



AUGUST Adoption STAR NEWSLETTER

August 3, 2009

Dear Friends,

July may have been filled with rainy days, but the sun was shining at Adoption STAR for many new adoptive parents and their babies. Unfortunately the summer is going by so quickly, but there is so much ahead of us that we can't wait to share it with you.

First, we of course expect to see ALL of you at our

9th Annual Adoption STAR Family Picnic **EVERYONE IS WELCOME******

Who: Everyone who is a part of Adoption STAR! Families who have adopted, those waiting to adopt, extended family, friends, staff, and volunteers. All are welcome!

When: Sunday, August 16, 2009 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Where: Ellicott Creek Park, Tonawanda, (Niagara Falls Blvd. & Ellicott Creek Rd.) Shelters 10A & 10B.

RSVP: Patty and Steve Spear at 692-2018 or mpps2@verizon.net

Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Also an unwrapped new toy would be greatly appreciated for the agency's holiday toy drive.

If you are reading this email today and you want to attend our Private Track Adoption Workshop, call the office to see if we can get you in last minute!

Private Track Adoption Workshop **NEW******

August 03, Monday, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Offered for the first time in a workshop format, Private Track Adoption training gives you valuable knowledge if you decide to pursue a private adoption with agency assistance. The workshop is \$200 per couple or single (individual training is usually \$375). Call 716.639.3900 for more information.

BELOW YOU WILL FIND THREE SPECIAL AND *NEW*** SAVE THE DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR. PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO READ ABOUT EACH OF THESE EXCEPTIONAL NEW AND IMPORTANT EVENTS... WE TRULY HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US, INVITE OTHERS, BRING GUESTS...**

Breakfast Briefings Learning Opportunities for Professionals

August 12, Wednesday, 7:45 am

Adoption STAR presents a series of three summer learning sessions for social work, education and healthcare professionals Aug 12, 19 and 26. Each session is \$25 or \$70 for the three-part series and includes breakfast. Call 716.639.3900 or email Cherie@adoptionstar.com for details.

Babies and Their Families Open House

September 27, Sunday, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Help us fill gift bags for our adoptive families at time of placement and our birth moms, too. Please bring new, unwrapped gift (newborn sleepers, caps, receiving blankets, small books) for baby and a pampering gift for the birth mom (fleece throw or small blanket, scented body lotion and soaps) and enjoy the fellowship of the Adoption STAR family. RSVP to Cherie@adoptionstar.com

Celebrate Family

November 5, Thursday, 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm

An evening of gourmet food stations, fine wines, extravagant gift baskets, and music to benefit Adoption STAR. Shea's Smith Theatre, 658 Main St in downtown Buffalo.

\$35 per person

\$65 per couple

\$100 patron tickets

Call Adoption STAR for details, 716.639.3900

or email Cherie@adoptionstar.com

Some Special News About Our Adoption STAR Founder:

Women of Influence award winners were announced by *Business First* on July 29. *Business First* will present awards to area women who have made contributions to the community in 10 categories. Michele Fried (Adoption STAR's founder and CEO) is one of four community professionals who will receive the Entrepreneur Award which honors women who are the chief executive, president or founder of a company or business venture that they helped start, build or significantly grow.

To read the announcement go to:

<http://buffalo.bizjournals.com/buffalo/stories/2009/07/27/daily25.html?surround=etf>

The Women of Influence Awards will be presented to 24 women on September 24 at Salvatore's Italian Gardens. The awards recognize the business acumen and community spirit of these women, Business First Publisher Jack Connors said. "The panel chose these women based on their ability to rise above a very talented pool of competitors," Connors said. "We're honored to recognize their accomplishments."

If you are not yet a client of Adoption STAR, we would love to see you at our Orientation on Tuesday:

Orientation Session - Buffalo area

August 04, Tuesday, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

The adoption journey starts with good information and learning. Please join us for an overview of the adoption process and to learn about Adoption STAR's mission and philosophy and the domestic and international programs available. 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville. Please call to RSVP or email info@adoptionstar.com

Home Study Educational Classes

September 15, Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Don't let the summer pass you by without registering for the Home Study educational classes. This five week program prepares you for domestic or international adoption. Call today. *Classes fill up quickly!*

ARE YOU AN ADULT ADOPTEE? IF SO, PLEASE CONSIDER ATTENDING THE NEXT ACE GROUP MEETING, Thursday, August 6, 6:30 pm at 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville. Contact ace@adoptionstar.com for more information.

