



NOVEMBER Adoption STAR NEWSLETTER

November 1, 2009

Dear Friends,

HAPPY NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH!

Within this newsletter is an extensive list of amazing National Adoption Month activities that we are hoping you will attend. It is also very important that you invite friends and family to join you as well. Spreading the word about adoption and more importantly "celebrating adoption" is the best way to spend your November. We expect to see all of you THIS THURSDAY at:

Celebrate Family

November 5, Thursday, 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm

An evening of gourmet food stations, fine wines, extravagant gift baskets, and music to benefit Adoption STAR.

Shea's Performing Arts Center

646 Main Street, Buffalo, NY

\$35 per person

\$65 per couple

\$100 patron

You may pay at the door if you haven't already.

If you are unable to attend due to residing too far or due to other reasons, please support Adoption STAR by mailing in your donation today. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Adoption STAR presents a great month of special days in honor of National

Adoption Month.

All events will be held at Adoption STAR's office, 47 Plaza Dr. in Williamsville unless noted. Questions? Call 716.639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com.

Agency Assisted Private Adoption Workshop—Albany New!

Monday, November 9, 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Learn how to market and manage your journey with agency support. Usually offered as a private class, the same information is covered in a collegial workshop setting, \$75 off the usual fee.

Contact sarah@adoptionstar.com if you are interested in attending.

Colonie Community Center, 1653 Central Ave in Albany.

Adoption Orientation – Albany

Monday, November 9, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Begin your adoption journey with information about the process and Adoption STAR's Services. This class is free and open to anyone interested in adoption and is held in the Colonie Community Center, 1653 Central Ave, Albany.

Financial Planning for the Adoptive Family

Wednesday, November 12, 6:00 pm

A financial planner, accountant (who are also adoptive parents) and an attorney will offer sound advice about how to manage family finances, prepare for the future and maximizing the value of the adoption tax credit. This event is free, reservations are preferred.

Adoptment Training New!

Wednesday, November 12, 7:00 pm

April Dinwoodie was adopted when she was two years old, and as an adult, she's an advocate for the power and comfort of mentoring. April will offer a training for all adult adoptees who wish to mentor a foster child. This free training is open to all adult adoptees who wish to donate a few hours of volunteer time each month. Please contact the agency

info@adoptionstar.com with your interest.

Exploring Your Adoption Options

Wednesday, November 18, 6:00 pm

Michele Fried, the agency's founder and director will facilitate this free workshop introducing you to a myriad of adoption options, including domestic, international, private agency and older child. Learn about the different paths of an adoption journey in this lively and informative session. Many speakers will be present to provide you with very specific tools to help you successfully adopt. A perfect workshop for those currently waiting to adopt!

Adoption Education Classes – Albany (Ask us about the Buffalo Weekend Class coming in December!)

Friday & Saturday, November 20 & 21

Special presentation in the Capital District, all five pre-parenthood education classes are packed into one weekend at the lovely Carondelet Hospitality Center in Latham. You may reside in the Albany area or choose to travel from outside the geographic area and stay for the weekend while sharing your time with the Adoption STAR staff!

Family Fun in Honor of National Adoption Day **New!**

Saturday, November 21 the following three sites welcome your attendance:

Visit Explore & More Children's Museum, 300 Glead Ave in East Aurora where adoptive and foster families receive a discount on admission from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. STAR mom Sheri-Le Rupp will read an adoption story at 11:30 am. Visit www.exploreandmore.org for details or call 655.5131.

At B is For Books, 6562 E Quaker St in Orchard Park, the adoption celebration begins Thursday, November 19 at 10:30 am at the pre-school story time. STAR adoptive mom Kimberly VanTine will read Star of the Week. On Friday, November 20 at 7:00 pm, at bedtime story hour, we'll read Star of the Week and enjoy crafts and a treasure hunt. On Saturday, November 21, there will be more family fun from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Visit www.bis4books.com or call 667.2383.

Stop by Monkey See, Monkey Do, 9060 Main St in Clarence. STAR mom Patty Spear will read an adoption book at Noon, followed by a family craft. Visit www.monkeysread.com or call 218.4121.

Adoption Orientation -- Buffalo

Sunday, November 22, 1:00 pm

Representatives from Adoption STAR will review the adoption process and Adoption STAR's services. This orientation is free and open to anyone considering adoption. RSVP to 716-639-3900.

*Play an Active Role in Creating Your
Forever Family*

Adoption STAR is coming to Albany!

**We will be holding our Agency Assisted Private
Track Workshop**

**November 9th 4pm-6pm at:
Town of Colonie Community Center
1653 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12205**

What is the Agency Assisted Private Track?

Adoption STAR offers a personalized training on how you can adopt your baby privately with our assistance. Agency Assisted Private Track Adoption lowers your fees while giving you full agency support and more control over the adoption process.

