

JOURNEYS

SUCCESSFULLY CREATING FAMILIES SINCE 1982 THROUGH COMPASSIONATE ADOPTION

Summer
2008

What a difference a year makes!



One day in October 2006, having arrived home from dropping Brendan off at school, I heard a message on our machine from Mary, our favorite case worker at FIA. One of her "call me right away" messages which I tried not to get excited about but is impossible not to. She told us about a pregnant woman in our area who was due in a couple of weeks and looking for just the right parents for her baby. She was having difficulty finding what she needed in the way of post contact. Reassuring ourselves that things happen the way they are suppose to, we agreed to jump right in and meet with her. Mary let her know we were interested, but she never heard from her again.

It almost felt like a test at the time... we took the excitement at the reality of having another child as a sign we were definitely doing the right thing and so happy we decided to move forward with this journey.

We got a few postcards in the mail here and there, but nothing materialized. I don't think we even got a phone call from any of them.

Then, in January, we got a call out of the blue. There was a baby girl born just two days before. The couple had been considering adoption and FIA brought some profiles for them to review. They wanted to meet us! We needed to get in the car and head straight to the hospital. The baby was not being released that day; this was strictly a meeting to get to know each other. We all seemed to click and before leaving for the night, we got to see the baby, hold her, check out her perfect fingers and toes, and it all felt so right. The meeting went very well and heading home from the hospital, we kept talking about how it all seemed too perfect – the biological father completely involved and supportive, because the baby was already born,

decisions being made now wouldn't be thrown out the window with the unexpected emotions of having given birth – we couldn't help but feel this was it!

We got the call and returned to the hospital the next day to bring home the precious Courtney Elizabeth. Brendan was with us and completely fell in love with her. We have photos of him helping Mary carry the seat out to the car. He was so excited! The ride home was filled with screeches of joy from the many loved ones we called telling them of our news.

The next day, a dear friend sent a mass email with photos to the company where Pete and I had been working. Knowing our history all too well, she was sure to remind everyone

about our 30 day revocation period. We were overwhelmed by the prayers and good wishes that came flooding in. This was really happening!

On day 3, Brendan was playing next door at a friend's house. A neighbor had just left from a visit, and my parents were on their way from out of town to meet Courtney for the very first time, when the cell phone rang. I got that familiar feeling in the pit of my stomach. "Hello" I said timidly. "Traci, it's Mary." I paused a moment waiting for her trademark "Nothing's wrong!" but it never came. I looked at Pete, my eyes confirming our worst fear. He immediately sat on the kitchen floor, slumped over with his head in his hands. The couple had decided to

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Somewhere over the rainbow...



...dreams do come true!

Life is a journey... Let us share a little bit about our journey to becoming a family with the help of FIA and many others.

In early spring of 2000 we learned more about FIA and the concept of open adoption at the Get Acquainted Weekend in Middletown Springs, Vt. Shortly thereafter we signed up and started getting our paperwork together. We put a lot of time and thought into our profile – it took us longer than we had anticipated – but found that it reflected well our values and who we are.

As soon as we were "active" in spring 2001 the waiting began. We were thrilled when there was a potential situation with a young pregnant woman in summer 2001. We met with her and had a good feeling – thinking on our way home that "this was it." Shortly before her due date she changed her mind. This was hard for us to digest, but we tried to be understanding and stay positive.

Another situation with a little baby boy, 3-months-old, came up. We had a phone conversation with the teenage potential mom and the grandmother.

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dawn's desk



welcome home

Recent changes in New York law have brought about a lot of challenges for everyone affected by adoption. In a nutshell, one of the new laws states that in a New York agency adoption, if there is an agreement between the adoptive family and birth family to stay in contact after the placement of the baby, that is to be legally binding, this agreement must be approved by the court.

FIA's staff, with the assistance of many professionals, worked together to formulate a flexible template for these agreements – we fondly call them PACAs (post adoption contact agreements). Our biggest challenge was to find language that embraced and recognized the voice of the child until the age of his/her majority. To write that letters and pictures and a once a year visit will occur on an annual basis would seem, on the surface, a pretty manageable agreement. Think of this agreement when the child is a newborn and few people would disagree that this would work. Now fast forward to the child being a twelve year old and you being faced with the "look" of your child informing you that "you can't make me, no way, no how" is the visit going to occur because states your child emphatically "you can't tell me what to do and I am going to my best friend's sleep over and I am not going to any picnic to see my birth mother". As the parent, you might or might not agree with your child's assessment of the reason the visit is not in your child's script but you, as the parent, are legally bound to the agreement that obligates you to the visit. Or take the scenario in reverse – your child's birth mother and father email you prior to the scheduled annual visit, informing you, that for various personal reasons, they no longer feel able to participate in the annual visit. The visits over the years have worked out very well and you know that your child is going to think that it is his/her fault that the birth parents no longer wish to visit.

I, for many years, was in strong opposition to written post adoption contract agreements. My feeling was that the foundation of all adoptions and relationships had to be that of trust and that the best written document could not create trust. Initially I was resistant to the new law. But having had a few cases over the years where conflicts have occurred between the birth and adoptive families and having witnessed the effects on the children, I have come to see the merits of how well written PACAs will enhance and strengthen the trust between the families and how our children will be the beneficiaries of the hard work of the adults who truly do love their children and whose goals are the same: children who are adopted, growing up to be healthy, well adjusted adults!

Our PACAs now include language that appropriately recognizes the adults' responsibility – both adoptive and birth parents – to 100% of the time have the child's best interest at heart, especially when any conflicts arise related to the agreement. And we have included language that addresses the voice of the child over time. It is the agency's hope that these contracts will withstand the test of time. I hope and expect to hear from our children as to how they think we have advocated for them.

Dawn, Director

our family

welcomes

John & Gail	Hailee
Lyn & Heidi	Ella
Matt & Jim	Owen
John & Kate	John
JR & Charlie	Charlotte
Alan & Nancy	Benjamin
Jay & Kate	Grace
George & Gerald	Margot
Scot & Amy	Robert & Tyler
Sue & Tracy	Clara
Jody & Nora	Charlotte
Russ & Christian	Ivy Marie
Sarah Ann & Kelvin	Azariah Kelsar
Matt & Amy	Christian
Dave & Sandy	Sawyer Cole
Jerry & Claire	Jeffrey
Joe & Rick	Lucas
Jean & Elizabeth	Sam
Peter & Janet	Anna
Matt & Brian	Kendall
Euclid & Dianne	Nathan
Mitch & Arlene	Robert
Joe & Mark	Emma
Chris & Keith	Ryan
Paul & Jill	Peyton





What does adoption mean to me?

