



47 Plaza Drive  
Williamsville, NY 14221  
716-639-3900  
Fax: 716-639-3700

2734 East Oakland Park Blvd., Suite 101  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33306  
954-566-6055  
Fax: 954-566-6255

[www.adoptionstar.com](http://www.adoptionstar.com)

## DECEMBER Adoption STAR NEWSLETTER

December 1, 2009

Dear Friends,

**Thank you all so much for helping us Celebrate Adoption during National Adoption Month (November) and thank you especially for supporting our fundraiser,**

***Celebrate Family***, on November 5. Attached are some photos of the event: <http://www.wilmackphotography.com/appiesnet/gallery/adoption-star>

In 2010 Adoption STAR turns 10 years old. We are already planning several special “birthday” events. Stay tuned for how YOU can be involved in our celebratory year. Also we are seeking volunteers for our Gala Dinner (to celebrate our 10 wonderful years) and are seeking out an honorary adoptive parents for each year we have been in business. So whether you adopted in 2000, 2001... all the way through 2009... please email [michele@adoptionstar.com](mailto:michele@adoptionstar.com) to let her know if you would like to be the “chair person for your year” and to help our committee plan a spectacular event!

**If you are considering adoption, you may want to register in 2009. If your registration is received no later than December 31, 2009, you will be locked into the 2009 adoption fees as listed in the fee description. Registration before the end of 2009 will be your advantage as the fees related to registration, home study and placement are being reviewed for increases in 2010. Registration now will “grandfather” you in to the current rates. If you have been considering starting your adoption journey, there is no better time than now. Don’t miss your opportunity to start your adoption journey now!**

*If you haven’t already become a fan of Adoption STAR on facebook please do so today!!*

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

December has some special events:

***Chocolate Passion It is not too late to sign up!!***

December 03, Thursday, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Enjoy a delicious experience and support Adoption STAR, too. Chocolatier Dan Johnson, owner of Choco-Logo Confectionery Design (141 Broadway between Elm and Michigan in downtown Buffalo) will lead us on a tour of the working chocolate factory. Then it's off to the tasting room to sample two wines and six types of chocolate. Due to space, timed reservations are required. Please select 5:30pm, 6:15pm or 7pm and arrive promptly. Just \$20 per person and all proceeds benefit Adoption STAR. This is an adults-only party, please contact the agency immediately if you wish to join us.

***A Place to Call Home in WNY - Adoption Fair***

December 03, Thursday, 11:30 am to 7:00 pm

Adoption STAR is proud to participate in this day-long adoption fair, presented by CAFFA (Coalition of Adoption and Foster Family Agencies), from 11:30 am to 7pm. Michele Fried will speak about the adoption triad at 12:15. Thanks to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (1 Lafayette Square in downtown Buffalo) for hosting this event.

***Weekend Home Study Classes - Buffalo, NY Our last home study classes in 2009!  
(Information on our first 2010 classes can be found in this newsletter.)***

December 04, Friday, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Friday, Dec. 4, 6 pm - 9 pm AND Saturday, Dec. 5, 9 am - 5 pm. Registered clients must complete these classes to become home study ready. Please call for location information and details.

***Orientation Session - Rochester area***

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The adoption journey starts with good information and learning. Please join us at the Jewish Community Center, 1200 Edgewood Ave, for an overview of the adoption process and to learn about Adoption STAR's mission and philosophy. Reservations preferred, call 585-672-5227.

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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.

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December 12, Saturday, 5:30 pm

Prospective adoptive parents and adoptive families are invited to attend Brockport Fire Exempt (248 West Ave, Brockport, NY 14220) Pasta dishes will be served compliments of Salamone's Fresh Pasta. A sign-up is available for breads, salads, desserts and drinks.

Please RSVP to Alison at [alison75@rochester.rr.com](mailto:alison75@rochester.rr.com) with the number of adults & children attending (along with ages of any children) and the dish you plan to bring. Please bring one wrapped gift (\$10 or under) for your child, with his/he name clearly printed on it. A "special guest" will be joining us to pass out the gifts, but please keep this a surprise! A bag

will be available to discreetly deposit these items in preparation for our special guest. If you would like to also participate in a cookie exchange, please bring between two and three dozen cookies to exchange amongst one another. Holiday crafts and cookie decorating will also be provided for the children. A donation of \$5 per family is suggested, but not required. This will help offset the cost to rent the facility.

**Our next Adoption STAR Orientation Session will be held at the Buffalo, NY office on Sunday, January 10, 2010 from 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Please call the agency at 716.639.3900 or email [info@adoptionstar.com](mailto:info@adoptionstar.com) to register for this free informational session.**

**If you wish to enroll in the first set of home study classes in 2010, now is the time to be sure a place is held for you.**

**Winter I Session 1 (Buffalo)**

**5 week series: Tuesdays, January 19 – February 16, 2010**

**6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

### **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:**

#### ***Life Changes***

In what way do you feel you have changed as a result of your experiences with adoption? In what way do you feel like your life has changed? In what way do you feel like your relationships have changed? Do you feel these changes have affected you positively or negatively or both? Do you feel comfortable in your role?

**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 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/adoptionstarpaparents/> 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:

<http://www.petitepublishing.com/Home.html>. 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. (*Adoption STAR does not receive any compensation or any portion of fees paid to Petite Publishing.*) 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](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 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 [www.adoptionstar.com](http://www.adoptionstar.com). One of the agency's online groups is specifically for those who have already adopted from Adoption STAR: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/adoptionstarparents/>

Best wishes for a very Happy New Year,

*Your Friends at Adoption STAR*

P.S.

STAY TUNED FOR THE AGENCY'S 2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS TO BE POSTED ON THE WEBSITE SOON!!

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**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](mailto:Zachary@adoptionstar.com) with your most updated contact information!

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**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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**Other ways to contact us:**

**Albany 518-391-2515**

**Binghamton 607-330-2158**

**Rochester 585-672-5227**

**New York City 917-470-9340**

**Syracuse 315-703-7511**

**Poughkeepsie 845-457-4883**

**Toll Free 866-691-3300**

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