> <i>Conscious Parenting: A Strategic Course in Parenting for the Family Adoption</i> <i>Openness in Adoption: Navigating the Waters of Post Placement Contact</i>	653 Plank Road Clifton Park, NY	Call 1-518-462-7474
April 19-20	FIA's Attorney, Agency & Social Worker in Partnership Semi-Annual Meeting	Barrow's House Dorset, VT	Call Dawn at 1-802-235-2373 email fia@friendsinadoption.org
April 25 9 am - 12 pm	Siblings Connections Sponsored by Family Center for Family Connections	Connections Training Institute 350 Cambridge Street Cambridge, MA 02141	1-617-547-0909 email to cffc@kinnect.org
April 28	34th Annual New England Adoption Conference Sponsored by the Adoption Community of New England	Milford High School Milford, MA	Call 1-508-429-4260 www.adoptioncommunityofne.org
April 29	American Fertility Association Annual Conference		www.theafa.org
May 1 7 - 9 pm	Adoption Resources & Counseling Center Adoption and Adolescence: Survival Tactics for the Family of Adoption	653 Plank Road Clifton Park, NY	Call 1-518-462-7474
May 2-5	18th Annual Conference of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys "Experience A Revolution In Family Building"	Williamsburg, Virginia	Robin Turner, rturner@drohanmgmt.com Call 1-703-234-4110
May 10-12	Adoption 2007: 18th Annual Statewide Adoption Training Conference Sponsored by the New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children	Marriot Hotel, Albany, NY	Call 1-607-272-0034
May 23 9 am - 12 pm	Parenting Styles Sponsored by Family Connections Training Institute	Center for Family Connections 350 Cambridge Street Cambridge, MA 02141	1-617-547-0909 email to cffc@kinnect.org
July 15-18	22nd Annual Adoption Resource Center (ARC) Summer Intensive		Call 1-617-547-0909 email cffc@kinnect.org
July 14	Friends In Adoption's Annual Picnic Weekend	Hapgood Pond, Peru, Vermont	Call Dawn at 1-802-235-2373 email Dawn@friendsinadoption.org
Fall 2007	Monthly Pre-Adoptive Parents Support Group Meetings and Special Events in the NYC and NJ area	Sponsored by the Infertility and Adoption Counseling Center	www.IACCcenter.com
Sept. 11 7 - 9 pm	Adoption Resources & Counseling Center-Into the Adoption Looking Glass: Taking a Closer Look at the Options in Adoption	653 Plank Road Clifton Park, NY	Call 1-518-462-7474
Sept. 27-28	FIA's Attorney, Agency & Social Worker in Partnership Semi-Annual Meeting	Barrow's House Dorset, VT	Call Dawn at 1-802-235-2373 or email to fia@friendsinadoption.org.
Oct. 9 7 - 9 pm	Adoption Resources & Counseling Center Adoption in the Schools	653 Plank Road Clifton Park, NY	Call 1-518-462-7474
Oct. 11-13	American Academy of Adoption Attorneys 2007 Mid-Year Conference: "International Law"	Baltimore, Maryland	jrgreene@cohenandgreene.com
Nov. 3 8 am - 5 pm	16th Annual Conference sponsored by Adoption Resource Network (ARNI)	Penfield, NY	Call 1-716-586-9586
Nov. 5 6:30 - 9 pm	12th Annual AFCR Adoption Fair	Marriott Hotel, Albany, NY	Call 1-518-448-5295
Nov. 18 9 am - 5 pm	27th Annual Tri-State Adoption Conference Montclair State University	Montclair, NJ	Call 1-210-920-0505 or email apc2007@optonline.net or www.adoptiveparents.org.
Winter 2007	The American Fertility Association Adoption Seminar Series		Call 1-888-917-3777 www.theafa.org

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to be created and to be with our family until now. When people ask me, "did you have to wait a long time?" (which to me assumes you were waiting for just any baby, not the one that made her way to your family). I say, "no... she came at the perfect time."

Adoption is a very tricky business. FIA makes it easier, but waiting for a baby is still a very hard thing (filled with anxiousness, self doubt, etc.). However, now when I look at this darling baby, who is so sweet, so adorable, so chubby...I know why we were tested...I know why we waited...this is an important thought to hold onto when one is longing for a little one. You have to really feel that the right baby comes "home" when he or she is ready to join your family.