Adoption means a lot to me. It means that a family is loving enough to take care of me as if I were their own child. It means that

I am different than

everyone else. Because when I was born, I was with somebody different than I am now. I guess I just have twice as many people that love me. I'm very glad that I do.

Kara
age 12

My name is Rachael and I am 11-years-old. I have a brother David a sister Elizabeth and a baby brother Grayson. My brother Grayson is adopted. People ask me if it changes anything. The way I think is that brother or sister adopted or not I still love him. I don't know where our lives would be without Grayson. He completes our family.

I also have a baby cousin who is adopted named Zachariah. I feel that Grayson and Zachariah sat up in heaven together with other babies and they chose to come live with our family. I think they chose the right family because we have enough love for everyone and we're always together. Thank you to their amazing birth mothers for helping Grayson and Zachariah get to us.

My name is Rachael and I approved this message.



Rachael

Caretaking Your Child's Adoption

For many years, I have been saying that I feel it is the responsibility of the adoptive family to care take their child's adoption until she/he is able to care take it for her/himself. What does this really mean in our daily lives?

Sharon Kaplan Roszia, co-author of *The Open Adoption Experience*, states that in order for adopted people to come to a full understanding of who they are, they need to have the information and history from both their birth and adoptive families. She adds that it is the adoptive parents "job" to preserve their children's biological heritage – to pass on at the appropriate times. "We ask our children to put on our cloaks and embrace our religion, our stories of where we came from, our heritage. We need to be willing to put on their cloaks of identity. We should be combining in our closet, all of that, so when we put on our cloaks, we're wearing each other's." "It's not, who does this child belong to, but who belongs to this child?"

So how does one become a caretaker of an adoption? The answer will depend on the type of adoption in which you have chosen to participate. For some of our families the connection remains through the agency; for others the connection is direct between the birth and adoptive families and for a handful, the connection is silent-existing as a file that, someday hopefully will be opened and added to. There are some basic tenants that belong in all adoptions.

1. Start talking to your child from the very beginning about how she/he became a part of your family. A baby does not understand what you are saying but you are building your confidence in telling the story. You may want to create a picture book for your child about his/her adoption. If appropriate include your child's birth family, a picture of the hospital the baby was born in (nurses tend to love group photos), and the coming home pictures. Include the book in your child's bedtime stories. If you do not make a book for your child, then there are many well written adoption books for children that you may wish to add to your child's library.

2. Always tell the truth, referring to people by their correct names and their correct connection to your family. Calling your child's birth mother, a special angel or a "friend" or anything other than the truth corrupts your foundation immediately. I worked with one wonderful family who did this and I suggested to the family that their daughter already had figured out the truth and sure enough when they finally got up the courage to tell their daughter she turned around, shrugged and said "a duh – I know that she is my birth mother." Our kids are smart and they deserve the truth.

3. Life is good, at least on most days. But being a proponent of preventative medicine, I like preparing ahead. I would be encouraging of identifying an adoption competent therapist. Meeting with a therapist when you are in a healthy state of being allows that person to better attend to your needs in time of crisis. I thought that when one of my children was having problems that because the therapist was an adoptive parent herself, that would mean she would be skilled in helping my child. Wrong! More harm than good was done. I learned my lesson and interviewed future professionals prior to introducing my child to them.

4. If your child asks you a question about her/his adoption and you can't answer it, then respond by saying that you will attempt to find out the answer and do so. Many of our alumni have called over the years with questions and in looking in their file, I have

been able to find the answer to their questions. This has provided them with the ability to respond truthfully to their child's inquiry. And if the answer can't be obtained, then let your child know that you hope in time to be able to find out the answer. Remember the agency is a life long resource for you, your child and your child's biological family. We are caretaking all of the adoptions that we have participated in over the last quarter century and we welcome calls from our alumni.

5. If your child was born of difficult circumstances, then tell the story at an age appropriate level. I can recall Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao, author of the *The Family of Adoption*, telling a story about a young woman who wanted to know who her birth father was. In her skilled way, Joyce was able to work with family members to create a video that – when watched by the adopted person and her family in a therapeutic setting – allowed this young woman to identify her birth father. What could have been a traumatizing situation, in the secure and safe environment of a skilled professional's office, turned out to be a powerful growth experience for this young woman and for her whole family.

6. If you are communicating with your child's birth family with letters and pictures please remember to include quality pictures of not only the child but the child with the family. As one birth mother told me, "I placed my son with a family. When I get only pictures of him, I think that he is an orphan." A quick call to the adoptive family letting them know this resulted in a deluge of family pictures. A number of families have provided photo albums to the birth family so as they send pictures the album can be added to. If there are siblings in the biological family, we have had our adoptive families send individual albums to the children so they can have their own special albums.

7. Talk about adoption. It doesn't need to be an everyday dinner topic but weave it into your family conversations. Did you watch a movie together where adoption was talked about...you might ask your son or daughter what they thought about it. Did your neighbor down the street just adopt...did your son or daughter mention it to you or you to them? I have heard a number of our families say "but Johnny never brings it up". My response is "do you ever bring it up?" Again our kids are smart...they know what is safe to talk about and what weirds their parent/s out! So if Johnny isn't talking, it's a sure sign that you should be!

Many of our families are using technology to chronicle their child's adoption and to preserve the connection between the families. One of our families used snapfish (www.snapfish.com) to create their profile. They then added to the book once they were chosen to adopt a baby. With permission from the birth family, they included birth pictures and comments from the extended biological family. Just recently they sent another book to forward to the biological family, filled with pictures of the baby's milestones over the year. They plan to do this every year and my guess is that they will be celebrating many of the child's milestones together as the years proceed. The child has copies of the books in his bedroom to look at as he pleases.

I have watched our families who have entered open adoptions from the very beginning where annual visits were planned develop their own rhythm with their connection to one another. Many of these visits occur at our annual picnic. As we witness from a distance, body language tells the story. One could sense the nervousness of the anticipation of the first visit, but when you come back next year and the year after and all you

Continued on page 7

Helping families grow!

Meet
the
staff

tara



Middletown Springs, VT
Director of Finance &
Personnel, IT Liaison

kim



Middletown Springs, VT
Adoption Coordinator

dawn c.



Middletown
Springs, VT
Adoption
Coordinator

dawn



Middletown Springs, VT
Founder & Director

mary



Clifton Park, NY
Director of PR, Legal Liaison
and Casework Supervisor

jan



Middletown
Springs, VT
Clerical Support

kate



Clifton Park, NY
NYS Licensed MSW,
Social Work Supervisor

nancy



Middletown Springs, VT
Office Asst.

barb



Syracuse, NY
Caseworker

Northville, NY
Caseworker

lynn



holly



Clifton Park, NY
Birth Mother Liaison

Athens, NY
Caseworker

patty



deanne



Essex Junction, VT
Caseworker

kim b.

