

June Adoption STAR NEWSLETTER

June 2010

Dear Friends,

May was SUCH a special month! Adoption STAR celebrated with many of you at the Dazzling Decade gala event where we celebrated our tenth birthday. Over 300 people were in attendance. It was truly such a beautiful event. So many people were amazed with how much we have grown in ten years and watching the candle-lighting ceremony that included adoptive parents and the children they adopted during the past ten years was so spectacular. The last candle, the eleventh candle on the birthday cake was the future and good-luck candle lit by our founder, Michele Fried and two of the agency's birth mothers.

Also in May, Adoption STAR invited you to another special event called the **Birth Mother's Day Celebration**, this is always the day before Mother's Day and honors those women who made the very brave decision to become a birth mother. This event was packed with birth families, adoptive families and many adoptees. If you have not yet attended one of our Birth Mother's Day Celebrations, we hope to see you next year!

On May 26 we had an impressive audience for the ***Black Hair and Skin Care Class***. This annual class was run by owners of More Hair Clinic, on Allen Street in Buffalo. Thank you to Sherry and Paul for facilitating a class with spirit, respect for families who have adopted transracially and by showing hands-on examples with our beautiful children who were perfect models!

In addition to the wonderful activities and many placements keeping us busy in the month of March we also added two new full time staff members. Welcome Lisa Geiger, MS, Adoption Counselor and Family Advocate and Melissa (Missy) Spatari, MSW, Adoption Social Worker and Family Advocate. Lisa will be working with domestic and international prospective adoptive parents and Missy will be working with domestic traditional and domestic private track prospective adoptive parents. Both Lisa and Missy will be working closely with Sue Kolock, our Supervisor of the Adoptive Parent Department who is also a Social Worker and Family Advocate (and who has been with Adoption STAR for several years.) To learn more about Lisa and Missy and ALL of the wonderful STAR Staff, please visit: http://www.adoptionstar.com/agency_ourstaff.php

June is filled with quite a bit of activity too.... Take a look:

Orientation Session -- Rochester area

June 08, Tuesday

Join us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and the Adoption

STAR Agency. Will be held at the Jewish Community Center, 1200 Edgewood Avenue, Rochester, NY. Please call **585-672-5227** to RSVP or email info@adoptionstar.com
> 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

June 13, Sunday

Join 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** to RSVP or email info@adoptionstar.com

> 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Adoption Forum: Getting Your Family Involved in Your Adoption Journey

June 16, Wednesday

You are invited to bring one or more family members and/or friends with you to learn more about adoption. This class is for our clients who have finished the home study classes. A panel of adoption professionals will introduce the process that you have gone through thus far. They will also address questions from friends and family.

> 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Our next set of Home Study Classes for Western New York residents begins **Tuesday, July 6**. There are still openings but they will fill up quickly. If you would like to begin the adoption process, please **immediately** register so you may be included in this mandatory five-week program for those residing in Western New York.

SAVE THE DATE!!!!

Adoptive Family Annual Summer Picnic

August 08, Sunday, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, Ellicott Creek Park, Tonawanda, NY, Shelters 10 a and 10 b. Adoption STAR adoptive families and prospective adoptive families are welcome to join us! This is a spectacular event with delicious food, entertainment and crafts!

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 412 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. **IF YOU HAVEN'T CHECKED TO SEE THE AMAZING STORIES ALREADY POSTED, PLEASE DO SO TODAY!**

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

IT IS NOT TOO LATE to add **YOUR beautiful adoption story and how adoption and Adoption STAR has touched 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!**

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. *This section will be up for our entire 10th birthday year!*

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

BIG NEWS! Haiti has reopened the adoption process. Adoption STAR will be accepting a minimal amount of applications to the Haiti adoption program.

We are committed to not forgetting Haiti, especially the children. To date with the help of the community at large Adoption STAR has provided monetary support as well as tents, pajamas and other much needed supplies. **AT THIS TIME ONLY MONETARY DONATIONS ARE NEEDED AT THE TWO ORPHANAGES WE SUPPORT.** Thank you to CELEBRATE BUFFALO who made a donation to our work in Haiti for over \$3,000.

