

FEBRUARY Adoption STAR NEWSLETTER

February 1, 2010

Dear Friends,

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. We are pleased to inform you that all of our children previously matched for adoption recently arrived safely to their families (NYS and OH.) We will not forget the orphans that remain in Haiti. Adoption STAR's commitment is 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.
4. If #3 occurs, to set up a home in S. Florida to provide immediate care for orphans as we identify whether or not they have living relatives in Haiti.

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)

A very special collaboration has come together with three Western New York Groups to benefit Haitian orphans. On February 12, 2009 our community was shocked and saddened by the plane crash of Flight 3407 in Clarence Center. On January 12, 2010, lives were

shattered in Haiti with a devastating earthquake. The families of Flight 3407 and Celebrate Buffalo apparel announce the launch of Flight 3407 memorial t-shirt, **Forever In Our Hearts**. 100% of proceeds from each \$20 t-shirt sold will benefit orphaned children in Haiti through Adoption STAR, a non-profit child placing agency. Laura Voigt, sister of Ellyce Kausner and liaison to Flight 3407 families said, "In the darkness of our tragedy, there is the good. The spirit of every life lost on Flight 3407 lives with every life that is touched in Haiti." Please consider purchasing a t-shirt by visiting <http://www.celebratebuffalo.com/> WGRZ Channel 2 News and WBEN 930 AM Radio are proud sponsors of **Forever In Our Hearts**.

Thank you to all of you who have called and emailed with your well wishes and concerns and especially those of you who sent in donations. Please continue to support our efforts 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.*

Also for a very specific wish-list for each of the orphanages we support, please email michele@adoptionstar.com

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.

Every February Adoption STAR publishes its placement statistics from the previous year. In 2009, 54 Adoption STAR families adopted! This averages to approximately one placement per week. One question we are asked frequently is, "How long does it take to adopt domestically?" And the answer you were given (if you asked – which you did!) is that we cannot promise a time frame. We still cannot promise you a time frame or guarantee that a child will be placed with you as many factors play a role in the placement of a baby. Adoption STAR is also very clear with our philosophy that we don't find babies for families but rather families for babies. We can share however that the "average placement time" for 2000-2009 was 7.8 months

from home study completion to child placement. If you would like a copy of the Adoption STAR 2009 report please email michele@adoptionstar.com with your request. Already in January 2010 there have been six placements and there are currently many matches of expectant parents with prospective adoptive couples.

Adoption STAR is happy to announce that we are now licensed in the State of Ohio and have an office in Cincinnati with additional staff based in Columbus and Cleveland, etc. We are able to service all of the State and are very pleased to share this expansion with you! Ohio residents may reach us by calling us at 513-631-6590 or 216-201-9177.

As a New York State Authorized, Florida and Ohio Licensed and COA Hague Accredited Agency, we are thrilled to enter a New Year and hope that no matter where you are in the process (especially those who have already adopted) we sincerely hope that you will get involved with the agency by joining a committee, volunteering to assist with a special program, or assisting the Board with a subcommittee or project, etc., etc! Contact michele@adoptionstar.com sharing with her how you would like to help or ask her for suggestions!

Now is the best time to begin your New Year's resolutions and for some of you that will be beginning the adoption journey and selecting an adoption agency... for others it will be deciding whether or not to adopt again.

There is no better time than to begin your adoption journey at the start of a New Year. Please join us on for one of these free informational sessions on adoption and Adoption STAR:

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

February 21, Sunday > 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Session to be held at Adoption STAR, 47 Plaza Drive,
Williamsville, NY 14221

Please call 716-639-3900 to RSVP or email

info@adoptionstar.com

Orientation Session -- Rochester area

February 23, Tuesday > 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Session will be held at the Jewish Community Center, 1200
Edgewood Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618

Please call 585-672-5227 to RSVP or email

info@adoptionstar.com

OPEN HOUSE & Adoption Celebration -- Florida

Thursday, February 18th, 2010 > 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

4:45 pm Ribbon Cutting

We invite the community-at-large especially all medical professionals dealing with pregnant women and teens, clergy, educators, and all those interested in learning more about adoption, to come and meet our staff and discover the many unique services Adoption STAR has brought to Florida. Please join us on February 18th to learn about the many services Adoption STAR has to offer both you and community. The Adoption STAR philosophy is to provide Support, Training, Advocacy and Resources to the entire adoptive triad from pre to post adoption. Please join us as we celebrate the opening of our new Fort Lauderdale location at 2734 East Oakland Park Blvd. Suite 101 Ft. Lauderdale (between Bayview and NE 26th Terr.). RSVP with names and contact information to annyse@adoptionstar.com or info@adoptionstar.com or by calling 954-566-6055.

In 2010 Adoption STAR turns 10 years old. We are already planning several special "birthday" events. Please let us know if you would be interested in joining the planning committee or helping in anyway.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday, May 1, 2010, 6:00 pm

Dazzling Decade ~ A Night of Stars

Marriott

Amherst, New York

A special tenth anniversary gala event with dinner, drinks, music and auction items to celebrate the amazing accomplishments and beautiful families created in the past ten years.

Your attendance is a must!

Also we are seeking volunteers for this Gala Dinner (to celebrate our 10 wonderful years) and are seeking out honorary adoptive parents for each year we have been in business. Please email michele@adoptionstar.com to let her know if you would like to be the “chair person for your year” or if you would like to help our committee plan a spectacular event! We promise there will not be a lot of work involved!

Please read Messages from the Adoptive Family Department for prospective adoptive families as #6 Fingerprinting has changed for NYS residents considering adopting.

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:

WRITE A LETTER TO THE BIRTH PARENT(S)

Write a letter to your child's birth/adoptive parents whether or not you have adopted. Either keep this letter in your journal, it'll be a nice reference for the future and will feel nice to write, or if you have adopted, consider sending it to your child's birth/adoptive parents.

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 www.adoptionstar.com.

Best wishes for a very Happy New Year,

Your Friends at Adoption STAR

P.S. View our 2010 calendar online now:
<http://www.adoptionstar.com/participate.php>

FEBRUARY

Waiting Families Group

February 03, 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 Please RSVP with the names and contact information of those attending. sofiawny@yahoo.com

SOFIA - Waiting Families Group

February 03, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Provides an opportunity for prospective adoptive families to receive support from one another during their wait to adopt. \$5.00 per family.

A.C.E.: Adoptee Circle of Experience

February 18, 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 or RSVP to ace@adoptionstar.com

OPEN HOUSE -- Florida

February 18, Thursday, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Please join us on February 18th to learn about the many services Adoption STAR has to offer both you and the community. We are also happy to celebrate the opening of our new Fort Lauderdale office at 2734 East Oakland Park Blvd. Suite 101. RSVP with name and contact information to annyse@adoptionstar.com or (954) 566-6055.

A.C.E Meeting

February 18, 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.

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

February 21, 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 -- Rochester area

February 23, Tuesday, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Join us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and Adoption STAR. Please call or email to RSVP. Session will be held at the Jewish Community Center - 1200 Edgewood Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618

MARCH

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

March 07, 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

Home Study Educational Classes

March 16, 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. This is the final program series scheduled for 2009. Register today by calling 716.639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com.

Baby Care Class: Caring for Your Baby

March 24, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

This class focuses on newborn care and is geared specifically to the waiting adoptive parent. It is facilitated by a physician's assistant who works in a pediatrician's office. \$5.00 per family.

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!

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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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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