

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>National Adoption Month</i>	1
<i>National Adoption Day</i>	1,3
<i>Angels in Adoption Awards</i>	2-3
<i>Natalie's Library Corner</i>	4
<i>Ask Our Expert</i>	5
<i>DCP&P Featured Child</i>	5
<i>A Home for the Holidays</i>	6

NJ•ARCH Features:

- Chat Rooms
- Lending Library
- Warm Line
- Resource Directory
- Support Group Advocacy
- Speakers Bureau
- Training Workshops
- Upcoming Events



www.cafsnj.org

National Adoption Month 2012



November was a very busy time for us here at the NJ Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJ ARCH). With all the statewide events to help celebrate National Adoption Awareness Month and National Adoption Day, our staff was jumping!

So what is **National Adoption Awareness Month**?* Every November, a Presidential Proclamation launches activities and celebrations to help build awareness of adoption throughout the nation. Thousands of community organizations throughout the country arrange and host programs, events, and activities to share positive adoption

stories, challenge the myths, and draw attention to the thousands of children in foster care who are waiting for permanent families. This year's National Adoption Month initiative targeted adoption professionals by focusing on ways to use social media to build each state's capacity to recruit and retain parents for the 104,000 US children and youth in foster care waiting for adoptive families. To learn more about this theme of "Adoption in the Digital Age" log onto

www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/about/digital-age.cfm.

Here are some ideas to help celebrate adoption, during November and throughout the year: Go out to dinner as a family to a restaurant that reflects your child's ethnicity. Give a talk at your child's school about adoption. Light a candle in honor of your child's birthparents. For other ideas on how to celebrate, we recommend downloading the "30 Ways to Celebrate National Adoption Awareness Month" at www.adoptivefamilies.com/pdf/2012calendar.pdf.

*The Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, funds the National Adoption Month initiative each November through a partnership with AdoptUSKids and Child Welfare Information Gateway.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

National Adoption Day: Saturday, November 17th. National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the



children in foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. Policymakers, practitioners and advocates work to

(Continued on page 3)

SOME OF NJ'S ANGELS:



Kristine Best



Jeanne Burstein

ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARDS NEW JERSEY "ANGELS" RECOGNIZED

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's (CCAI) *Angels in Adoption™* Program provides Members of Congress the opportunity to honor an individual, couple, or organization from their district that has made an extraordinary contribution on behalf of children in need of homes. These heroes hail from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico and represent the wide spectrum of individuals involved in the adoption and foster care process. Since the program's inception in 1999, over 1,700 Angels have received this honor. CCAI also honors a select number of National *Angels in Adoption™*. On September 12th, these unsung heroes traveled to Washington DC to participate in three days of events designed to train them in using their personal experience to affect change on behalf of children in need of homes and to celebrate their hard work and dedication to the issue. Most met their NJ Congressman as well. Please meet our angels:

Kristine Best *Representative Scott Garrett*

Kristine Best, who works as a nurse in the neonatal unit at Hackensack University Medical Center, has served as a foster parent for the past 23 years. She has mothered and nursed

16 children back to health, and also adopted three of them as her own. All of the children that have stayed with Kris had have had some sort of medical issue or special need and she ensured that they were all given the best medical attention possible, as well as the love and nurturing that all children deserve. Ms. Best made the decision to become a foster parent in her late twenties and adopted her first child when she was in her thirties. Her selfless decision to care for and help children in foster care was born out of her love for children and her dedication to service.

Jeanne Burstein *Representative* *Rodney Frelinghuysen*

An adoption professional for the past 25 years, Jeannie Burstein has worked closely with all members of the adoption triad at Children's Aid and Family Services and Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children. Her great sensitivity in counseling women facing unplanned pregnancies has helped to give many the strength and courage to make the best plan for their babies. Her thoughtfulness in conducting home studies for prospective adoptive parents helps them understand the unique challenges of adoptive parent-

hood. She is also committed to counseling and helping adult adoptees who want to find their birthparents and has successfully reunited over a hundred adopted individuals with their families of origin. She is responsible for the immeasurable healing of her adopted clients whose sense of self was enhanced by the search, and she also changed the lives of many birthparents. Ms. Burstein cares deeply about her clients and is a valuable sounding board and support to all of them. She is a consummate professional in her focus on child-centered adoption practice, providing information and unbiased support so that each client can come to a decision through honest exploration and self-determination. As one birth-mother says, "Jeanne was more than supportive, kind, and compassionate during a very difficult time in my life. She contacted me after I made my adoption plan, and I told her I had regrets that I never held my baby. She spoke with his parents and they brought him back to the agency so I could hold him." A colleague adds, "The highest compliment that I give Jeanne is that I can imagine no one that I would rather have at my side coaching me in making one of the most important decisions anyone can

ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARDS

make in her lifetime: how to best parent a child."

