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NJ•ARCH Features:

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



www.cafsnj.org

National Adoption Month 2014



This year, National Adoption Month focuses on "Promoting and Supporting Sibling Connections." The theme pays tribute to the unique bond between siblings—it is the longest lasting relationship most people ever have, longer than the parent-child or spousal relationship. Over the last two decades, research has demonstrated the critical nature of sibling bonds and their importance for children's development and emotional well-being. In fact, some research suggests that children and young people in

foster care experience better outcomes when placed with their siblings.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 requires states to make reasonable efforts to place siblings in the same foster care, kinship guardianship, or adoptive placement and provide for frequent visits or other ongoing interaction between siblings not placed together. Some states have enacted statutes that protect sibling relationships in foster care, and a few have established laws to protect

sibling relationships after adoption. Still, many States struggle to recruit and support families that are able to parent sibling groups, and many children and young people adopted from foster care every year are separated from their siblings. For ideas on how to celebrate National Adoption Month, visit their website* or visit AdoptUSKids website to find resources to help promote and support sibling connections in adoption. [*www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/about/promoting.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/about/promoting.cfm).

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ADOPTEES BIRTHRIGHT BILL

Our summer newsletter featured a review of the NJ Birthright Bill that was passed on May 27th, 2014. We wanted to offer additional clarification of the Bill, which is now called "Public Law, 2014, Chapter 9." Some of the key elements are:

- 1- People born and/or adopted in New Jersey who are least 18 years of age will

- be able to access a copy of their original birth certificates (OBC) after Jan. 1, 2017.
- 2- Others may access the adopted persons OBC including: direct descendant or spouse of the adopted person/ adoptive parent or legal guardian / legal representative of the adopted person: an agency of the state or federal government for official

- purposes only.
- 3- The registrar may file a new certificate of birth for a child born in a foreign country or under the laws of a country other than the U.S. who has been granted an immigrant visa or successor immigrant visa by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

(Continued page 5)

OUR NJ'S ANGELS:



Carolyn Hodakowski



Assemblywoman
Sheila Oliver



Senator Joseph Vitale



ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARDS NEW JERSEY "ANGELS" RECOGNIZED

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's (CCAI) *Angels in Adoption™* Program honors individuals, couples, and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions on behalf of children in need of families. 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, almost 2,000 Angels have received this honor.

Carolyn Hodakowski *Representative* *Rodney Frelinghuysen*

Carolyn Hodakowski, a founding member of the Morris County based Concerned Persons for Adoption (CPFA), has been on the Board of Directors, Executive Board of CPFA since its inception more than 40 years ago. She and her husband have five children. They adopted two brothers with special needs from Canada and then had three biological children: two sons and a daughter with special needs. In addition to being an advocate for adoption personally and through CPFA, Carolyn also became an advocate for children with special needs and was named parent of the year by her county's Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) and became the first

PTA Special Education Chairperson in the state of New Jersey. She has been a steadfast contributor to all the work that CPFA has done to educate the public about adoption, to support those wanting to adopt, and to help find homes for adoptable children, while supporting those who have become adoptive parents. *Unfortunately Carolyn passed away a week before the Angels in Adoption events took place. Her family accepted her award posthumously.*

Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver *Representative* *Donald Payne*

In 2004, Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver sat on a committee that discussed the merits of the Adoptee's Birth Right Bill, first introduced in 1980. When the time came for comment, she spoke with deep sensitivity to the challenges experienced by persons completely cut off from members of their birth families. Asw. Oliver signed onto the bill as a co-sponsor in the next session, and when she became speaker in 2010, she approved the bill being heard in committee over the next two sessions. As Speaker of the Assembly, she posted the bill for the floor vote in 2011. After much work, the streamlined bill passed in both houses in early 2014, and an agreement was negotiated

to a mutually satisfactory final version that was signed into law by Gov. Christie on May 27, 2014. Assemblywoman Oliver contributed significantly to the ultimate enactment of legislation restoring the right to access their birth identity to adopted persons born or adopted in New Jersey.