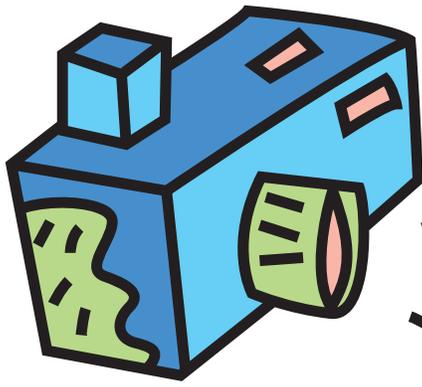


Rochester, NY
Caseworker

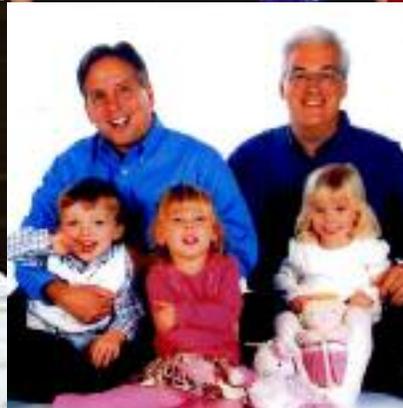
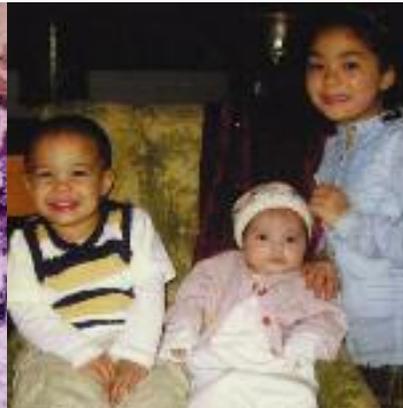
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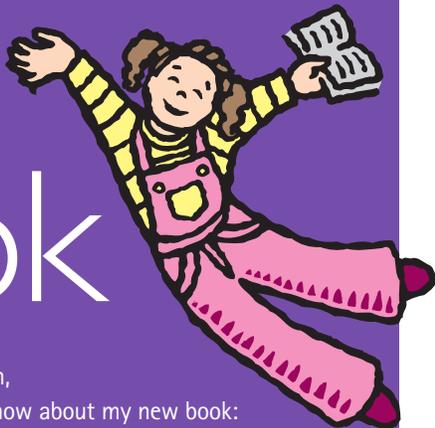
Clifton Park, NY
Office Asst.



family album



book



Dear Colleagues in Adoption,

I am writing to let you know about my new book: *MAKING ROOM IN OUR HEARTS: Keeping Family Ties Through Open Adoption*. The book has been well received within the adoption community with positive reviews in the newsletters of the American Adoption Congress, NACAC, PACT, and Adoptive Families web page. Adam Pertman, author of the best selling book *Adoption Nation* and Executive Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, had this to say: Every once in a while, a book comes along that can make an honest difference in the understanding of an important subject and in people's lives. I'm delighted to say that *MAKING ROOM IN OUR HEARTS* is one of those books.

Many birth and adoptive parents now meet during the adoption process and some continue with ongoing contact. Increasing openness has benefits for the child and his/her birth and adoptive family, but understandable concerns persist: will the child be confused or have mixed loyalties? Is this shared parenting? *MAKING ROOM IN OUR HEARTS* answers these questions by presenting the stories of families who share the joys and challenges of maintaining open relationships. Over 150 birth and adoptive family members, adopted children and national experts were interviewed. This book does what no other book has done: describes how important openness is from the child's perspective. As one 19-year-old put it, "I would be a completely different person if I had grown up without knowing who I was and where I came from. Open adoption has allowed me to be the person I was intended to be."

This book is a very user-friendly tool and I trust you will find it helpful. Please contact me if you are interested in an article for your newsletter. Mention that you have seen this flyer for a **20% discount** on individual books or get a bulk discount. I have enclosed two reviews that you may reprint. I look forward to hearing from you and hope you can send this information to your adoption colleagues.

Sincerely,
Micky Duxbury, MFT
www.mickyduxbury.com

To order:

George Kenney, Taylor and Francis
Ph: 561-998-2544, Fax: 561-998-9784
george.kenney@taylorandfrancis.com

Caretaking...continued from page 4

see is the happiness of families spending a day together – adoptive moms, adoptive dads, birth and adoptive grandparents and then add the children, birth and adoptive and the joy abounds! But what happens if, after a few years, the birth family doesn't show up. Your child might think that it is her/his fault or that something bad happened to her/his birth family. Life sometimes is tough and our kids are smart. If your adoption foundation is strong, then the strength of this will allow your child to weather the storm. In allowing your child to express her/his feelings and assuring them that you will attempt to find out why the birth family was unable to meet, your child will continue to feel secure.

Caretaking your child's adoption is no easy task, in fact it would be much easier to tell your child once that she/he is adopted and then move along having done your job. This way you are protecting your child from any pain of her/his story. But we learn from the articulate voices of adults who were adopted that as adoptive families we need to spend less time protecting and more time listening to their feelings and providing a safe and secure environment for them to learn the truth of their adoptions.

My daughter turned 28 on December 30th – Joel and I along with her brother wished her a Happy Birthday but it was the text message from her biological sister wishing her a Happy Birthday that made her day complete. Her entire family – birth and adoptive – share joy in our daughter being the person that she is. Together over the years, through the calm times and the challenging times, we collectively have provided her with the information that she has needed and that belongs to her to allow her to grow up into a healthy adult.

In a recently published book, *Making Room in Our Hearts* by Micky Duxbury, she writes, "In order to know who you are, you need to know something about where you came from; in order to move into the future, you have to be able to claim your past."

If we lovingly care take our children's adoptions, then we are giving them the gift of being able to value and celebrate their whole selves!

Recommended reading and resources:

- *Copin' With Open* by Michael Colberg; *Friends in Adoption Newsletter* Volume 8, Spring/Summer 2003
- *The Open Adoption Experience* by Lois Ruskai Melina and Sharon Kaplan Roszia
- *Making Room in Our Hearts* by Micky Duxbury
- Tapestry Books – Your complete source for Adoption books, www.tapestrybooks.com

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Marie Dolfi, ACSW, LCSW

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mail

Letter from birth mom Wendy

For all you've done, that I could never pay you back. I'm not sure who will receive this, but I'd love to RAVE about how wonderful Barb is. She has made (what has been so hard) my experience so much easier and more comfortable and acceptable than I imagined. She continues to keep in touch, and show concern regularly. That means so much in my life. She's become a friend not just a "go-between". If I could I'd nominate her for "PERSON OF THE YEAR"! Thanks to both Dawns and Kim and Nina Rumbold who got me in contact with Kim at FIA. You guys are all in my thoughts and prayers. Thanks for everything from you all and Heidi and Lyn. I'm forever grateful.