Lisa Roberts

Senator Robert Menendez

As both an adoptive and foster mother, Lisa Roberts has made an impact on the lives of many children and youth in the foster care system in New Jersey. She has been a foster parent to children since the age of eighteen, fostering many and adopting eight as her own. Many of her children spent the first years of their lives suffering from neglect, and Lisa gave them their first experiences with unconditional love, support, stability, and a family. As a result of her dedication and nurturing, her adopted children are all thriving today. She is an inspiration to the many children she has fostered and adopted and has striven to teach them the value of community service

and the importance of giving back to those less fortunate, especially children in need in their own hometown of Camden.



Jewish Family and Vocational Service of Middlesex County Representative Frank Pallon

Founded in 1979, Jewish Family and Vocational Service of Middlesex County has offices in Milltown and Monroe Township, New Jersey, working tirelessly within the communities it serves to assist families throughout the adoption process.

JFVS and its Adoption Assistance Program, Creating New Families, provide a full spectrum of support, social services, and counseling that adoptive families and birth-parents need, before, during, and after an adoption takes place.

For more information on the Angels in Adoption program, please log onto:

www.angelsinadoption.org.

Do you know someone who may be a great candidate to nominate as an Angel in 2013? Log onto the Angels in Adoption website to find out all the details.

Congratulations again to all the Angels in NJ and around the United States! We wish you all continued success!

SOME OF NJ'S ANGELS:



Lisa Roberts and Family



NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY (CONT FROM PAGE 1)

finalize adoptions and create and celebrate adoptive families. Courts throughout New Jersey finalized adoptions during that week.

Here at NJ ARCH, we were asked by several supervisors from Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), formerly known as DYFS, to

supply NJ ARCH information and "goodie bags" for their families who finalized their adoptions. We were thrilled to be a part of such a wonderful event and look forward to it each year.

According to the *Star Ledger*, 810 New Jersey children had their adoptions finalized in

2012, 197 children during National Adoption Day. Last year, 1,096 children were adopted in New Jersey.

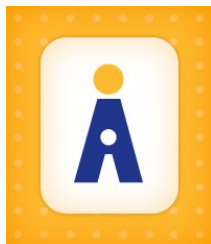
For more information on National Adoption Day, log onto:

www.nationaladoptionday.org/about.



Jewish Family and Vocational Services of Middlesex County

DID YOU KNOW?



ADOPTION LEARNING PARTNERS

www.AdoptionLearningPartners.org

"OVERWHELMED FOR THE HOLIDAYS:

AN ADOPTIVE PARENT'S GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE HOLIDAYS"



THIS FREE WEBINAR IS
AVAILABLE UNTIL
DECEMBER 31ST.

CHECK OUT THE ALP WEBSITE
TO SEE THEIR OTHER ONLINE
CLASSES AND WEBINARS

NATALIE'S LIBRARY CORNER

Hello Readers. Welcome to Natalie's Library Corner.

This month I did something a little bit different. Rather than write a book review I decided to experiment with reviewing an online "webinar" or pre-recorded online presentation. The webinar was offered by "Adoption Learning Partners" or ALP. ALP is a "web-based educational adoption resource for professionals, parents, adopted individuals, and the families that love them." The topic I chose to view was Overwhelmed for the Holidays: An Adoptive Parent's Guide to Navigating the Holidays presented by Judy Stigger, LCSW, as the timeliness of the topic caught my attention. Here are some points from this webinar:

The purpose of the webinar was to decrease the amount of stress the holidays can bring to a family. The often frantic pace of the holidays, including travel, family gatherings, holiday foods and music can challenge children beyond their capacities to cope. Children who have only recently joined their adoptive families or who have sensory sensitivities are especially vulnerable at this time of year. This can result to power struggles and children having many meltdowns.

Three important points are shared and explored in detail:

- "Understand your child's

capacity to cope."

- "Teach your children self-regulation skills."

- "Find ways to remember the birth family during the holidays."

Goals of the holiday season should be to create positive memories, to impart family values and to build good coping skills. A modest meal with a small guest list is best. The idea of having an alcohol free, informal, multi-generational family brunch, including birth and adoptive family members, could be a consideration instead of a large party that might end late at night.

Managing stimulation is key. Help children to self-regulate. Identify the things that cause stress for your child, for others and for you. Observe yourself and your child. What is the toughest time of day for your child, for others and for you? What tends to set your child off? What does your child look like when he/she is upset? Shift your thinking from won't to can't. Your child won't be reasonable when he is tired. Change to your child can't be reasonable when he is tired.