Please continue to support our continuing 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.*

Nepal

Nepal has recently gone through much political upheaval recently. To learn more about what is happening visit the Adoption STAR link about Nepal:

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

The children of Nepal need us more than ever. If you are able to make a tax-deductible

monetary donation that will go directly to Nepal, time is of the essence. Please feel free to do so by making a donation directly via our website:

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

New York State

SOFIA, the adoptive family support and social group has a new co-president. Thank you to Carolyn Schopp for partnering with Catherine Wadhams. Our co-presidents are excited to be working with both prospective adoptive parents and adoptive families. To become a member or to reach our SOFIA group, please email sofia@adoptionstar.com

If you are interesting in serving on the SOFIA steering committee or helping SOFIA out in any way, please also email Carolyn at sofia@adoptionstar.com to let her know.

Stay tuned for news on upcoming SOFIA events.

Ohio

The second Adoption STAR Ohio baby was placed! The Adoption STAR Ohio team consisting of social workers and attorneys are truly committed to expanding Adoption STAR throughout the State of Ohio. Angela Laman, LCSW, Adoption STAR Ohio Program Director is busy introducing the agency to all who is interested in learning more.

If you are considering adoption, either now or in the future, we encourage you to learn more about Adoption STAR Ohio by emailing angela@adoptionstar.com or by calling 513-631-6590.

Florida

Annyse Gross, Adoption STAR Florida Operations and Marketing Director is working on developing a committee to plan a National Adoption Month Fair in November 2010. Stay tuned for more information. If you would like to assist Annyse in this venture, please contact her at annyse@adoptionstar.com

AS OF MAY 2010, ADOPTION STAR IS CONNECTICUT APPROVED THROUGH MAY 2012. THIS MEANS THAT WE ARE AUTHORIZED TO PLACE CHILDREN FOR ADOPTION WITH CONNECTICUT FAMILIES.

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!

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, IF ADOPTION STAR DOES NOT HAVE A COPY OF YOUR HARD COPY PROFILE VIA A PDF (OF LESS THAN 5 MG) PLEASE IMMEDIATELY BE SURE THIS IS EMAILED TO YOUR FAMILY ADVOCATE. MANY TIMES WE DO NOT HAVE TIME TO EXPRESS MAIL YOUR PROFILE OUT AND THESE PDF PROFILES COME IN HANDY!

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. There are two companies, both founded by adoptive parents who could help you with this project. For more information visit: <http://www.littlelambvideo.com/> and <http://www.customvideomemories.net/> (*Adoption STAR does not receive any compensation or any portion of fees paid to any of these businesses.*) **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 way is to arrange a training session with our staff to begin the Agency Assisted private track program and attend the special training.

And yet another way is to have your profile come alive by creating a DVD presentation. See # 2 above. *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.

Please stay in touch and get involved!

Your Friends at Adoption STAR

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

JUNE

Orientation Session -- Rochester area

June 08, Tuesday, 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

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

June 13, 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

Adoption Forum: Getting Your Family Involved in Your Adoption Journey

June 16, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

You are invited to bring one or more family members and/or friends with you to learn more about adoption. This class is for our clients who have finished the home study classes. A panel of adoption professionals will introduce the process that you have gone through thus far. They will also address questions from friends and family.

JULY

Home Study Educational Classes

July 06, 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 639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com.

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

July 15, Thursday, 6:30 pm - 8:00 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

AUGUST

Orientation Session -- Albany area

August 02, Monday, 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

Adoptive Family Annual Summer Picnic

August 08, 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!

Orientation Session -- Buffalo area

August 10, Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 8:00 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

A.C.E. Meeting

August 19, 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.

Home Study Educational Classes

August 31, 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 639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com.

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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Syracuse 315-703-7511

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