From the bottom of my heart,
Wendy

Thanks for your hard work

Hi Patty,

Wow, what a 6 days we just experienced! We just wanted to take a moment and thank you for all your hard work and support over the last week. As much as the final outcome hurt, we still appreciate your advice, guidance and work. If nothing else, it was a crash course in the emotions of adoption. We will be stronger due to this experience.

We believe that everything happens for a reason, as cliché as that sounds. Even though it felt right to us, it wasn't if Lisa wasn't 100%. We only want to do this the right way, we can't imagine starting out such an important relationship any other way.

We have a couple of beautiful pictures of Lisa holding the baby. Do you have a way of forwarding them to her? Obviously, we can't have any direct contact with her, but we know she may appreciate them. Despite our pain, we only wish her and the baby health and happiness.

Again, thanks you so much. Here's to hoping we get to work together again!

Brian & Matthew

P.S. Matt and Brian are now the proud parents of a little girl.

Thanks for coming to our high school

Holly,

This should have been sent a week ago! I wanted to thank you for all your effort in coming to Hamburg and presenting at the high school. I really wanted to let you know that on Monday when I returned and had a chance to talk to the students they repeatedly said that your presentation was the best one! They said that you could really relate to them and made it relevant for their lives. Apparently you did a great job because you definitely "got through to them"!

Again, thank you! We will contact you in the future and hopefully (fingers crossed) you will be willing to make the trip out here again!

Sincerely,
Molly

Happy family

We love you all and send our best wishes for a wonderful 2008!

All is well here and Ezra is growing beautifully. He turned two on January 9 and he adores the world! We are all so love filled and thank you all so very much for making our family a joyous one.

Your loving ways paved a path to our door that is full of light, love and wonderment.

Love and hugs,
Judith, Michael and Ezra





mail

Hi FIA gang!

Hello from New Zealand! We hope all is well. Here are some pictures of the boys for their birth mothers. They are doing so well and really starting to play together, which has been amazing to see. Leo is 16 months and Rainer just 3-years-old. How time flies!

We are even hoping to make it to the picnic this year since we'll be in the states for awhile this summer.

We'll let you know when we want to get started on #3!

Lots of love,

Amanda, Kevin, Rainer & Leo

Stay Acquainted Meeting (SAM)

Kim B.,

I loved our Stay Acquainted Meeting (SAM) the other day and I so appreciate your hosting it. I think that they are a great idea because they help to keep this process hopeful.

I loved your home. It is so beautiful and full of your personal touches. It really felt like home especially with your warm and welcoming personality as the icing on the cake (and that was delicious too!).

Thanks for forwarding the email address for Sally. I'll definitely be in touch with her. I love to chat. :-)

Take care, and we'll see you on the 25th of May, I'm sure.

Fondly,

Robin

Thanks

Dear Dawn, Kim, Tara, Dawn (& Lisa too!),

Thanks so much for all you have done and do for us. We are overjoyed that Christian found his way home to us through Friends in Adoption. Things are going very well! Sometimes it feels like he has always been here. Matt and I know now that he has always been in our hearts and it's finally so nice to kiss and hug him (a lot!) after all this time.

Fondly,

Matt & Amy

Hello all

Just wanted to say hi and wish you all the best of holidays. Seems like 2007 was a good year for FIA and we can't tell you how happy we are that finally we made it into the category of families that have a baby. We're pleased to be able to contribute to this year's stats!

Clara is a love, a sweetheart with a peaceful and easy-going temperament. She's very easy to soothe and we feel blessed to have such a beautiful and sweet baby. Her latest tricks are sleeping longer at night (4-5 hours at a stretch, yes!) and she has taken up smiling in the past few days. What fun! A few recent photos are attached.

We send you all wishes for a wonderful holiday season and new year filled with all good things. We feel so grateful to you for all of your hard work and all the support you have offered us over the past few years.

Love,

Sue & Tracy



January 2008

Its Christmas time and Alex is enjoying every minute of it! He is amazed by all of the Christmas lights and says a big WOW every time he sees a Christmas tree. Alex now has enough toys to open his own toy store!

The big hits at Christmas this year were his train table, farm and anything that moves; a car, trucks, trains and planes, he just loves them all! He also loves his new rocking horse; he enjoys giving him kisses as much as he does riding him.





mail

Thanks again for your help

Dear Dawn,

We just wanted to thank you again for your help and advice last spring. We did get a chance for all of us to visit with Emily's birth mother in August. It was a very positive and friendly time touring museums, walking in the park and zoo, and eating out together.

Also, we wanted you to know that Katie had to write a paper for english class on a subject with different opinions. She had to write supporting one side. There were many subjects to research and write about. She wrote and presented her support of open adoption. It was a great paper and she enjoyed working on it. Katie is now a freshman in high school and Emily is now a junior in high school.

We wish you a happy 2008.

Melissa, Ted, Emily & Katie

I am so happy

Hi Tara,

It has always been a pleasure working with you. Your professionalism and personality are perfect examples for Friends In Adoption. I hope to be just like you when I grow up! (smile)

I am so silly...It's because I am so happy with Azariah. He is trying to talk like crazy. I wish I could understand what he is saying. When I reply, "Azariah what are you saying?" He looks at me with a frown in his forehead as if to say, "Mommy what are you saying?" FUNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNY!

Sarah Ann



Letters from students at a local high school

Dear Dawn, Tara, Dawn, Deanne & Kim,

I want to thank you so much for the inspirational and informative field trip. I found your strong passion for all of your clients and for the children's well being to be uplifting.

I had been considering adoptive counseling before and now my desire has only grown. I would love to someday work and add to such a cozy, caring and compassionate environment to do such a service that is so needed.

Thank you again for giving us that time and for being who you are and doing what you do.

Sincerely,

Calla H.

Human Services class visit

Dear Dawn & Staff,

Thank you very much for allowing our Human Services class to come and visit your agency. I really enjoyed everything you did for us. The cookies were delicious and very thoughtful. Talking and asking questions was very helpful for me.

Last year we had an adoption agency come to our classroom to discuss their business with us and I was very interested.

After coming to your agency and seeing the environment you work in and how much pride and love you have for your job I am now considering working in the adoption field. Most people chose their profession based on money and benefits. I believe every person I met at Friends in Adoption cared so much for their job and viewed their profession as something they love than just a job.

