



## **MAY Adoption STAR E-Mail NEWSLETTER**

May 1, 2009

Dear Friends,

**As of this week 350 children have been placed. Just four months into 2009, fifteen babies have been placed and several expectant parents are matched with prospective adoptive parents. We are still greatly in need of identifying additional couples and singles for Black infants with and without at risk background issues. Please do not respond to this email, but contact one our adoptive family advocates, Sue Kolock [skolock@adoptionstar.com](mailto:skolock@adoptionstar.com) or Sarah Rohde [sarah@adoptionstar.com](mailto:sarah@adoptionstar.com) if you have not already shared your interest in being considered for a child of all races.**

**So much is happening this May and early in the month... We are hoping you will be involved...**

### **Growing in Your Open Adoption**

**May 06, Wednesday> 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

**This class will focus on developing a positive relationship over time with your child's birth parents. Topics will include how to talk with your child about their birth parents and how to effectively address issues that may arise. This is a perfect class for anyone who has adopted a child and has any form of post adoption contact. PLEASE RSVP TO**

**[sofiawny@yahoo.com](mailto:sofiawny@yahoo.com)**

**Sponsored by SOFIA**

### **Birth Mother's Day Celebration**

**May 09, Saturday> 12:00pm-3:00pm**

**This event is for everyone! Join us at the Faith United Church of Christ, 1300 Maple Road at Hopkins Road in Williamsville.** IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THIS WONDERFUL, FAMILY EVENT. **RSVP by calling 716-639-3900.** IF YOU ARE ABLE, PLEASE BRING A SIDE DISH OR DESSERT TO SHARE. THE ENTIRE STAFF WILL ALSO BE PRESENT. *This event is especially important for those children who were adopted internationally or via a domestic closed adoption. Many people think only those involved in an open adoption should attend. If you are involved in an open adoption, your child(ren) will have many opportunities to visit with their birth mother, but for those adoptees who do not have this in their lives it is important to take the time on birth mother's day to celebrate their birth mother and the life they have today. SEE YOU THERE!!*

## **The History of Birth Mother's Day**

Birth Mother's Day was created in 1990 by a group of Seattle, Washington birth mothers who met each other at a birth parent support group. The day grew out of the shared recognition that Mother's Day does not include birth mothers. Most birth mothers are neither named nor recognized among the mothers in our midst. For most birth mothers there are no cards or flowers.

Birth Mother's Day is held on the day before Mother's Day. There are several reasons for this. The first of these recognizes a birth mother's motherhood as the first mother. A separate day allows all of the feelings to be acknowledged and allows adoptive moms and adoptees the time to celebrate their birth mother's.

Birth mothers who have had other children express feeling torn between the Mother's Day celebration of the children they are raising and the memory of the child who is absent. A separate day allows for observance and expression of both circumstances.

Observing Birth Mother's Day also creates a time for families of adopted children to talk openly about birth families and the ways we are all connected to one another through our children. It is such an important day especially for those who adopted internationally and for those with closed adoptions to attend Birth Mother's Day Celebrations.

WE ARE REPEATING: IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THIS WONDERFUL, FAMILY EVENT. THE ENTIRE STAFF WILL ALSO BE PRESENT. PLEASE CALL 716-639-3900 TO LET US KNOW YOU ARE COMING. AND IF YOU ARE ABLE, PLEASE BRING A SIDE DISH OR DESSERT TO SHARE.

*Thank you to everyone who celebrated Adoption STAR's birthday with us by making a tax-deductible donation to the agency. March was our birthday month. We turned nine years old! Our wish list continues to include donations of new or gently used adoption books of any kind and/or a monetary donation to any of our programs, specifically the birth parent department or the post adoption department. You may make a donation online by going to: <http://www.adoptionstar.com/donate.php> <<http://www.adoptionstar.com/donate.php>> or by mailing in your check to Adoption STAR. THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING OUR BIRTHDAY WITH US!*

For those of you considering adoption, we would like to encourage you to attend one of the upcoming orientation sessions listed below. Please know that an orientation session is not mandatory to register with the agency, but it is a comfortable, no-cost event for you to get to know staff and clients of the agency:

**Orientation Session -- Buffalo area**

**May 17, 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](mailto:info@adoptionstar.com)**

**Orientation Session -- Binghamton, NY**

**June 20, Saturday, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm**

**Join us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and the Adoption STAR Agency. Broome County Public Library 185 Court Street, Binghamton, NY 13901 Rsvp to [info@adoptionstar.com](mailto:info@adoptionstar.com) or call the agency directly.**

**STAY TUNED FOR A SYRACUSE, NY ORIENTATION COMING SOON.**

**Don't forget to check out our international programs. Our Nepal program is closed for 2009, however we are now accepting applications for 2010. Please contact Amanda Grover at [Amanda@adoptionstar.com](mailto:Amanda@adoptionstar.com) for more information. Also there are so many children in Haiti who are waiting for placement. Referrals are immediate. Please contact the agency for more 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 group. We hope to see you online!

