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SEPTEMBER Adoption STAR NEWSLETTER

September 2, 2009

Dear Friends,

We have asked you to save the date for a wonderful event during National Adoption Month. Please plan on attending. It promises to be fun and your presence will show your support for Adoption STAR.

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 tickets

Call Adoption STAR for details, 716.639.3900

or email Cherie@adoptionstar.com

Our ninth annual Adoption STAR adoptive family picnic was incredible. Over 200 people attended! In addition to the delicious food, cool arts 'n crafts, clown and a gorgeous day, the children and their families were certainly the "stars" of the day. Thank you to all who attended and thank you again and again to our Picnic chairs Patty, Steve and Matthew Spear! To view the excitement of the day, please visit this link: <http://picnic2009adoptionstar.shutterfly.com/>

As of the end of July, half way into 2009, **36** Adoption STAR families have adopted! It has been an exciting year so far. If you wish to begin the adoption journey and receive a home study for the purposes of adopting, please know that our Fall Home Study Classes start Tuesday, September 15 and run for 5 consecutive Tuesday evenings. If you wish to register, please sign up before the series is filled.

September is probably more packed with events than any month so far. Please attend as many as you are able as they truly are very creative and important events for all those who are touched by adoption or thinking about adopting. ALL OF THESE EVENTS ARE ALSO OPEN TO THOSE WHO

ARE NOT AFFILIATED WITH ADOPTION STAR.

Waiting Families Group

September 09, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Here's an opportunity for prospective adoptive families to meet. Families who have successfully adopted after "being in your shoes" will share stories of their adoption journey and offer advice and support for surviving the wait. Sponsored by SOFIA (Supporting Our Friends Interested in Adoption). RSVP to info@adoptionstar.com or call 716.639.3900.

Orientation Session - Syracuse Area

September 14, Monday, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Join us for this free orientation session in Syracuse at the Betts Branch Public Library, 4862 South Salina St. Come learn more about adoption and the Adoption STAR mission and philosophy. This will be our last orientation in Syracuse in 2009. RSVP to info@adoptionstar.com or call 716.639.3900.

Transracial Adoption Panel

September 16, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

A dynamic panel discussion explores various topics in developing and growing as a transracial family. An adult adoptee who was transracially adopted will be present with his parents and you will hear their family's experiences as well as have an opportunity to ask questions. RSVP to info@adoptionstar.com or call 716.639.3900.

Open Adoptions: Making Them Work For Your Family

September 21, Monday, 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.

McKownville United Methodist Church, Celebration Room, 1565 Western Ave., Albany, NY
Speaker: Rose Capurso, Ph.D.

This workshop will address issues that are unique to adoptive families with open relationships with birth family members. Discussions will include defining and adjusting roles for birth and adoptive parents as families mature. Discussions will also focus on ways to explain open adoption to your child and the outside world. Current research on openness in adoption will also be reviewed. This free program is for adults only. For further information or questions, please contact:

Adoptive Families of the Capital Region, Inc. (518) 448-5295

<http://adoptivefamilies.homestead.com>

Women of Influence Award Luncheon

September 24, Thursday, 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Salvatore's Italian Gardens

Michele Fried (Adoption STAR's founder and CEO) will receive a Women of Influence award presented by *Business First*. Michele is being given the Entrepreneur Award which honors women who are the chief executive, president or founder of a company or business venture that they helped start, build or significantly grow.

Light The Night Walk

September 25, Friday evening

One of our adoptive families has lost members of their family recently. Light The Night Walk remembers them and many others by also raising awareness and funds for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's. This year, Team Maxick will walk in memory and celebration of Larry and Neil Maxick. Team Maxick homepage

<http://pages.lighththenight.org/wny/Buffalo09/TeamMaxick>.

Babies and Their Families Open House **NEW THIS YEAR!**

September 27, Sunday, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Help us fill gift bags for our adoptive families at time of placement and our birth moms, too.