The movie that we saw about the young girl in high school that found out she was pregnant was a very good story and I could relate to it in many ways. My mother was also 17 when she had me and I now have a boyfriend that is one year older than me. I have thought about what I would do if I ever got pregnant and after hearing about your program and watching the movie I think I would do things a lot differently.

Sincerely,

Amanda M.



mail

Thank you so very much for our tour

Dawn, Deanne, Kim & Dawn,

Thank you so very much for our tour last week. You were such hospitable hostesses! It was so warm, homey and inviting. Students were immensely impressed with not only your services, but your philosophy as well. Your unconditional positive regard and respect for those with whom you work was evident, and they all were able to identify that. They also noted your passion for what you do, and thought they would like to emulate it.

The field trip was not only valuable for us to learn about the fields of adoption and social work, but also to witness empowering and respectful human services in action. I deeply appreciate your willingness to host us and to share your passion, experiences and knowledge. It has undoubtedly impacted each student. I hope we can build and continue a relationship with your agency!

In great appreciation,
Stephanie P.

Student of the week Sam B.

Samantha is living proof that, in a school driven by academics and athletics, there is still plenty of room for a “flower child”.

With flowing clothes and a Frisbee in hand, Sam embodies the alternative spirit that reminds us of the importance of art, music and caring about the world around you.

Two summers ago, she attended Governors Institute for the arts. There, she learned a lot about art, from figure drawing to

light installation. “It was stupendous and amazing” Sam said.

She hopes to major in graphic design in Sante Fe or San Francisco. Specifically, she wants to get into designing album covers, that way she can combine her passion for art and music.

Much to her credit, Sam helped get the program Students for Social Awareness off the ground at school. “We are trying to spread the word to more people about the problems that we can be oblivious to” Sam said. The group looks into problems that are going on around the world and tires to find ways they can help out.

She hopes to keep the group going even after she graduates high school.

When she isn’t skating, Sam enjoys telemark skiing and snowboarding in the winter. During the spring, she loves to play Frisbee and helped start the Ultimate Frisbee club that meets after school.

Finally, Sam has a passion for music. “I have been playing in band since fourth grade and I’m proud to be a band geek” she said. Her instrument of choice is the saxophone. She started in jazz band as a freshman. When asked why music plays such a big role in her life, she responds with a quote from Bob Marley: “Why music? Because one good thing about music is that, when it hits you, you feel no pain!”



Dawn

...and a few years later! College of Sante Fe next year. Unbelievable! Thought you might enjoy the article on Sam.
Heidi

contacting Friends in Adoption

JOURNEYS

...is published two times a year by FIA.

Send your letters, photos and comments to:

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Friends in Adoption
P.O. Box 1228
Middletown Springs, VT 05757
kim@friendsinadoption.org
Letters may be edited for space.

OFFICE HOURS

9 am – 4 pm, Monday – Thursday. 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.

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

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parent and we needed to return the baby. We were both devastated but it was hitting Pete especially hard. He literally could not function for a short period of time, a state I had never seen the man I so often call my rock fall into. I believe at times like that, somehow God reaches down and fills the other person's bucket of strength because I don't know how I kept it together to make all the calls that had to be made, arrange a babysitter for Brendan, pack the bags, and got us moving. By then, Pete had pulled it together enough to drive but I'm thankful he has such a big heart because there is no doubt he lost a chunk of his that day.

When we got to the house with Courtney, we sat in the driveway for a moment and said our goodbyes. I had packed a couple outfits, some formula, bottles — I had no idea how prepared they would be. We knocked on the door; I was holding Courtney, not knowing what to expect in the next few moments. Courtney's grandmother opened the door but I felt so sick to my stomach that I never made it past telling them there was formula in the bag. I had to get out of there! I kissed her cheek, handed her over, and got into the car as quickly as I could. I remember sobbing harder than I ever had before. My throat was tight and I felt like I couldn't catch my breath. We called Mary to tell her it was done, but ended up having to call her back as I tried to pull myself together on the side of the road. Pete finally called back asking Mary to contact them and tell them she was scheduled for a doctor appointment in 2 days and that she was past time to eat, that they'd know she was hungry when she made this sound, that it was a bath day, that she liked her left eyebrow rubbed when she cried for no reason, that she liked to lay with her nose tucked just under your left ear when she finished her bottle, and the list went on until it occurred to us that Mary didn't need to tell them anything — they would figure it out. We returned home with barely a word in the car.

We knew that Courtney was where she belonged. That for some reason, God needed us to care for her for those few days. Because we had 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 kept us going and reminded us that we are part of a bigger plan. It didn't eliminate the pain we felt, but in the end, it was what got us through.

At home, our parents were there with Brendan, everyone trying to act as if nothing was wrong for his sake. Thankfully, we had not mentioned the words "big brother" in an effort to protect him, knowing the realities of the revocation period. We told him from the moment we brought Courtney home that we were going to take care of her for a little while. When we had to bring her back, we told him it was time because her Mommy and Daddy were ready to take care of her. He was sad. He loved her and missed her like crazy. But it made sense to him, and he talked about her regularly for about 8 months and still mentions her now and then.

When we began our first adoption journey, we quickly learned we had to assume the role of Adoption Educator and it was shortly after that we realized all the responsibility that goes with it. But after a number of meetings with adoptive families and biological families thinking about adoption, sharing our stories through different forums, and being contacted out of nowhere via the phone or email to help a couple figure out where to start their own journey, we have come to own this role. We put ourselves out there whenever we have the chance. As many adoptive parents know, it can be completely exhausting at times, even as you realize most people mean well and simply aren't educated about what is spewing out of their mouths. But it can be totally exhilarating at other times, like when I heard my Mom use my thoughts to defend Brendan's birth mom to one of her friends. We are proud to be ambassadors for adoption!

That said, within hours of being home, we were fielding questions about how this could happen and the calls began flooding in. We felt as though we'd been continually up on our soapbox defending everyone involved, the birth parents' rights, the best interest of the child, etc., and we were sick of it! For the very first time, we just wanted to STOP talking about adoption! It wasn't about adoption at that point, it was all about our hearts breaking and missing this little girl we came to love like crazy. I don't know if some people didn't get that or if they just didn't know what else to say so they felt they had to bash. Either way, it was tough overcoming the desire to tell everyone to take a hike. Luckily, we didn't. We continued to explain all sides as we knew them and it felt right. Selfishly, it was our little way of supporting our family, Brendan, his birth family, and the adoption community at large.