We named the baby Emma Mari (which means "wished for child" in Hebrew). Sami made us parents, but Emma completed our family. Sami is absolutely thrilled to be a big sister. She showers Emma constantly with hugs and kisses and says, "oh...my sweet little sissy is so cute," as she is pinching her very abundant cheeks. I used to worry about the proverbial

"age" difference between Sami and the "future" child which seemed very important at the time. But for those who are concerned about that, all I can say is that it all goes away when you see your precious little child. Because Sami is now in third grade, I feel like I am starting all over again. I can concentrate on this baby just like I did when Sami was an infant. I love doing the "baby" stuff, but I also get to do the terrific eight-year-old things too. To my surprise, this age difference definitely has its benefits.

Thank you FIA for all that you have done and words cannot express our gratitude and thanks to Barb and Dawn for all they have done to bring Emma home to us. We wish all the families that are waiting a very hardy good luck. And please hang in there...when your time comes you will say it was all worth the wait. As Dawn told me the day after we got home, "Like most babies, they find their way to the right home, only Emma happened to take the scenic route."

Best wishes,
Alan, Janice, Sami and Emma

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Begin with a Get Acquainted Weekend

Is FIA right for you?

Dear Mary, Dawn, Lisa, Tara and Kim,

I still cannot stop thinking about the weekend. My favorite part was hearing Holly's story. The courage of that birth mom to tell what she went through and to share with all of us her personal information was so compelling.

I was glad to hear that not every adoption you do is an open one like Holly's. We are fine with exchanging letters and pictures through the agency. The openness piece is too much for us at this time (although we pray for a birth mom like Holly).

Thank you again for everything – I have never seen such a dedicated group of individuals who actually love their jobs. We have found the right agency and have hope again that we will have a child soon.

Love,
Sue and Barry

Before you make a decision about whether FIA is right for you, we feel it's important for you to understand who we are, how we work, what we expect from clients and how we view the adoption process. There's so much to tell, and we think there's no better atmosphere in which to accomplish this than here in Vermont.

So we ask you to start your journey at an FIA Get Acquainted Weekend. The weekend will give you a chance to meet our staff, ask questions and relax in a casual, rural setting while exploring the

adoption options offered by FIA.

Attendance at a Get Acquainted Weekend is mandatory for all clients. ***It is a wonderful educational opportunity which does not obligate you to work with Friends in Adoption.*** The cost of the weekend is \$275 per couple or single. This fee covers all meetings and lunch on Saturday. Weekends fill up quickly and are booked on a first-come, first-serve basis.



Complete this Registration Form and return it to FIA. Pick your date carefully: FIA has a no refund policy. Your payment can only be applied to the workshop you register for.

Questions? Email Kim at kim@friendsinadoption.org.

Dawn, Barb, Kim, Lisa, Mary and Tara,

Thanks for a truly inspiring weekend! We had already met with Mary in her office to hear about domestic adoption and FIA. We felt like there wasn't too much more to learn – we were so wrong! To hear the presentation of life-long issues of adoption and adopting transracially really helped us realize that we do want to adopt a child of color. We feel so badly that it has taken us this long to get our act together.

We were always worried about the money but it was nice to hear Tara say that money should not stop anyone from adopting and that FIA would work with us. It was funny how many of us, once we started exploring adoption, knew so many people that recommended your agency. I guess all roads do lead to FIA! We will call when we are ready to schedule a consult.

Maureen and John

Get Acquainted Weekend Registration Form

Name 1 _____

Name 2 _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone 1 _____

Work Phone 2 _____

Email _____

May we call you at work (we identify ourselves as FIA)? Yes No

How long have you been in the adoption search process? _____

Special circumstances you would like us to know about. _____

How did you learn about FIA? _____

Would you consider adopting a child of race other than your own? Yes No

If there is a cancellation for the weekend of your choice, would you be available on 24 hours notice? Yes No

Are there any children currently residing in your home? Yes No

Due to the nature of the weekend, we cannot accommodate children.

Please indicate your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice for workshop to attend. The following dates are set for FIA's 2007 Get Acquainted Weekends.

_____ May 18–20, 2007

_____ Aug. 24–26, 2007

_____ Oct. 26–28, 2007

_____ Nov. 30–Dec. 2, 2007

METHOD OF PAYMENT

\$275 fee per couple/single includes meetings and lunch on Saturday.

Personal check payable to *Friends in Adoption*

VISA Mastercard

CC# _____

Signature _____ Exp. Date _____

Please return this form as soon as possible to reserve your space. Reservations may be made via email or fax with a credit card. A letter confirming space in the first available weekend will be sent to you upon receipt of this completed form. Fax to Kim at 1-802-235-2311.

DATES AND RATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mail this form to: Friends in Adoption
44 South Street, PO Box 1228
Middletown Springs, VT 05757-1228
Phone 1-802-235-2373, Fax 1-802-235-2311
www.friendsinadoption.org