

April Adoption STAR NEWSLETTER

April 1, 2010

Dear Friends,

Adoption STAR is 10 years old! A unique agency, made up of families and families of friends, who believe - like we do - that there's nothing more precious than a forever family.

Please join us as we celebrate this wonderful milestone.

Please support Adoption STAR's past and future by celebrating at our "birthday party":

Dazzling Decade ~ A Night of Stars

Saturday, May 1, 2010

Buffalo Marriott

1340 Millersport Highway

Amherst, New York

6:00 pm ~ Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres, Silent Auction

7:00 pm - 11:00 pm ~ Dinner, Dancing, Award Presentations and Candlelighting

Individual Reservations \$75.00 per person

RSVP by April 15

Reply card available online on our homepage under SAVE THE DATE

www.adoptionstar.com

Award Presentations:

Adoption STAR will also present the first **Adoption Friendly Workplace Awards** to Western New York businesses that have established fertility and adoption benefits for their workers. To date the following businesses will be recognized on May 1:

Bank of America- Laura Weinstein

Price Waterhouse Coopers- Chris Nelson

Met Life- Timothy Keller

Senator Charles Schumer has been invited to receive the **Adoption STAR Haitian Humanitarian Award** for his assistance in getting one of the agency's Haitian adoptees out of Haiti and home to Western New York.

Michele Fried will be the first recipient of the **Founder's Award**. The award will be given annually to an individual whose contributions, expertise and dedication to adoption mirror those of Michele Fried.

Celebrate Buffalo will present a check to Adoption STAR to assist orphanages in Haiti. The check represents 100% of the proceeds from a fundraiser launched by the families of Flight 3407 and Celebrate Buffalo apparel in which they sold Flight 3407 memorial t-shirts, **Forever In Our Hearts** for \$20 each.

Also, Adoption STAR families (honorary committee chairs) representing each of Adoption STAR's ten years will light candles on Adoption STAR's Birthday cake.

Thank you to our 10th Birthday Sponsors:

Buffalo Spree

Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Chick

Creditors Interchange

Dental Wellness ~ Dr. Robert M. Chick and Dr. Robert J. Reszel, II

HSBC

Innsbruck Printing & Mailing Services

Key Bank

Kelly Mercure Photograph

Petite Publishing Adoption Profiles and Lifebooks

Phenomenon Events & Productions

Phillips Lyle LLP

Drs. Dylan and Christine Tinnesz

TxMQ Enterprise Staffing and IT Solutions

PLEASE EMAIL michele@adoptionstar.com to request sponsorship information.

The committee has developed amazing benefits for sponsors. **Sponsorships are available for individuals, families and businesses and provides you with the ability to sponsor Adoption STAR's 10th birthday year and all it's events, not just one specific event.** Also if you have auction items to donate please contact Kathy Glaeser at nykathyo@aol.com

Thank you to our wonderful Dazzling Decade committee members:

Judy Chick, Chair

Greg and Robyn Altman

Mike and Cindy Bates

Dina Benderson

Jade Chen

Sharon Chick

Aaron Deckert and Jill Maxick

Debby DiMatteo

Candice Fletcher and Louisa Pacheco

Michele Fried

Meghann French

Jill Garvin

Bonnie Gersh

Kathy Glaeser

David and Collenn Hodge

Teri Henick
Michael Hill
Karen Hoyt
Karen Joswiak
Brian and Wendy Lane
Michelle Lasure
Jodi Latner
Tricia Low
Debby Margulis
Scott and Shannon McDonald
Maria Merlino
Sheila Murphy
Sue Reardon
Aaron and Jennifer Rosenberg
Mike and Carolyn Schopp
Andrea Sciabetta
Paula Sciuk
Betty Tata
Laurice Thompson
Alison Tuff
Cindy Vastola
Jenn Voss
Judy Vriesen
Lawrence and Lynn Whalen
Sandy White
Bonnie Will
Jeff Zdrojewski

Your support and presence at our May 1st event is truly appreciated.

There is no time like the present to reflect on our past and dream of our future. Our first STAR baby is almost 10 years old, happy, healthy and a big sister to another Adoption STAR baby. Since then, Adoption STAR has helped create **more than 400 forever families**. Each of our children has their own special charm and we can't help but smile when we walk through our office and see their photos on our walls. We remember their stories. They're part of our history.