Over the ensuing weeks, the clouds did begin to clear. The number of times I wanted to drop to my knees had fallen significantly although I do remember, with all my senses, the moment I realized that her blanket no longer smelled like her. I kept thinking I should have rationed my fixes for her scent even though I knew in time, it was bound to fade anyway. There wasn't much left at that point — a couple bottles we had forgotten about in the fridge had finally been put away. I started feeling a new kind of sad, knowing it would all soon be a memory. She would never remember us, but she would remain in our hearts forever. Pete just kept busy and luckily we have some really great friends and family who aren't afraid to barge in and push any awkwardness aside for a good laugh.

We were left wondering whether we could put ourselves out there again. There were several moments we truly thought this was it — we're done. We can't go through this again. We began focusing on Brendan. He brings us so much joy and if we were to be a family of three, then so be it. But, we could never shake that feeling of our family not being complete. In the end, we decided to continue.

We got a few more postcards. Then nothing. A few more. Then nothing. I kept trying to make connections with the names, due dates, locations, etc. — I remember one card from a Tracey who was due in March (my birthday!). Anyone who waits daily for these cards knows exactly what I'm talking about!

May rolled around and we got another call. A pregnant woman expecting a girl due at the end of July wanted to meet with us. She had been working with a family who decided not to move forward with her. She was young and already had a son the same age as Brendan who lived with her Mom. We met both her and her Mom for lunch, talked for a couple hours while our other favorite case worker, Patty, entertained our Brendan at another table. We felt



donations

Amy	Merrie & Stephen in honor of Ann
Ann & Seth	Michael & Sandra
Bill & Andrea in honor of Teddy & Harry	Raymond & Theresa in honor of Jada's first birthday
George & Donna in honor of Jada's first birthday	Richard & Barbara
Hilda in honor of Jada's first birthday	Roger & Terry in honor of Jada's first birthday
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good about the meeting but never mentioned it to anyone, including our parents. I think we felt a need at that point to protect everyone else. We knew there was no way to protect our own hearts but maybe we could protect everyone else's. We were ultimately matched. We talked on the phone, emailed, and met a couple more times. We made ourselves readily available to her, knowing she was struggling with her emotions. There were a couple red flags, but at that point, what would we gain from not seeing this to fruition? It was then we agreed that if this situation fell through, we would be done. We both said it out loud and we were just plain tired of our lives feeling "on hold". We wanted to be done with the wait one way or another and move on.

By the time July came, we were thinking pink! We hadn't allowed ourselves to buy anything but we discussed the princess parties, the barbies, the boys, and so on. We had all agreed on a name, received the post-adopt contract to sign, and began asking for prayers; if we were facing exposure of any kind, please let it be early on.

We spoke with Maria the night before her c-section and were told about the hospital plan — when we should arrive, where we should go, etc. The big day arrived; she had the baby! But she wouldn't take calls from FIA. We tried to stay positive but in our hearts we knew. Hours later we got word she had decided to parent.

Frustration, disappointment, and, for the first time, we felt anger. I'm not sure if we were more angry with ourselves for continuing with a situation we had some doubts about, taking even more of a financial hit, or if we were actually angry at HER. I think a little of everything. We couldn't help feel we were taken advantage of this time around. I think we literally just stopped talking about adoption. We never told FIA we were done; we just stopped. But I suppose subliminally, we knew from Brendan that the rewards of adoption are endless so we couldn't officially pull the plug.

Then, on August 6th, we were trying desperately to get Brendan to take a nap. We'd been in his room a good amount of time when I took a break and heard my cell phone ringing downstairs. Probably a wrong number (we aren't big cell phone people). I made my way downstairs and picked it up. "Hello." I was immediately greeted with "Where have you been?" I fumbled for words, knowing something was up. Mary told us about Laurie, a mature, young girl who had given birth to a baby girl two days before, had decided to make an adoption plan, and chose us! Then she said that if we could get to the hospital within the next two hours, we would be able to meet Laurie before she was released. I knew we could get there within the time frame, so I said we were on our way. I walked calmly to the boys and explained that we had another baby we were going to pick up and take care of and that we had to leave NOW. Before we could get out the door, the phone rang. We held our breath as I answered. It was Mary and my heart sank. "Don't forget the car seat!" Oh my gosh! The car seat! Pete ran up to the attic and threw it in the car. Off we went laughing at the insanity of it all.

We arrived at the hospital, met with Patty, who then took us up to meet Laurie. As we entered her room, we were both thrown by her youth. It was like looking at our 16-year-old niece sitting there. She was a natural beauty with long, thick, curly hair in braids, stunningly gorgeous eyes, and a smile that would knock your socks off. I often think of how awkward it all must have felt for her — here's the three of us, sitting at the end of her bed, Patty to the side, and we're trying to make conversation. I believe she had already made her decision and was planning to leave whether she had met us or not, but I am so thankful that we had the chance to meet. It felt like only seconds passed from the time we met Laurie, that the nurse came in, read the release papers for her to sign, gave Laurie a hug, and left. Laurie grabbed her pillow and her bag and gave each of us a hug. We all offered to help her downstairs but she refused, said good-bye and off she went as we stood in shock in the empty hospital room.

The nurse came back and asked if we were ready to see the baby. As we followed her to the nursery, she told us she was one of the most beautiful babies they've ever seen. I chuckled to myself, "Yeah, I'll bet you say that to all the hopeful parents standing in disbelief at the baby they're hoping to bring home!" But they couldn't have been more right. She was perfect in every way!

The nurses had stickers, badges and all kinds of big brother stuff for Brendan but we quickly headed them off. Patty took Brendan to play so we could spend some alone time with Kyra Elizabeth and watch the mandatory shaken baby video. I don't think we ever took our eyes off Kyra! We'd already seen the video anyway. There were still so many unknowns — the birth father "not in the picture" (been there!), only one parent knowing about the baby (done that!) — and a few other items to be worked out. But none of that seemed to matter at that point.

Brendan went with Pete to get the seat from the car and on the way, he looked up at Pete and said "Daddy, I didn't think we were ever gonna' get another baby." But we did! Kyra was released and we drove home. The next 30 days was beyond stressful. The phone rang here and there and each time, we held our breath and felt sick. Friends and family actually began emailing or stopping by instead of calling. One morning, about a week in, Kyra was sleeping and Brendan and I were playing quietly on the floor. He stopped, looked at me and we had the following conversation which I will never forget:

B: "Mommy, isn't it a nice morning with the phone not ringing?"

M: [surprised that he's picked up on the anxiety of it all] "Yes, it is."

B: "Guess that means we get to keep her."

M: "Well, we sure hope so buddy, but we've still got a little bit of time to know for sure."