Senator Joseph Vitale *Recommended by Senator* *Frank Pallone, Jr.*

Since 2002, Senator Joe Vitale has been the prime sponsor of legislation to restore the right of adopted persons, as adults, to have access to their original birth certificates. Senator Vitale has worked with advocates and a bipartisan group of legislators on this issue. The Bill finally passed both houses in 2011 and was conditionally vetoed by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. In 2012 and again in 2014, Senator Vitale reintroduced the legislation. Committees in each house heard the bill and sent it to the floor, where it was passed by both houses in February 2014. Following the acceptance of changes asked for by the Governor, the legislation was ultimately signed into law on May 27, 2014. Senator Vitale is recognized by adoptee advocates as the driving force behind finally making this legislation a reality.

ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARDS

William Singer

Senator Cory Booker and
Senator Robert Menendez

Mr. Singer is an exceptional adoption attorney who has been practicing family law in New Jersey for well over 30 years, concentrating on family formation. He always advocates for the best interest of the children involved in the cases he handles. Mr. Singer works tirelessly to get children out of foster care and into loving families. He focuses on providing New Jersey children with permanent stable, and loving families. Mr. Singer is truly an Angel in Adoption.

Assemblywoman

Valerie Vainieri Huttie

Recommended by Rep.
Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttie became aware of the Birthright Bill when she was elected to the Assembly in 2006 and signed on as a co-sponsor that year. In 2010, the access bill was heard in the Assembly Human Services Committee chaired by Asw. Huttie. She had carefully studied the history and facts surrounding the permanently sealed records from 1940 when the law preventing access by those involved in adoption was enacted. This year, Assembly Human Services again heard testimony on the bill and again released the bill to the floor. It was voted in the Assembly and Senate within 90 minutes and sent to the governor's office once again. On May 27, Governor

Christie signed the conditionally vetoed bill into law after much public input, thought, and conversation with prime sponsors.

Assembly Speaker Vincent

Prieto

Recommended by Rep.
Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Since 2008, Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto has been the prime sponsor of legislation introduced in 1980 that would restore to adopted adults the right to a copy of their original record of birth. The Speaker has worked very hard, facing vigorous opposition from advocacy groups opposing the legislation, and has helped his colleagues understand the importance of this becoming law. In 2011, the Birthright Bill passed in both the Senate and the Assembly and went to the governor's desk for approval. At that time, he conditionally vetoed the bill and substituted language and concepts that were advocated by the bill's opponents and which came far short of respecting adoptees' rights as citizens to the truth of their origins. Speaker Prieto kept his word by assuring that it was heard in the first meeting of the Human Services Committee and then posted it for a floor vote on the same day it went before the full Senate. Governor Christie again conditionally vetoed the bill, but the prime sponsors' concerns and rea-

sons for advocating passage were received differently than in 2011, and he publicly signed the Bill into law on May 27th.

Senator Loretta Weinberg
Recommended by Rep.
Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Since her election to the New Jersey Legislature in 1992, Senator Loretta Weinberg has championed the restoration to adopted individuals of the right to receive a copy of their original certificate of birth upon request. As a member of both Assembly and Senate committees charged with hearing the bill, and as a lawmaker who studies and listens carefully to advocates and opponents of legislation, she asks simple but deeply thoughtful questions of those testifying on the merits (or lack thereof) of particular bills. Senator Weinberg is a co-prime sponsor with Senators Vitale and Allen of P.L. 2014 Chapter 9, the newly-enacted law. Senate Majority Leader Weinberg is a legislator of integrity, intelligence, and commitment. The adoption community in New Jersey has much to thank her for in her respect for the full personhood of those who were born or adopted in the state she loves and serves.