If you are an Adoption STAR family please share your story on our website. Please also invite your family members to do so as well.

To add YOUR beautiful adoption story and how adoption and Adoption STAR has changed your life, please go to:

http://www.adoptionstar.com/agency_story.php

You will be asked to plug in your email address (this will not appear on the post this is just for STAR's information) your first name (last name is not necessary and does

not need to be added), and your zip code (this will also not appear on your post), please add the Date of Adoption or Related Experience/Story (MM/DD/YYYY).

Then you will have room to write your story. It can be a very short entry of just a few sentences, or as long as you want! You can also upload a photo of your child or children, or a family photo or none at all. *Please share your story in celebration of our "dazzling decade" and please spread the word to your family members who may wish to share how your adoption has touched them as well and share with your friends who may have adopted with us and encourage them to also share their story!* **Thank you!**

To read the stories already posted, please go to:

http://www.adoptionstar.com/agency_stories.php

Adoption STAR has added a new feature to our website. Please visit the home page: <http://www.adoptionstar.com/index.php> On the right hand side you will see: **Happy 10th Birthday Adoption STAR! Click Here for More Information!** Click and you will see a series of new web pages created in honor of our 10th birthday.

Or go directly to this link:

http://www.adoptionstar.com/agency_10th.php You will see the following sections **10 Years: A Look Back; The Next 10 Years; Share Your Story; Stories** and a **Donate** link.

Haiti

Even as we celebrate our 10th birthday, we are committed to not forgetting Haiti, especially the children. As you already know, on January 10, 2010 a massive 7.0 earthquake struck just outside of Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. Since that time Adoption STAR has been working non-stop to stay in touch with the orphanages where we had children residing awaiting their adoptive placement with their U.S. adoptive families.

To date, Adoption STAR due to YOUR support and generosity from businesses such as Tent City – Washington Surplus store in Buffalo, The Talking Phone Book, and many individual donations has provided much need financial support and donated food and items.

Father Michel Pugin spent one month on Adoption STAR's behalf with the children of Renmen orphanage in an attempt to bring some normalcy back to their lives and to help begin the school that has been shut down since the earthquake. He just returned from his time in Haiti and is profoundly touched by the children he now refers to as his children. Fr. Pugin will return to Haiti in June to continue providing hands-on support.

Adoption STAR's commitment is to continue to raise funds:

1. To assist in rebuilding two orphanages that we work with.
2. To send money, food and much needed supplies to these orphanages.
3. To continue advocacy efforts to increase the number of orphans who are able to come to the U.S. under humanitarian parole.

For more information on Haiti and the work Adoption STAR is doing on behalf of Haitian orphans, please visit the following links on the Adoption STAR website: <http://www.adoptionstar.com/> on the home page you will see information on Haiti and you can follow the various links from the home page or visit each separately below:

http://www.adoptionstar.com/childplacement_haiti.php

http://www.adoptionstar.com/special_updates.php

<http://www.adoptionstar.com/donate.php>

<http://www.adoptionstar.com/contact.php> (check the options in the drop down box)

Please continue to support our efforts in Haiti by making a tax- deductible donation by mailing in your check to Adoption STAR, Inc. and putting Haiti in the memo line. Please mail checks to the agency's Williamsville, NY office. Thank you. *Please share this information with family, friends, co-workers and any others you feel that can assist with these efforts.*

New York State

We have had an incredibly busy 2010 and only 3 months into it, we have had many placements (at least 15 in less than 13 weeks!) Also several of our clients who posted their profile on our website have successfully adopted. To view these profiles visit: http://www.adoptionstar.com/familyalbums_new.php

Ohio

The Ohio office is busy introducing the agency throughout the state. The first Adoption Informational session was held in the Cincinnati area. Another session is being planned for May. For more information on our Ohio program please contact 513-631-6590.

Florida

On March 26, Adoption STAR hosted an Infant Adoption Awareness Training workshop presented by Catholic Charities. The IAATP grant encourages health care providers to receive training on how to work with pregnant women considering adoption. It is a successful and unique program. If you are interested in learning more about this training and arranging one for your organization in Florida or New York, please contact Michael Hill at Michael@adoptionstar.com.