B: "I hope we get to keep her, Mommy. I love her so much!"

M: "Me too."

Kyra is now six months, a giggly, chatty girl with all the beautiful features of her birth mom. We look forward to meeting with Laurie again at the FIA picnic in July!

We finalized Kyra's adoption in court on Tuesday, March 4th. All those dark times don't seem so dark anymore. We haven't forgotten anything that happened to get us to this point, but we also realize that if things would have happened any differently, we might never have had these two little miracles and we can't imagine life without them. Things didn't happen exactly the way we wanted, or in our time frame, but our family is finally complete... and it was completed in the most perfect way!

Traci, Peter, Brendan & Kyra

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We got along well, but the situation felt like a co-parenting situation, and even though it was a difficult decision we chose not to go ahead with this situation. Then another match, this time with a potential birth mom from Rhode Island. Again we encountered silence from her end just before the due date – feeling devastated, again.

Our first year as active adoptive parents showed us many different sides of the process. Heartache after heartache, we received comfort from FIA: "Your baby is out there." We had been part of the Capital District FIA support group, and being able to talk to people who were in the same situation helped so much. And we learned a lot during our first year, too: To trust our feelings, to be open to whatever conversation and relationship develops between the potential birth mom/birth family and us.

In April 2002, after many months of wondering when it would finally happen for us, a call came from JoAnn at FIA. A potential birth mother, Joanne from New Mexico, had chosen us, based on our profile. Her due date was in August, still 3-4 months away. She didn't want to have contact with us, and we were OK with that, even though we would have liked to talk to her. She was good in sending us the medical forms and the paperwork that we needed. There were also weeks of silence, and we feared the worst. But JoAnn, our caseworker, helped us tremendously (thank you!). Her recommendation was to be "cautiously optimistic" – we tried, but of course in this situation you dream and think about the baby a lot. Then came a surprise call at the end of July (2 weeks before the due date) from JoAnn, on a Tuesday afternoon at 2:00 pm. The potential birth mom would be induced the next day. We had to fly out to New Mexico ASAP. Full-scale panic! We had to arrange a lot in a few hours, book a flight and pack. On Wednesday morning at 6:00 am we started the last part of our journey (part one) to becoming parents. Joanne, the birth mom, had decided to meet us in the hospital after all. It was the best and most emotional moment that we had ever experienced. On Thursday, August 1st, we met our daughter Leonie, 22 hours old at the time, and her birth mother, for the first time. We received the most appreciated gift of our daughter – "Meet your new parents" is what Joanne told the baby girl when she put her into our arms. We also became, in a way, part of Leonie's birth family. Because of the required paperwork for the interstate compact (ICPC) we had to stay for two weeks in New Mexico, and during that time we met again with the birth mother and some other members of the birth family. And we also had time to bond as a new family.

We decided to go for part two of our journey to becoming parents in late 2003, but it again took us a while until we had our profile and other paperwork together. Did we mention that we're not very efficient (at least not always)?

We received a call from FIA in March/April of 2005 about a potential birth mom who wanted to work with us. Her due date was late October. For the longest time, we didn't hear from her, but after our previous experience with Leonie's birth mom we assumed it would turn out OK. We were heartbroken when the situation fell apart in mid-October. The birth father who had been out of the picture had reappeared and wanted to raise the baby. After that came a long stretch where we received postcards – meaning our adoptive parent profiles were sent out to pregnant women – but nothing happened. Luckily our daughter Leonie kept us busy and every day we felt blessed to have her with us.

Somehow we had thought our first round had been difficult and hard, and we hoped the second time around would be easier. Having more experience, a fuller life, and maybe (we hoped) being "more attractive" to birth families/mothers. In spite of all this, all the doubts and concerns we had the first time returned, sometimes even stronger than before. But we knew what we wanted and kept going – helped along the way, as before, by Dawn and the wonderful staff at FIA. We also felt very fortunate to have a big support network of

friends and also our families back in Germany. Everybody was keeping their fingers crossed, hoping with us, and anxiously awaiting the arrival of our second child.

It took until early 2006 for our next "situation" to come up. Here both potential birth mom and birth father had health problems, and after reviewing their medical information we decided against going ahead. Shortly after, in March 2006, there was a situation with a 2-year-old girl who lived with her grandmother. We met with the grandmother and had a very long and intense conversation. We felt confident that we would be able to adapt to this situation, and would be able to have a good relationship with the grandmother who wanted to stay involved with the child. Complications within the birth family developed (legal questions about custody/parental rights, between the family on the birth mother's side and the birth father) which ended this situation for us.

In April, we drove out to meet with a teenage couple in western NY state. It quickly became clear that we had a match. The baby girl was born the day after our meeting, and we returned immediately to take her home. We spent the whole day (Saturday) with the birth parents and the baby in the hospital. On Sunday, the birth mother was discharged from the hospital. When it was time on Monday to pick the baby girl up at the hospital for our trip home, there was at first a delay because the birth parents hadn't signed the paperwork yet. Then it turned out that the birth mom had changed her mind literally in the last minute (in fact, while we were waiting at the hospital). It was a very difficult time, we had not seen this coming. It was also hard to understand for our daughter Leonie, who had been with us the whole time. This fall-through was extremely painful – we were giving ourselves the time to mourn the loss of that child. It was also much harder because Leonie was part of this. She asked a lot about "her baby sister" and when we would finally be able to pick her up at the hospital. You learn something new every day, and we learned here (as the FIA staff kept reminding us) that you have to be "cautiously optimistic" – however, the birth parents can change their minds along the way, and sometimes this is what happens. In the future we would have to be more careful how we explained this kind of situation to Leonie.

After these potential matches in rapid succession, the remainder of 2006 and the first half of 2007 were frustratingly quiet. More and more we felt disheartened, and I (Tina) especially had been thinking of giving up. I felt the age difference between Leonie and the second child would get too big (this is something that we feel everybody has to decide for themselves – and don't let anybody interfere with what you're feeling comfortable with!). Also, I thought that I myself would be getting too old to become a second-time mom. We had started discussing how long we would still pursue the adoption plans for our second child, and one tentative deadline that we had set for ourselves came and went. We were not quite ready to give up and decided to "wait and see."

In early summer, while I was on my yearly trip to Germany, I had talked to many of my close friends there, and I knew that a) I wanted a newborn baby and b) I would have to talk to Bernhard, my husband, again about pulling the plug. The emotional rollercoaster was taking its toll on me.