*Congratulations to all
our Angels!*

OUR NJ'S

ANGELS:



William Singer



Assembly Speaker
Vincent Prieto



Assemblywoman
Valerie Vainieri Huttie

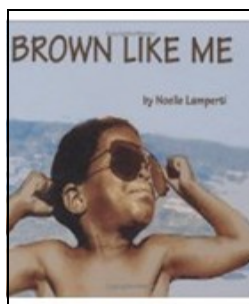


Senator Loretta
Weinberg

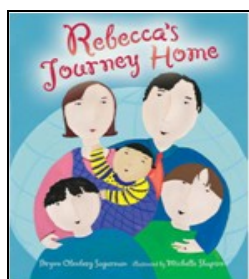
DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 4000 Books
and Articles in our
NJ ARCH Library.

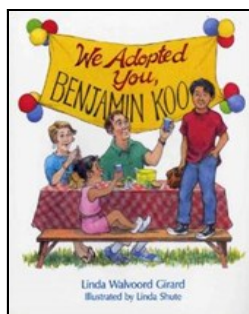
Contact NJ ARCH or Log onto
our website to see our list!



BROWN LIKE ME



Rebecca's Journey Home



WE ADOPTED YOU,
BENJAMIN KOO

NATALIE'S LIBRARY CORNER

Hello Readers, Welcome to the winter issue of "Under the Arch." I have chosen to share some delightful children's books with you on the topic of transracial adoption in this review.

Brown Like Me – by Noelle Lamperti, is a really cute book about a six-year-old African American girl who was adopted by a Caucasian family. She sees that her family members are "brown" and therefore she looks for things in her world that are brown in color. This is a lovely and affirming story with beautifully colored illustrations.

Rebecca's Journey Home – by Brynn Olenberg Sugarman, tells a story of a baby girl who was adopted from Vietnam by a Caucasian Jewish family. It shows that the two older brothers are very excited and anxious to welcome their new baby sister into their lives. The boys remark that their sister will be Vietnamese and American and Jewish. The book also reflects the increasing cultural diversity of the Jewish community.

We Adopted You, Benjamin Koo – by Linda Walvoord Girard, is the experience of nine-year-old Benjamin Koo Andrews who was adopted from Korea as an infant. Benjamin tells us that he has many questions. Through loving family discussions about his birth and adoption, Benjamin finds out what makes a real family. He says "I know that's exactly what we are."

Lucy's Family Tree – by Karen Halvorsen Schreck, addresses the situation that confronts many adopted children in school...the dreaded "Family Tree" assignment. Lucy's adoption from Mexico makes her feel as though her family is too "different." She actually asks her parents to write her a note to excuse her from the task, but they challenge her to think it over and find three families that are the "same." Lucy ends up creating a family tree that celebrates both her past and present.

Just Add One Chinese Sister – by Patricia McMahon and Conor Clarke Mc Carthey, tells the story of Claire's arrival in the United States from her birth home in China. Claire and her mother are putting together a book of memories of their first days and hours together. Claire's older brother, Conor, kept a journal as he anticipated the day his new little sister would arrive. His entries also become part of their memory book.

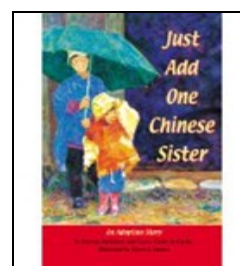
Families are Different – by Nina Pellegrini, is yet another really sweet book. This one is about a little girl named Nico who, along with her sister, Angel, was adopted from Korea as an infant by Caucasian parents. She looks a lot like her sister but not like her mom and dad. Nico doesn't like to look different. Her mom tells her that there are different kinds of families that are stuck together with a special kind of glue called love. Nico sees that families are

different. Children can live with one parent or two parents, or grandparents. They can have stepbrothers, step-sisters or parents that don't look alike. Now Nico doesn't feel so bad. She's just like everyone else; she's different.

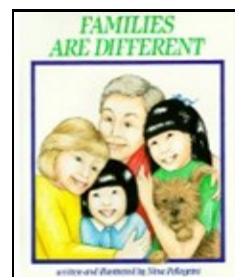
I hope you enjoy these snippets as much as I enjoyed writing them. They are all available from the NJ ARCH free lending Library.