Please bring new, unwrapped gift (newborn sleepers, caps, receiving blankets, small books) for baby and a pampering gift for the birth mom (fleece throw or small blanket, scented body lotion and soaps) and enjoy the fellowship of the Adoption STAR family. RSVP to

Cherie@adoptionstar.com or call 716.639.3900

In addition to these events, there are also a few "new" resources for you:

1) Adoption Star Parenting Site

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/adoptionstarpaparents/>

You have already adopted and now you are parenting. Parenting not only brings about special moments, milestones and joy, it also comes with challenges. Parents deal with many different stages ~ parenting infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers and school-aged children. Also adoptive parenting includes different components to typical parenting...You may be experiencing an open adoption, a transracial or transcultural placement, or have a child asking adoption questions. This is a site where you can discuss any parenting and adoption related issues from infancy, toddlers, and school-age. This is a safe place to ask questions and share experiences and advice.

2) One of our new adoptive families who welcomed home a baby boy approximately one month ago just launched their new business and website

<http://www.petitepublishing.com/Home.html> Michelle and David write: Petite Publishing was conceived while recalling the struggle to write our own family profile for our adoption journey. We were so raw with emotion that we found it difficult to write our Dear Birthmother letter, and decide on which photos to use in our profile. Although we had the support of our family and friends, we didn't have anyone truly objective to give us feedback. We wanted to create something beautiful, thoughtful, and that expressed our family's unique style. We revised our profile several times, until we realized that we just needed to speak from our hearts and keep it simple. We had heard of these same struggles from other families within our agency; not knowing what to include, where to begin, or how to use and manipulate digital media. We decided to use our design and writing experience to help other families, so they wouldn't have to struggle as we did. At Petite Publishing, our profiles are not designed to be slick marketing pieces, but rather beautifully written and designed books to help adoptive families represent themselves honestly. Our designers have been in the field for over 15 years, and are very successful at working with digital media, design layouts, typography, and illustration. Let us help make your Adoption Profile or Lifebook a beautiful representation of your family that will be treasured by birthmothers, as well as your adopted child, for years to come. Please call or email us to get started. We look forward to helping you create your Forever Family!

Michelle D. Lasure

phone: 716.474.1191

email: petitepublishing@me.com

www.petitepublishing.com

If you're in the Amherst, NY area, you may have noticed an article on Zack Fried, Adoption STAR's Intake Worker, in the Amherst Bee. Zack was interviewed about being an adult adoptees. Zack will also be featured in an upcoming MY VIEW editorial in the Buffalo News discussing his thoughts about an MTV program entitled, 16 and Pregnant.

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:

ARTICLES, ADS, CARTOONS

The media has a lot to do with the way we feel about our society and ourselves in general. Did you see an article, a cartoon or an advertisement that had either a positive or negative impact on you today? Describe this impact!

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. (*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 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.

Please visit:

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

SEPTEMBER

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Home Study Educational Classes

September 15, Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Don't let the summer pass you by without registering for the Home Study educational classes. This five week program prepares you for domestic or international adoption. Register today by calling 639.3900.

Transracial Adoption Panel

September 16, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

A dynamic panel discussion explores various topics in developing and growing as a transracial family.

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September 27, Sunday, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Help us fill gift bags for our adoptive families at time of placement and our birth moms, too. Please bring new, unwrapped gift (newborn sleepers, caps, receiving blankets, small books) for baby and a pampering gift for the birth mom (fleece throw or small blanket, scented body lotion and soaps) and enjoy the fellowship of the Adoption STAR family. RSVP to Cherie@adoptionstar.com

OCTOBER

Adoption Informal Meeting

October 01, Thursday, 8:00 pm -10:00 pm

Adoption STAR will speak at WANNABE DADS AND MOMS - A support group for LGBTQ people exploring the possibilities of becoming parents through adoption. To register or for more information contact: abowie@gaycenter.org or 212-620-7310 x400.

Orientation Session - Buffalo area

October 06, 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.: Adoptee Circle of Experience

October 14, 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.

Financial Planning for the Adoptive Family

October 20, Tuesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Back by popular demand!

This class will introduce applying for the adoption tax credit, other adoption benefits, and financial planning for your family's future.

Blue Rose Birth Mother's Support Group Meeting

October 21, Wednesday, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

If you are a birth mother and feel you may be interested in learning more about the Blue Rose group please contact the agency directly. Pregnant women considering adoption are also welcome to attend to help gather some of the information they need to make an informed decision on whether adoption is right for them and their baby.

Information Session - Ithaca Area

October 22, Thursday, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Your adoption journey starts with thoughtful learning. Join us for a free information session at the Tompkins County Public Library, 101 E. Green St on the Commons. An Adoption STAR representative will talk about adoption options and Adoption STAR's unique mission and philosophy.

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!

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>