JOURNALING

Whether you have made an adoption plan for your child or you are waiting to adopt or you are currently parenting, journaling is a great way to organize your thoughts and feelings and to learn more about yourself. It is also a perfect place for you to get your feelings out when you might not feel comfortable expressing them to others.

You don't have to limit yourself to writing in your journal. You can draw and paste pictures in it that have meaning to you. Be creative and use the journal to express ALL of who you are!

Here is an idea for your Journal/Blog today:

ARTICLES, ADS, CARTOONS

The media has a lot to do with the way we feel about our society and ourselves in general. Did you see an article, a cartoon or an advertisement that had either a positive or negative impact on you today? Describe this impact!

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>

Adoption STAR YAHOO Online Group

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. No agency staff are members of the online group ~ 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:** 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:** If you have not yet been fingerprinted by Adoption STAR since the law requiring FBI prints went into affect two years ago, it is your responsibility to make sure that those are completed. The FBI fingerprint card rejection rate is quite high. Even if the State approves the fingerprints stating no criminal history, the FBI often rejects the prints stating they need to be redone. This causes many delays and of course quite a bit of frustration. The good news is that once you are fingerprinted and receive approval from both NY and the FBI you do not need to be fingerprinted again! If those fingerprint clearances expire before you adopt, the agency will just need to request a summary judgment report. We expunge records after finalization so any of our previous families who return to adopt again, we need to re-fingerprint as we do not have the option of requesting the summary judgment 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. 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. No agency staff are members of the online group ~ 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. 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 way is to arrange a training meeting 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 on the DVD project, 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 have them 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, most open to the community at large, and one does NOT need to be an Adoption STAR client to participate in some of the groups. Support after adoption is encouraged and enhances the well being of the adoptive family. For more information on the agency's support groups, visit www.adoptionstar.com

All the best,
Your Friends at Adoption STAR

P.S.

Adoption STAR's 2009 Calendar Is On-Line.

Please visit:

<http://www.adoptionstar.com/participate.php> to view our upcoming calendar of events.

AUGUST

Private Track Adoption Workshop

August 03, Monday, 6pm to 8pm

Offered for the first time in a workshop format, Private Track Adoption training gives you valuable knowledge if you decide to pursue a private adoption with agency assistance. The workshop is \$200 per couple or single (individual training is usually \$375). Paid reservations are required by July 27. Call 716.639.3900 for details.

Orientation Session - Buffalo area

August 04, Tuesday, 6:30pm

The adoption journey starts with good information and learning. Please join us for an overview of the adoption process and to learn about Adoption STAR's mission and philosophy.

A.C.E.: Adoptee Circle of Experience

August 06, Thursday, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

If you are an adult adoptee, age 18 and up, this support and social group meeting is for you. Contact the agency for more information.

Adoptive Family Annual Summer Picnic, Ellicott Creek Park

August 16, Sunday, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Adoption STAR adoptive clients and waiting clients are welcome to join us! Each year this is a spectacular event with delicious food, entertainment and crafts!

SEPTEMBER

Waiting Families Group

September 09, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

This group provides an opportunity for prospective adoptive families to receive support from one another during their wait to adopt. Families who have successfully adopted after "being in your shoes" will be invited to share their journey in adoption and to offer tips for surviving the wait.

Sponsored by SOFIA

Orientation Session -- Syracuse Area

September 14, Monday, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Join us for this free orientation session in Syracuse. Location to be determined. Come learn more about adoption and the Adoption STAR Agency. RSVP via email or telephone.

Home Study Educational Classes

September 15, Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Don't let the summer pass you by without registering for the Home Study educational classes. This five week program prepares you for domestic or international adoption. Call today.

Transracial Adoption Panel

September 16, Wednesday, 6pm -7pm

A dynamic panel discussion explores various topics in developing and growing as a transracial family.

Babies and Their Families Open House

September 27, Sunday, 1pm to 3pm

Help us fill gift bags for our adoptive families at time of placement and our birth moms, too. Please bring new, unwrapped gift (newborn sleepers, caps, receiving blankets, small books) for baby and a pampering gift for the birth mom (fleece throw or small blanket, scented body lotion and soaps) and enjoy the fellowship of the Adoption STAR family. RSVP to Cherie@adoptionstar.com

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

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 Zack at Zachary@adoptionstar.com with your most updated contact information!

PLEASE, PLEASE GET INVOLVED WITH THE MANY ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY!

Thank you!