In this workshop you will be taught how to manage and market your adoption journey. We will coach you on how to write compelling and attractive advertisements to place in newspapers and websites.

You are in charge of your journey and Adoption STAR's resources are beside you. Agency Assisted Private Adoption requires you to be an active part of your adoption journey.

The fee for this workshop is \$300 per couple or single.

This is a \$75 savings!

A wonderful article and information on adoption (and Adoption STAR) can be found in the November issue of Family Magazine. Here is a sneak peek ~ <http://www.bluetoad.com/publication/?i=24933&l=&m=&p=&id=2229>

Adoption STAR would like to welcome new staff member Michael Hill in the position of Project Lead for the Infant Adoption Awareness grant. Adoption STAR has been the NYS agency grant recipient for three years. To learn more about Michael visit http://www.adoptionstar.com/agency_staff_profile.php?id=33 and email him a welcome at Michael@adoptionstar.com.

Are you an adopted person? If not, PLEASE take a moment to cut

and past the information within the next paragraph and email it to an adult adoptee that you know. Would you like to be a mentor for only two hours a month for a child in foster care waiting to be adopted?

This is a specialized volunteer program that has been found to provide numerous benefits for the mentors and children in foster care.

We need you for this important program! This is a successful program originated in New York City. The founder April Dinwoody (adopted at age 2) will come to Buffalo on Thursday Nov 12th 7pm and meet in the Adoption lobby to kick off this program by providing an initial informational session and training. Please consider being a mentor! This is such a rewarding program. Contact us immediately so we can register you for this event.

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

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 TO A COMPANY ABOUT AN ADVERTISEMENT

Pick an ad and write a letter to the company who wrote the ad. This can be positive or negative ad. Write in your journal how the ad made you feel.

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/> f or those who already adopted from Adoption STAR. Please join this group to connect with other parents about the

different stages of parenthood. No agency staff are members of the online groups ~ only adoptive parent clients. Please utilize this resource to post a message, to learn from others, and especially to receive support and connect with new friends and past home study peers, etc.

When you join, please list your name and your home study group's name so others will be able to welcome you to the group.

Messages from the Adoptive Family Department for prospective adoptive families:

1. Emailing: If you wish an update on whether or not you have been profiled OR to check on the outcome of a recent profiling please CALL the agency rather than emailing us for an update. Also if you wish an update on your file to see if you are missing paperwork, etc., please contact us via telephone and not email. We receive an overwhelming amount of emails each day and cannot always get back to you timely.

Also email can be lost or bounce to spam files and never be received. In addition, questions that are specific to your file and profiling are important to us and we would prefer personal contact with you.

2. Profiles: If you hoping to adopt a baby domestically and are just beginning to create your profile and need assistance there is an online company founded by Adoption STAR adoptive parents who can assist you with the process: <http://www.petitepublishing.com/Home.html>.

Even if you have already created your profile and handed it in, but feel it needs a "face lift" consider Petite Publishing for this as well. (*Adoption STAR does not receive any compensation or any portion of fees paid to Petite Publishing.*) As you know we request only five profiles (for expectant parents) to be kept at the agency. Be in touch with the agency to be sure we have more than one profile remaining. Often we run out of our clients' profiles and if this occurs you may lose out on being considered for potential adoption situations.

We will not accept more than five profiles at one time (we just do not have the space to accommodate this.) Do not get discouraged if we ask for more profiles as it means your Family Advocate is working on your

behalf to get your profiles viewed. Remember we cannot profile you without profiles, so if you have not handed in your profile and your home study is done, precious time is passing.

3. Profiling Opportunities: It is sometimes difficult for families to "hear" or "read" about available children and come to learn they can not be considered unless they are home study ready. "Home study ready" means that your home study or home study update is less than 12 months old and that no paperwork has expired such as fingerprints and child abuse clearances. It also means that we have your profile too. Without these items, we are unable to consider you for domestic adoption situations in-state or out-of-state.

4. Home Study Expiration: If your home study is coming up on expiring there is a good chance your fingerprint clearances and SCR (child abuse) clearances have already expired or will soon expire. The date of your clearances is listed in the body of your home study document. It is important to keep this up to date. Please contact the office if you need more information. We are recommending that you begin processing your update within two months before it expires so there is no lapse. Those with expired home studies (and expired SCR clearances) are unable to be considered for potential placements.

5. Second Adoptions: Many Adoption STAR families who have adopted previously from us have adopted again! If you are considering adopting again, it is important to begin the process to update your home study. We just want to remind those of you who wish to adopt again, the process does not require home study educational classes.