Part of managing stimulation is being consistent and being predictable. Bedtime and mealtime should be kept as close to the normal routine as possible. Preferably, nap time should also be kept close to the normal time. This would make things easier for everyone.

Rehearse what is going to happen. Explain frequently what is going to happen next. Surprises are not a good idea when you are attempting to manage stimulation. Practice shopping. Plan your shopping trip. Go to one store and buy the one item which was decided in advance. Practice through play. An Advent Calendar is a good tool to use because it involves opening one window a day and eating only the piece of chocolate that is in that window. This teaches trust, power and control, self-control and reciprocity.

Incorporate a ritual of remembering your child's other family at the holidays. Depending upon your relationship and comfort zone, call, send a card, visit or invite these people to your home. Your child remembers his birth parents, even though he might not talk about them with you.

CELEBRATE what your child contributes to your family. Take aways from this webinar

- Monitor your body's stress levels.

- Recognize that sensory sensitivity is neurological. Don't request what a child can't do.

- Shape environment and plausible activities to encourage your child's success.

- Remember your child's birth family.

- Celebrate what your child contributes to your family.

FOSTER YOUTH INTERNSHIP (FYI) PROGRAM

Know a young adult that was in foster care who may want to make a difference? Consider having them apply to the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) Foster Youth Internship (FYI) program.

Established in 2003, the program's goal is to raise awareness to federal policy-makers about the needs and unique perspectives of those who spent time in foster care.

As part of the program, CCAI organizes retreats, advocacy trainings, and various networking opportunities with experts in the child welfare field. Throughout the summer, the FYI interns spend time researching about policy issues affecting foster children across the

country. They then create a policy report that is presented at a Congressional briefing and released to child welfare advocates across the country.

As a result of the program, federal policymakers are shown firsthand the experiences of youth in foster care, and as a result go on to use their new knowledge to inspire legislative change. Interns participating in this program benefit both personally and professionally, gaining experience and skills that will bolster their careers for years to come and build a foundation to advocate for improving the foster care system.

To find out more about the program, log onto:

www.ccaainstitute.org/our-programs/foster-youth-internship.html.

Applications are due on January 13, 2013. For details on how to apply, log onto

www.ccaainstitute.org/fyiapply.html.

We hope to be reading about a New Jersey Foster Youth in 2013!

*“Working for Every Child
to have a
Safe and Loving Family”*



DID YOU KNOW?

SOME FYI SUCCESSSES:

- 100 FORMER FOSTER YOUTH HAVE USED THE FYI EXPERIENCE TO PURSUE DISTINGUISHED CAREERS
- 60 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE HEARD THE VOICES OF FORMER FOSTER YOUTH AND ARE NOW EDUCATED ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING THEIR LIVES
- 10 CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS HAVE PROVIDED FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE TO POLICYMAKERS
- 125 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN PRESENTED TO POLICYMAKERS
- 37% OF FYIs HAVE GONE ON TO PURSUE GRADUATE, LAW, AND DOCTORAL DEGREES

DCP&P FEATURED CHILD:



Quasnaya, Born 1997

Quasnaya is an engaging, funny, artistic and enthusiastic young lady with a growing positive attitude. This talented singer enjoys listening to music, reading, as well as, drawing and arts & crafts. She loves to participate in activities, such as, gymnastics, cheerleading and skating. Quasnaya's favorite foods are spaghetti, chicken and macaroni & cheese.

Quasnaya likes dogs and would like a pit bull, one day. She is doing well in school and aspires to be a lawyer in the future. She is in need of a secure environment and has a strong desire to have a patient family that will love and care for her.

For more information about Quasnaya, call 1-800-99-ADOPT.

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www.cafsnj.org



*The one-stop
resource
for those
touched
by adoption.*

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A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

For the 14th year in a row, the Dave Thomas Foundation, will be hosting the *"A Home for the Holidays."* This year, the broadcast will take place on Wednesday, December 19th at 8 pm. Each year, the Foundation works with CBS to offer a heartwarming hour-long television show spotlighting waiting older children. Dave Thomas, the Founder of Wendy's, who was adopted began the Foundation. Through the Foundation thousands of families have obtained information on adoption, especially older child adoptions. For the past

nine years, NJ ARCH, a Program of Children's Aid and Family Services, has been proud to serve as the NJ State Contact for this yearly event.



We are happy to help viewers of the broadcast and anyone else learn more about adoption and assist them through their adoption journey.

For more information on "A Home for the Holidays" or the Dave Thomas Foundation, log onto:

www.davethomasfoundation.org



*The staff of NJ ARCH
wishes everyone a happy
and safe holiday season!*