Older Child Adoptions

If you wish to receive emails about older children available for adoption, please provide your full name and email address and send it to: zachary@adoptionstar.com. At least one time per month you will receive photos and information on older children who need forever families.

On-line Profiling

It is not unusual for expectant parents or their family members to search the Web for adoptive families. One of the most effective ways to reach a potential birth mother is to post your profile on the Internet. The online profiling offers expectant parents an opportunity to get-to-know some of the wonderful adoptive parents who are waiting to adopt. By posting your profile with Adoption STAR you are allowing information about yourself and your desire to adopt to be available to all expectant parents who visit the site. This is an incredible opportunity for waiting adoptive families to present themselves online in a Dear Birth Parent letter and photos.

This online profiling will offer a unique environment created for expectant parents and hopeful adoptive parents to find each other, establish relationships, and create adoption situations that meet the needs of everyone. As you know we share hard copy profiles with our birth parent clients, but often there is a birth mother who feels more comfortable by seeking out an adoptive family on her own. Your profile can be the one that makes her feel comfortable about her adoption decision.

Only Adoption STAR adoptive parent clients are eligible to participate in the online adoptive parent profiles. Fee for participation is reasonable and competitive. Rather than the typical monthly fee with other Internet adoption sites, our fee is only \$99 for a three-month period. There are also no application fees or additional Internet service fees. It is also very easy to do!

[Please click here to start the process by filling out our Adoptive Parents Profile Form](#) or cut and paste this link onto your browser:

http://www.adoptionstar.com/adoptiveparents_profile1_form.php

We will contact you when we receive it and we put it live on our website!

Our Email/Mailing List

If you would like any of your family or friends to receive our newsletter, email updates and mailings, please email Zachary@adoptionstar.com with their names, mailing addresses, and email addresses. If you are a client of Adoption STAR, we would like to remind all of you to provide the agency with updated telephone numbers (work, home, cell, pager), mailing addresses and email addresses. If you have switched jobs, left a job, moved, etc., please email Zachary with your most updated contact information!

Have you joined these groups yet?

SOFIA

There is NO membership fee! SOFIA means supporting our families interested in adoption. It is a special group. The focus is educational and social. It is for those families who are waiting to adopt and those families

who have already adopted through STAR or through another entity. Please visit SOFIA by going to their website at <http://www.wnysofia.com/>

FACEBOOK

It is so easy to do. Just visit <http://facebook.com/> and search for the Adoption STAR fan group. We hope to see you online!

TWITTER

Follow Adoption STAR on Twitter! <http://www.twitter.com/adoptionstar>

BLOG

Read what has been posted on the blog, make comments or add your own articles, stories, poetry to the blog.

<http://adoptionstar.blogspot.com/>

Adoption STAR YAHOO Online Groups

We highly recommend that once your home study is approved that you log onto and join the Adoption STAR adoptive parent's yahoo group. It is easy to join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/adoptionstar/> There are so many Adoption STAR clients (those who adopted and those waiting to adopt) who all have access to each other.

Another online group is the Adoption Star Parenting

Site <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/adoptionstarparents/> for those who already adopted from Adoption STAR. Please join this group to connect with other parents about the different stages of parenthood. No agency staff are members of the online groups ~ only adoptive parent clients.

Please utilize this resource to post a message, to learn from others, and especially to receive support and connect with new friends and past home study peers, etc. When you join, please list your name and your home study group's name so others will be able to welcome you to the group.

Messages from the Adoptive Family Department for prospective adoptive families:

1. **Emailing:** If you wish an update on whether or not you have been profiled OR to check on the outcome of a recent profiling please CALL the agency rather than emailing us for an update. Also if you wish an update on your file to see if you are missing paperwork, etc., please contact us via telephone and not email. We receive an overwhelming amount of emails each day and cannot always get back to you timely.

Also email can be lost or bounce to spam files and never be received. In addition, questions that are specific to your file and profiling are important to us and we would prefer personal contact with you.