Just two weeks after my return from Germany, out of the blue we received a phone call from FIA. It was Sunday morning, July 22nd, and Deanne from FIA presented us with a situation about a baby boy, born the previous Wednesday, July 18, in Texas. There wasn't as much information available (medical records, etc.) as we would have liked. However, as the baby was already a few days old and still at the hospital, we had to make a quick decision. Later that day we had a brief phone conversation with the birth mother, where we felt that we had connected. In spite of our many previous disappointments, we thought that this was finally the real thing, and decided to fly out. The fact that we had gone through a similar fire drill five years earlier hadn't helped us to prepare for what to pack, etc., but we knew from previous experience that we would manage somehow...

Rainbow...continued from page 14

The next evening the three of us arrived in Texas –we had told Leonie that we had to temporarily help a friend and take care of her baby, hoping thereby to manage her expectations in case of yet another disappointment.

We still had a long drive in Texas, and finally arrived at the hospital on Tuesday afternoon. When Leonie first laid eyes on the baby boy her reaction was "he looks just like me!" We picked the name "Finn" for him, and brought him home to the hotel – even though we were in a legal at-risk situation, since the birth mother hadn't signed the paperwork yet. Wednesday turned out to be very intense – neither we nor our attorney had been able to get in touch with the birth mother. It turned out later in the afternoon that her cell phone reception was spotty. Z, the birth mom, contacted us while we were at the attorney's office, and later that day she arrived and signed the paperwork without any hesitation. During the meeting we connected instantly, and made plans for another meeting since we had to stay in Texas anyway for about two weeks (the ICPC again...). Thanks to Deanne at FIA for keeping us sane that day!

A few days later Leonie said that it would be nice if Finn could stay with us forever – somewhat reluctantly (still being cautious) we answered that this was hopefully what was going to happen.

Before being able to travel back home, we had to work through more complications (legal issues in Texas - mainly on the birth father's side). Unfortunately, our Texas attorney was not quite as efficient as he could have been (this is putting it nicely). Deanne from FIA and Brendan O'Shea, our NY attorney, were extremely helpful working our way through these rough spots.

Now, finally, in February 2008, it looks like we're heading towards a finalization sometime soon, and our journey towards becoming a family will be complete!

We will always be part of the FIA family, and we're especially thankful for having had JoAnn's and Deanne's (our wonderful caseworkers) and Brendan's support and guidance through the rough times.

We have been – and still are – growing into this "patchwork family". Our mindset about open adoption has changed over time, and adapted to the circumstances of our children's birth families, and their wishes. We feel very blessed to know at least part of our children's birth families and to hear from them from time to time through phone calls and letters. Maybe in a few years we can visit them – fortunately, New Mexico and Texas are not so far apart.

Finally, we could have written a lot more about our experiences during our adoption journey, but we didn't want it to be too emotional or personal. But I can assure you there have been lots and lots of tears - and there still are, but now mostly happy ones, enjoying life with our two beautiful children.

Bernard, Tina, Leonie & Finn

2008 events

April 5, 2008

Adoption Community of New England
35 Annual Adoption Conference
Westborough, MA • Phone: 508-366-6812

April 10-11, 2008

FIA's Semi-Annual Attorney, Agency &
Social Worker Partnership Meeting
Barrows House, Dorset, Vermont
Email: fia@friendsinadoption.org

April 21, 2008 7-9 pm

Adoptive Families of the Capital Region, Inc.
Discussion Group for Prospective & Waiting Parents
Location: Celebration Room, McKownville United
Methodist Church, 1565 Western Ave., Guilderland
Please contact AFCR at 518-448-5295 or visit
www.timesunion.com/communities/afcr

April 30 – May 3, 2008

Annual Conference of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys
St. Louis, MO • Robin Turner: rturner@drohanmgmt.com
Call 1-703-234-4110

July 19, 2008

Friends in Adoption's Annual Picnic

July 30–August 2, 2008

North American Council on Adoptable Children
present NACAC's 34th annual conference
Ottawa, Ontario • NACAS email: info@nacac.org
Phone: 651-644-3036 • www.nacac.org

October 5, 2008

The American Fertility Conference • www.afafamilymatters.com

November 1, 2008

CPFA "Let's Talk Adoption" Conference • www.cpfanjan.org

November 3, 2008

13th Annual AFCA Adoption Fair
Marriott Hotel, Albany, NY • 1-518-448-5295

November 8, 2008

ARNI 17th Annual Adoption Conference
Saturday, Penfield, NY • 585-256-7500

November 23, 2008 – Save the date!

28th Annual Adoption Conference
Presented by the Adoptive Parents Committee
Weill Cornell Medical College • 70th St. and York Ave., Manhattan
<http://www.adoptiveparents.org/conference.htm>



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Begin with a Get Acquainted Workshop Is FIA right for you?

Tara, Dawn, Mary, Patty, Barb, & the rest of the FIA staff,

I can't say enough wonderful things about the FIA workshop that David and I recently attended. We were not prepared for what an enlightening and emotional experience it would be and haven't been able to stop talking about it to friends and family ever since. One rarely has the opportunity to spend time with a group of strangers who are willing to share such personal, emotional, painful and joyful experiences in such an honest and open way – all in the name of helping others achieve a common goal. It was a truly moving experience that opened our eyes and hearts to all the possibilities your organization offers.

The same high praise goes for the FIA staff – all truly phenomenal individuals. Our friends Marie and Elaine recently adopted through FIA, and have spoken about it and the staff like fanatics ever since. Your staff and organization are truly special.

David and I are still processing the information we received and discussing next steps. We expect to make a final decision right after the New Year. I hope to be in touch with you then.

Best regards, Chris

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 Workshop. The workshop 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 Workshop 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. This fee covers all meetings and lunch. Workshops fill up quickly and are booked on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Complete this Registration Form, you can mail it to FIA **or** register online at www.friendsinadoption.org. 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.

Dear Friends in Adoption,

Today is a very exciting day for both Jeff and myself as we just officially signed on with FIA.

We cannot thank your staff enough for the GAW in Vermont. The information you shared and the knowledge of your staff was just incredible! You all truly made finalizing our decision a very easy process.

There is a lot to be said about an organization that can truly convey their passion about what they do, and that came through to us.

Thanks for a great weekend!

Jenn & Jeff



Get Acquainted Workshop 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? _____

If there is a cancellation for the workshop 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 workshop, we cannot accommodate children.

Please indicate your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice for workshop to attend. The following dates are set for FIA's 2008 Get Acquainted Workshops.

_____ May 15-17, 2008 (Thurs/Fri)

_____ August 22-24, 2008 (Fri/Sat)

_____ October 24-26, 2008 (Fri/Sat)

_____ December 4-6, 2008 (Thurs/Fri)

METHOD OF PAYMENT

\$275 fee per couple includes all meetings and lunch.

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 workshop 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.

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