### **Adoption STAR YAHOO Online Group**

We highly recommend that once your home study is approved that you log onto and join the Adoption STAR adoptive parent's yahoo group. It is easy to join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/adoptionstar/> There are so many Adoption STAR clients (those who adopted and those waiting to adopt) who all have access to each other. No agency staff are members of the online group ~ only adoptive parent clients. Please utilize this resource to post a message, to learn from others, and especially to receive support and connect with new friends and past home study peers, etc. When you join, please list your name and your home study group's name so others will be able to welcome you to the group.

**Messages from the Adoptive Family Department for prospective adoptive families:**

1. **Emailing:** If you wish an update on whether or not you have been profiled OR to check on the outcome of a recent profiling please CALL the agency rather than emailing us for an update. Also if you wish an update on your file to see if you are missing paperwork, etc., please contact us via telephone and not email. We receive an overwhelming amount of emails each day and cannot always get back to you timely. Also email can be lost or bounce to spam files and never be received. In addition, questions that are specific to your file and profiling are important to us and we would prefer personal contact with you.

2. **Profiles:** As you know we request only five profiles (for expectant parents) to be kept at the agency. Be in touch with the agency to be sure we have more than one profile remaining. Often we run out of our clients' profiles and if this occurs you may lose out on being considered for potential adoption situations. We will not accept more than five profiles at one time (we just do not have the space to accommodate this.) Do not get discouraged if we ask for more profiles as it means your Family Advocate is working on your behalf to get your profiles viewed. Remember we can not 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. 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 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 from the Post Adoption Department 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 invite them to join the mailing list by following the directions at the end of this email. You do not need to be associated with the agency to receive this newsletter.

4. **Support groups:** Adoption STAR has several support groups, most open to the community at large, and one does NOT need to be an Adoption STAR client to participate. 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).

All the best,

*Your Friends at Adoption STAR*

P.S.

**Adoption STAR's 2009 Calendar Is On-Line.**

Please visit:

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

## **MAY**

### **Growing in Your Open Adoption**

May 06, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

This class will focus on developing a positive relationship over time with your child's birth parents. Topics will include how to talk with your child about their birth parents and how to effectively address issues that may arise.

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### **Birth Mother's Day Celebration**

May 09, Saturday, 12:00pm-3:00pm

This event is for everyone! Join us at the Faith United Church of Christ, 1300 Maple Road at Hopkins Road in Williamsville. RSVP by calling 716-639-3900.

## **Home Study Educational Classes**

May 12, Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Spring 2009 kicks off on May 12 and ends June 16.

Talking About Adoption, Child Interest, Open Adoption, Child Identity and Adoption Law are the names of the five educational classes provided by Adoption STAR as part of the home study process.

## **Orientation Session -- Buffalo area**

May 17, 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](mailto:info@adoptionstar.com)

## **JUNE**

### **Adoption Forum: Getting Your Family Involved**

June 02, Tuesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

This class is for our clients who have finished the home study classes. You are invited to bring one or more family member and/or friends with you so they too can learn more about everything you have learned about.

Free! Please RSVP!

Sponsored by SOFIA

### **Transracial Adoption Panel**

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

An interactive panel discussion on how to develop and grow as a healthy transracial family.

Sponsored by SOFIA

### **Orientation Session -- Binghamton, NY**

June 20, Saturday, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

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

Broome County Public Library 185 Court Street,  
Binghamton, NY 13901 Rsvp to [info@adoptionstar.com](mailto:info@adoptionstar.com)  
or call the agency directly.

### **Home Study Educational Classes**

June 23, Tuesday, 6:00 pm - 9:30 pm

This summer is the best time to begin the home study educational classes with Adoption STAR. The five week classes fill up quickly, for more information contact [info@adoptionstar.com](mailto:info@adoptionstar.com)

### **A.C.E.: Adoptee Circle of Experience**

June 24, Wednesday, 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.

**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 Anna at [anna@adoptionstar.com](mailto:anna@adoptionstar.com) with your most updated contact information!

PLEASE, PLEASE GET INVOLVED THIS MONTH WITH THE AGENCY!

*Thank you!*

**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**

**47 Plaza Drive**

**Williamsville, NY 14221**

**Phone 716-639-3900**

**Fax 716-639-3700**

**2734 East Oakland Park Boulevard, Suite 101**

**Fort Lauderdale, FL 33306**

**Phone 954-566-6055**

**Fax 954-566-6255**

**E-Mail [info@adoptionstar.com](mailto:info@adoptionstar.com) <<mailto:info@adoptionstar.com>>**

**Website <http://www.adoptionstar.com/>**

**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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**IMPORTANT MESSAGE:** We have implemented a new monthly newsletter system. This newsletter system has two new features. If you look at the bottom of this newsletter, you will see three links that you can click or copy and paste into your web browser. The preferences link allows you to change what kind of emails you get. For example, for most individuals, this newsletter shows up as text only. If you would like to see the different colors, fonts, and make it look like a web page, you can go to the preferences link and switch your preference to HTML. Likewise, if you got this newsletter in HTML or code, you can switch it to text only. The other features allow you to forward this newsletter to anyone or to unsubscribe to this newsletter.

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