2. **Profiles:** If you hoping to adopt a baby domestically and are just beginning to create your profile and need assistance there is an online company founded by Adoption STAR adoptive parents who can assist you with the process: www.petitepublishing.com. Even

if you have already created your profile and handed it in, but feel it needs a “face lift” consider Petite Publishing for this as well. Also a terrific way to make your profile unique is by having it “come alive” in a DVD presentation. For more information visit: <http://www.littlelambvideo.com/> (*Adoption STAR does not receive any compensation or any portion of fees paid to Petite Publishing or Little Lamb.*) As you know we request only five profiles (for expectant parents) to be kept at the agency. Be in touch with the agency to be sure we have more than one profile remaining. Often we run out of our clients' profiles and if this occurs you may lose out on being considered for potential adoption situations. We will not accept more than five profiles at one time (we just do not have the space to accommodate this.) Do not get discouraged if we ask for more profiles as it means your Family Advocate is working on your behalf to get your profiles viewed. Remember we cannot profile you without profiles, so if you have not handed in your profile and your home study is done, precious time is passing.

3. Profiling Opportunities: It is sometimes difficult for families to "hear" or "read" about available children and come to learn they can not be considered unless they are home study ready. "Home study ready" means that your home study or home study update is less than 12 months old and that no paperwork has expired such as fingerprints and child abuse clearances. It also means that we have your profile too. Without these items, we are unable to consider you for domestic adoption situations in-state or out-of-state.

4. Home Study Expiration: If your home study is coming up on expiring there is a good chance your fingerprint clearances and SCR (child abuse) clearances have already expired or will soon expire. The date of your clearances is listed in the body of your home study document. It is important to keep this up to date. Please contact the office if you need more information. We are recommending that you begin processing your update within two months before it expires so there is no lapse. Those with expired home studies (and expired SCR clearances) are unable to be considered for potential placements.

5. Second Adoptions: Many Adoption STAR families who have adopted previously from us have adopted again! If you are considering adopting again, it is important to begin the process to update your home study. We just want to remind those of you who wish to adopt again, the process does not require home study educational classes.

6. Fingerprinting: For our NY families, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services has recently implemented the use of a LiveScan digital fingerprint imaging process for the submission of fingerprints for all prospective adoptive parents and anyone in your household over the age of 18. You will receive information in your home study packet of paperwork at your initial consultation with your Adoption STAR Family Advocate including the required Fingerprint Information Form which needs to be completed and brought to the LiveScan center when fingerprints are taken. Individuals must also bring to the fingerprinting appointment appropriate forms of identification, as indicated on the back of the Fingerprint Information Form. An appointment to be fingerprinted is necessary and can be scheduled online by going to www.L1enrollment.com or by calling 1-877-472-6915. The website will list locations in

your area that provide this fingerprinting service. There is no fee to be fingerprinted and the turnaround time for the results tends to be quicker than the previous fingerprinting program. Once you are fingerprinted and receive approval from both NY and FBI you do not need to be fingerprinted again! If your fingerprint clearances expire before you adopt, the agency will just need to request a summary update judgment report. We expunge records after finalization so any of our previous families who return to adopt again will need to be re-fingerprinted as we do not have the option of requesting the summary update report.

7. Waiting: Your Family Advocate understands that waiting to adopt is emotionally draining and difficult. We have a growing list of recommendations to ease your wait time. The agency's educational credit system for both domestic and international adoptions has been created to assist you while you wait to become an adoptive parent. Adoption education is a life-long process, what better way to prepare for adoptive parenthood than to continue your adoption education! We highly recommend that once your home study is approved that you log onto and join the Adoption STAR adoptive parent's yahoo group. Finding a creative outlet often assists with one's wait. If you are planning to adopt domestically, there are a number of creative ways to help in your pursuit. One of those ways is to place your profile online at the Adoption STAR website. Here is a link to learn

more: http://www.adoptionstar.com/adoptiveparents_profile_form.php Another other way is to arrange a training session with Sarah Rohde (716-639-3900) to begin the agency assisted private track. Another way is to have your profile come alive by creating a DVD presentation. For more information visit: <http://www.littlelambvideo.com/> *These are just a few ideas to think about, and again, if you are struggling with the wait, we encourage you to contact the agency as we are here for you!*

Messages about Post Adoption for families who already adopted:

1. Open Adoption Contact: Just a reminder that you signed an agreement to supply the agency with photos and letters for your child's birth family whether or not the birth parents wanted an open adoption. It is imperative that you provide these photos and letters in a timely fashion. If you haven't it is not too late to do so now. It is very sad to have to inform a birth mother or a birth father that there are no photos waiting for them in their file. Even if you have not heard from the birth family, it is still important to keep to the schedule provided to you. Many of our schedules fall into the following category (but check your placement paperwork to be sure that your agreement is the same or if it requires more frequent contact): photos/letters to be sent the first two weeks after placement, one month after placement and then every month through six months after placement, then 12 months, 18 months and 24 months, and then yearly thereafter until age 18. PLEASE also remember to also include photos for Adoption STAR. We update your files with these photos, pass them around to the staff as we all love to see our babies growing up and we continuously like to update our bulletin board! Please send all photos via regular mail attention: Anna Steinberg at Adoption STAR, 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville, NY 14221.