Lucy's Family Tree



Just Add One Chinese Sister



Families are Different

ADOPTEE'S BIRTHRIGHT BILL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

4- The birth parent of an adopted person may submit a document of contact preference to the State Registrar indicating: a) "I would like to be contacted directly" b) "I would prefer to be contacted only through an intermediary. I would like the following individual to act as an intermediary" or "I would prefer not to be contacted at this time. If I decide later I would like to be contacted, I will submit a revised document of contact preference." 5- A parent who files a document of contact preference must simultaneously submit a completed form providing updated family history information which shall include medical, cultural, and social history information regarding the birth parent. A parent who requests no contact will be REQUESTED to update family history information every 10 years until the age of 40 and every five years thereafter. 6- A birth parent whose relinquished child's adoption was finalized BEFORE August 1, 2015 may submit a request for redaction of their name and other identifying information of the

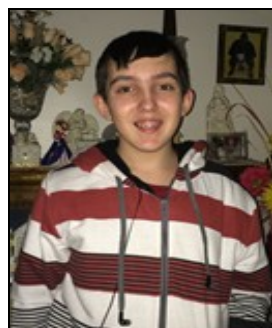
birth parent to the Office of the Registrar before Dec. 31, 2016. This request may be rescinded by the birth parent at any time, and the Registrar shall provide the identifying information concerning the birth parent to the authorized requester. For persons born AFTER August 1, 2015, the birth parent's name and identifying information will remain on the OBC. For persons adopted after this date, the adoptee will receive a complete, un-redacted long form certificate of birth. To read the law: www.njleg.state.nj.us/2014/Bills/PL14/9_.PDF.

DCP&P FEATURED CHILDREN



Meet Raheem! Raheem is a very charming and endearing young man. He just turned 14 and is proud of his teenage status. He is a reader, enjoys choose our own adventure-types of books. He likes school; is currently in 8th grade. He is a good student whose favorite subject is Math; he does need some assistance with homework. Raheem is wonderful with younger children; he is very nurturing. He aspires to be a chef and makes great chili as well as Sunday morning omelets.

Raheem needs a family who will open their hearts and home to him and consider his brother Laquan, when ready. For more information about Raheem please contact Pam Montague at 609-947-6571.



Meet Steven! Steven is an intelligent, talkative young man. Steven has just begun his freshman year of high school. Last year, his favorite class was computers, where he was able to design in-game worlds for Minecraft, a video game he enjoys. Steven's love of technology also

extends to playing video games on Nintendo DS for Xbox and going to a local arcade. Steven currently attends a special education school where his behavioral needs are able to be met. He is planning to attend a four-year college after he completes high school and hopes to eventually turn his love of technology into a career. Steven is working on learning the life skills he will need as a young adult and has identified that he will need the support of a family past his eighteenth birthday. Steven is open to different types of families and hopes to find one that will accept him for who he is. For more information, contact Minga Rosa, Adoption Exchange Specialist at 609-888-7489.

DID YOU KNOW?



NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY IS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND!

OVER 250 NJ CHILDREN AND THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE U.S. CHILDREN WILL HAVE THEIR ADOPTIONS FINALIZED THIS MONTH.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THESE FAMILIES WHO CHOSE TO GIVE THESE CHILDREN PERMANENT LOVING HOMES !

FOR MORE INFORMATION, LOG ONTO

WWW.NATIONALADOPTIONDAY.ORG



NEW JERSEY ADOPTION RESOURCE CLEARING HOUSE

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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" AND MORE

The 15th Annual "A Home for the Holidays", an entertainment special celebrating the joys of adoption, will be broadcast Friday, December 19th at 8 pm on the CBS Television Network. Each year, the Dave Thomas 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



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

www.davethomasfoundation.org.

Sunday, November 23:
Adoptive Parents Committee (ACP) 34th Annual Adoption Conference, Brooklyn NY.
www.adoptiveparents.org/2014-adoption-conference/.

November '14- May '15: Free Teen Adoption Support Group (ages 13-17): South Orange NJ, Children's Aid and Family Services. For information, call Kate Hamilton at (201)-740-7126.



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