6. Fingerprinting: If you have not yet been fingerprinted by Adoption STAR since the law requiring FBI prints went into affect two years ago, it is your responsibility to make sure that those are completed. The FBI fingerprint card rejection rate is quite high. Even if the State approves the fingerprints stating no criminal history, the FBI often rejects the prints stating they need to be redone. This causes many delays and of course quite a bit of frustration. The good news is that once you are fingerprinted and receive approval from both NY and the

FBI you do not need to be fingerprinted again! If those fingerprint clearances expire before you adopt, the agency will just need to request a summary judgment report. We expunge records after finalization so any of our previous families who return to adopt again, we need to re-fingerprint as we do not have the option of requesting the summary judgment report.

7. Waiting: Your Family Advocate understands that waiting to adopt is emotionally draining and difficult. We have a growing list of recommendations to ease your wait time. The agency's educational credit system for both domestic and international adoptions has been created to assist you while you wait to become an adoptive parent. Adoption education is a life-long process, what better way to prepare for adoptive parenthood than to continue your adoption education! We highly recommend that once your home study is approved that you log onto and join the Adoption STAR adoptive parent's yahoo group. It is easy to join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/adoptionstar/> There are so many Adoption STAR clients (those who adopted and those waiting to adopt) who all have access to each other. No agency staff are members of the online group ~ only adoptive parent clients. Please utilize this resource to post a message, to learn from others, and especially to receive support and connect with new friends and past home study peers, etc. When you join, please list your name and your home study group's name so others will be able to welcome you to the group. Finding a creative outlet often assists with one's wait. If you are planning to adopt domestically, there are a number of creative ways to help in your pursuit. One of those ways is to place your profile online at the Adoption STAR website. Here is a link to learn more: http://www.adoptionstar.com/adoptiveparents_profile_form.php

Another way is to arrange a training meeting with Sarah Rohde (716-639-3900) to begin the agency assisted private track. Another way is to have your profile come alive by creating a DVD presentation. For more information on the DVD project, visit: <http://www.littlelambvideo.com/> *These are just a few ideas to think about, and again, if you are struggling with the wait, we encourage you to contact the agency as we are here for you!*

Messages about Post Adoption for families who already adopted:

1. Open Adoption Contact: Just a reminder that you signed an agreement to supply the agency with photos and letters for your child's birth family whether or not the birth parents wanted an open adoption.

It is imperative that you provide these photos and letters in a timely fashion. If you haven't it is not too late to do so now. It is very sad to have to inform a birth mother or a birth father that there are no photos waiting for them in their file. Even if you have not heard from the birth family, it is still important to keep to the schedule provided to you.

Many of our schedules fall into the following category (but check your placement paperwork to be sure that your agreement is the same or if it requires more frequent contact): photos/letters to be sent the first two weeks after placement, one month after placement and then every month through six months after placement, then 12 months, 18 months and 24 months! and then yearly thereafter until age 18. PLEASE also remember to also include photos for Adoption STAR. We update your files with these photos, pass them around to the staff as we all love to see our babies growing up and we continuously like to update our bulletin board! Please send all photos via regular mail attention: Anna Steinberg at Adoption STAR, 47 Plaza Drive, Williamsville, NY 14221.

2. Staying Connected: Time passes so quickly and our children grow up so fast. We are working, playing, parenting... we are so busy! Even with our busy lives, we need to remember that our adoption journey has continued from waiting, to placement, to parenthood and continues forever. Adoption does not end at the placement of our children but rather it continues. What does this mean for us adoptive families? It means that your children may have unique issues due to their adoption experiences, questions about themselves and their birth families, etc.

Adoption STAR can provide you with a list of professionals who provide post adoption counseling to provide you with the support and counseling necessary when dealing with unexpected special needs or other parenting issues.

3. **Newsletter:** This monthly email newsletter is a special way to stay connected. If you know anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, please have them provide us with their email address. You do not need to be associated with the agency to receive this newsletter.

4. **Support groups:** Adoption STAR has several support groups including online groups for you to become involved with before, during and after you have a child placed in your home. Support after adoption is encouraged and enhances the well being of the adoptive family. For more information on the agency's support groups, visit www.adoptionstar.com. One of the agency's online groups is specifically for those who have already adopted from Adoption STAR: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/adoptionstarparents/>

All the best,

Your Friends at Adoption STAR

P.S.

Adoption STAR's 2009 Calendar Is On-Line. STAY TUNED FOR THE AGENCY'S 2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS TO BE POSTED SOON!!

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

NOVEMBER

Celebrate Family! Benefit Event for Adoption STAR

November 05, Thursday, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Join us for an evening of gourmet food stations, wine sampling, extravagant basket raffles and the live music by jazz diva Amy Barlow Liberatore in the elegant Shea's Theatre lobby on Main St in downtown Buffalo. \$35 per person, \$65 per couple and \$100 patron. Call 639.3900 for details or email Cherie@adoptionstar.com.