2. **Staying Connected:** Time passes so quickly and our children grow up so fast. We are working, playing, parenting... we are so busy! Even with our busy lives, we need to remember that our adoption journey has continued from waiting, to placement, to parenthood and continues forever. Adoption does not end at the placement of our children but rather it continues. What does this mean for us adoptive families? It means that your children may have unique issues due to their adoption experiences, questions about themselves and their birth families, etc. Adoption STAR can provide you with a list of professionals who provide post adoption counseling to provide you with the support and counseling necessary when dealing with unexpected special needs or other parenting issues.

3. **Newsletter:** This monthly email newsletter is a special way to stay connected. If you know anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, please provide us with their email address. You do not need to be associated with the agency to receive this newsletter.

4. **Support groups:** Adoption STAR has several support groups including online groups for you to become involved with before, during and after you have a child placed in your home. Support after adoption is encouraged and enhances the well being of the adoptive family. For more information on the agency's support groups, visit the agency's website.

See you at the Dazzling Decade ~ A Night of Stars on May 1st!

Your Friends at Adoption STAR

P.S. View our 2010 calendar online now:

<http://www.adoptionstar.com/participate.php>

APRIL

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

April 11, Sunday, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Join us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and the Adoption STAR Agency. 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville. Please call to RSVP or email info@adoptionstar.com

Orientation Session -- New York City area

April 29, Thursday, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Join us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and the Adoption STAR Agency. Located at Phillips Lytle Law Firm, 437 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022. Please call to RSVP or email info@adoptionstar.com

MAY

Adoption STAR 10th Birthday Party!

May 01, Saturday, 6:00 pm Marriott, Amherst, NY

Please join us for our Dazzling Decade ~ A Night of Stars event. Dinner, music, awards, and auction items. Celebrate the amazing accomplishments of Adoption STAR over the past ten years. Your presence is so very important. Open to the community-at-large. Please join us!

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

May 02, Sunday, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Join us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and the Adoption STAR Agency. 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville. Please call to RSVP or email info@adoptionstar.com

Orientation Session -- Ithaca area

May 05, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Join us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and the Adoption STAR Agency. Please call to RSVP or email info@adoptionstar.com

Birth Mother's Day Celebration

May 08, Saturday, 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

This is an event for everyone! Please join us as we celebrate the women who have made such brave and honorable choices. Location TBD. RSVP by calling 716-691-3900 or emailing info@adoptionstar.com

Home Study Educational Classes

May 11, Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

This five week program prepares you for domestic or international adoption and is open to all registered Adoption STAR clients. Register today by calling 639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com.

A.C.E. Meeting

May 13, Thursday, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

A.C.E.: Adoptee Circle of Experience is a support group for adult adoptees 18 and up. Held at the Adoption STAR office at 47 Plaza Drive in Williamsville.

Hair Care Class – Buffalo area

May 26, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

This class hopes to assist and educate in the special hair care necessary to appropriately raise our children. For families who have adopted Black or Biracial children or who are considering doing so, this is a hands-on workshop run by professionals.

Please feel free to post or forward this email as appropriate.

Follow Adoption STAR on Twitter!

<http://www.twitter.com/adoptionstar>

Become a fan of Adoption STAR on facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Adoption-STAR/110156193216?ref=ts>

Adoption STAR, Inc.

A NYS Authorized and Florida Licensed Non-Profit Adoption Agency

Hague Accredited Adoption Service Provider

STAR stands for Support, Training, Advocacy and Resources

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Binghamton **607-330-2158**
Rochester **585-672-5227**
New York City **917-470-9340**
Syracuse **315-703-7511**
Poughkeepsie **845-457-4883**
Cleveland **216-201-9177**

Toll Free **866-691-3300**

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