

JANUARY Adoption STAR NEWSLETTER

January 1, 2010

Dear Friends,

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Adoption STAR wishes you the very best this New Year. May all your dreams come true!

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!

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!

OPEN HOUSE – Florida Office
Thursday, February 18th, 2010
4:00pm – 6:00pm

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 954-566-6055.

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 a free informational session on adoption and Adoption STAR on Sunday, January 10th, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm, 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville. Please call 716.639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com to RSVP.

ALSO 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 One (Buffalo)

5 week series:

Tuesdays, January 19 – February 16, 2010

6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

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.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday, May 1, 2010

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. So whether you adopted in 2000, 2001... all the way through 2009... please email 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!

In November we announced a very special collaboration between Elly’s Angels and Adoption STAR, we feel blessed to have found each other. Please see Elly’s Angels recently launched website: <http://ellysangels.org/>

Adoption STAR encourages all those who are experiencing infertility to consider a one-of-a-kind specialized series dealing with infertility. The

following series will be held at the Adoption STAR. Fees go directly to the service providers listed below.

Infertility Workshop 6-week series:

Dates: Sunday, January 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st; February 7th and 14th

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

These meetings will be held at 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville, NY.

Week 1 - What treatment options are right for you? Explaining stress associated with infertility.

Week 2 - Learning to talk to the doctor, feeling comfortable asking questions. How can you get the most out of your treatment?

Week 3 - For couples - what if you are on different pages in terms of timing? For single individual, how do you make the most of supportive individuals in your life?

Week 4 - Grief and Loss associated with infertility.

Week 5 - When to stop, determining your financial, emotional and medical endpoint.

Week 6 - Moving forward, making decisions regarding adoption, choosing to be childless, how do you know what is right for you?

Additional topics: How do you decrease stress during infertility? Coping techniques. Communication skills. Seeking professional help. Signs of depression. Family stressors/support. Maintaining healthy relationships during infertility. Asking for what you need. Individual concerns, needs and questions.

Class fee: Full 6 week program - \$150.00 individual; \$250.00 couple; \$30.00 per class individual, \$50.00 per class couple.

Contact: Kathleen Crissey, MS, LMHC - 716-510-9487; kc1008@aol.com or Any Ryan-Heiser - 716- 908-9363 AmyRyanHeiser@MSN.com.

Kathleen A. Crissey, MS, LMHC is a practitioner with over 20 years of clinical experience including infertility, adoption related

counseling and family counseling. She is also the adoptive parent of 4 children.

Amy Ryan-Heiser is a practitioner with 13 years of experience working with children and families. She is currently in private practice working with a diverse population of clients. Amy and her husband went through successful infertility treatment.

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 YOUR CHILD

Write a letter to your child whether or not you have adopted. Explain in this letter how you feel about your current situation-both the positives and the challenges- and what changes you would like to see occur – short time and long term. Keep this letter in your journal, it'll be a nice reference for the future and you can measure how much you have changed and grown. You may be able to one day share this letter with your child as well.

For those of you in the Albany area, you may be interested in this educational workshop: **Talking to Children About Their Birth History** Monday, January 25, 2010 , 7- 9 p.m. will be held at the McKownville United Methodist Church, 1565 Western Ave., Guilderland (between Crossgates & I-87).

This workshop will discuss how to share a child's birth family history with them at various ages. The program will include information on how to engage a child in the discussions. Speaker: Kate Kaufman Burns, LCSW. For more information or call (518) 448-5295.

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>

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/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: <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. 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: 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

then 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 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.

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>

JANUARY

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

January 10, Sunday, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR by joining us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and the Adoption STAR Agency. 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville. Please call 716.639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com to RSVP.

Infertility Workshop Session 1

January 10, Sunday, 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

What treatment options are right for you? Explaining stress associated with infertility. The first of six sessions. To register contact Kathleen Crissey, MS, LMHC, 716-510-9487, kc1008@aol.com or Amy Ryan-Heiser, 716-908-9363, AmyRyanHeiser@MSN.com

Infertility Workshop Session 2

January 17, Sunday, 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Learning to talk to your doctor, feeling comfortable asking questions. How can you get the most out of your treatment? The second of six sessions.

2010 Home Study Classes Begin!

January 19, Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

The first five week series of home study educational classes for 2010 begins. For registered clients of the agency. To enroll for this series or future 2010 adoption classes, please contact 716.639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com today!

Home Study Educational Classes

January 19, Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 9:30 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 639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com.

Infertility Workshop Session 3

January 24, Sunday, 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

For couples - what if you are on different pages in terms of timing? For single individual, how to make the most of supportive individuals in your life? The third of six sessions.

Infertility Workshop Session 4

January 31, Sunday, 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Grief and Loss associated with infertility. Fourth of six sessions.

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

Infertility Workshop Session 5

February 07, Sunday, 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

When to stop, determining your financial, emotional, and medical endpoint. Five of six sessions.

Infertility Workshop Session 6

February 14, Sunday, 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Moving forward, making decisions regarding adoption, choosing to be childless, how do you know what is right for you? Six of six sessions.

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

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

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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