Transracial Panel Discussion - Utica

November 06, Friday, 6:00 pm

Mother and son Diane and Christian Eshelman will speak about Adoption and the Transracial Family at The Color of Family meeting at the Dunham Public Library, 76 Main St in Whitesboro, NY. RSVP to thecoloroffamily@gmail.com or call 315.404.7783.

Orientation Session - Albany area

November 09, Monday, 6:30pm - 8:00 pm

Join us for this free orientation session to learn more about adoption and Adoption STAR's services. The session will take place at the Town of Colonie Community Center, 1653 Central Ave in Albany. RSVP to

info@adoptionstar.com or 866-691-3300.

Agency Assisted Private Adoption Workshop - Albany

November 09, Monday, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Learn how to market and manage your adoption journey, with agency support and reduction in fees. This training is usually offered individually; this collegial setting offers the same information. \$300 per couple or single. Space is limited. Call 866-691-3300 or email info@adoptionstar.com.

Financial Planning for the Adoptive Family

November 12, Thursday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Back by popular demand! This class will introduce how apply to for the adoption tax credit, other adoption benefits, and financial planning for your family's future. Our presenters are certified financial planner Amy Jo Lauber, Mark Tronconi, CPA and Lisa Allen, Esq. Mark and Amy Jo are proud adoptive parents, too!

Adoptment Orientation

November 12, Thursday, 7:00pm

This unique program trains adult adoptees to mentor young people who are in foster care. Adult adoptees who have a few hours of volunteer time to share each month are invited to attend this training and begin making a difference now. Call 639.3900 for details.

Exploring Your Adoption Options

November 18, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

This free workshop will introduce a multitude of adoption options including international, private, older child, etc. It will also provide ways to enhance your profiles with an abundance of creativity. For all those who are currently waiting to adopt!

Weekend Home Study Classes - Albany, NY

November 20, Friday, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

This intense weekend includes all five prep classes back-to-back, from Friday, November 20 (6:00 to 8:30pm) to Saturday, November 21 (9:00 am to 5:00pm)at the pictureseque Carondelet Hospitality Center in Latham, NY. Space is limited so call 716.639.3900 or email info@adoptionstar.com to register.

Family Fun in Honor of National Adoption Day

November 21, Saturday, all day

Three partners in WNY are helping us celebrate. Explore & More Children's Museum (300 Gleed Ave in East Aurora) is discounting admission for adoptive parents (see your November newsletter), 10am to 5pm and a STAR parent storytime at 11am. B Is for Books (6562 E Quaker St in Orchard Park) celebrates with stories and crafts on Thursday, Friday & Saturday. See www.bis4books.com for the schedule. Monkey See, Monkey Do (9060 Main St in Clarence) will have a STAR storyhour at Noon. What a great day!

Orientation Session - Buffalo area

November 22, Sunday, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

The adoption journey starts with good information and learning. Please join us for an overview of the adoption process and to learn about Adoption STAR's mission and philosophy.

DECEMBER

Chocolate Passion

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

Enjoy a delicious experience and support Adoption STAR, too. Chocolatier Dan Johnson, owner of Choco-Logo Confectionery Design (141 Broadway between Elm and Michigan in downtown Buffalo)will lead us on a tour of the working chocolate factory. Then it's off to the tasting room to sample two wines and six types of chocolate. Due to space, timed reservations are required by Dec 1. Please select 5:30pm, 6:15pm

or 7pm and arrive promptly. Just \$20 per person and all proceeds benefit Adoption STAR. This is an adults-only party, please. Email Cherie@adoptionstar.com.

Weekend Home Study Classes - Buffalo, NY

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

Friday, Dec. 4, 6 pm - 9 pm AND Saturday, Dec. 5, 9 am - 5 pm. Please call or email to RSVP and for Buffalo location information.

Orientation Session - Buffalo area

December 07, Monday, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

The adoption journey starts with good information and learning. Please join us for an overview of the adoption process and to learn about Adoption STAR's mission and philosophy.

A.C.E.: Adoptee Circle of Experience

December 10, 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.

A Holiday Party for Our Birth Mothers

December 12, Saturday, Noon - 2:30 pm

Celebrate the joy of the season with the Adoption STAR family at this special party for our birth mothers and their children.

Chrimukkah Wonderland - Celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah and All Things Winter

December 12, Saturday, 5:30 pm

Our Rochester area families will gather at the Brockport Fire Exempt (248 West Ave, Brockport) for a cookie exchange, menorah lighting, visit from St Nick and pasta dinner courtesy of Salamone's Pasta. Please bring a salad, bread or dessert to share. Moms and dads, ask about St Nick's visit when you when RSVP to Sue at shawnsue4ever@yahoo.com.

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!

PLEASE, PLEASE GET INVOLVED WITH THE MANY
ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY DURING NATIONAL ADOPTION
MONTH!

Thank you!

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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