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National Adoption Month 2015

This year, National Adoption Month focuses on the adoption of older youth currently in foster care because ***"We Never Outgrow the Need for Family."**** This theme calls attention to our nation's population of older youth in foster care who need loving, permanent families. Young people ages 15 to 18 make up five percent of the foster care population (84,778 youth in the U.S.). Creating lifelong connections for these young people is critical in helping them prepare for successful adulthood.

Compared to their peers, many young people in foster care face higher rates of dropping out of high school, unemployment, and homelessness. Despite these challenges, research on positive youth development confirms that children and teenagers have the ability to overcome traumatic experiences and thrive in adulthood when they are connected to a strong, permanent support system.

All young people need a sense of belonging; through adoption, youth are connected to a family who not only provides a sense of stability, but also help them navigate the complicated landscape of their emerging independence. These lasting connections can help youth with important life tasks, such as enrolling in higher education, finding stable housing, securing employment, and establishing healthy relationships.

To find out more about National Adoption Month and how you can help spread the word, log onto the National Adoption Month's website at www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/* and/or AdoptUSKids website at www.adoptuskids.org to find resources to help promote and support older youth adoption. Included is a list of items you can read such as, "The history of National Adoption Month", firsthand stories of young people waiting for adoption, examples of how agencies and

communities can help spread the word about Adoption Month, and the ***"We Never Outgrow the Need for Family"*** illustration on the AdoptUS Kids website. This illustration includes: *"Children need love and encouragement throughout their lives"* and depicts examples such as *"teaching her how to drive, help prepare him for his first job interview, remind her that she is always beautiful, even on her bad hair days, celebrate his achievements, and always save a seat at the table."* Their logo is: ***"Adopting a teen is the beginning of a lifetime of memories."*** Need additional information? Contact NJ ARCH for information about adoption and foster care in New Jersey.



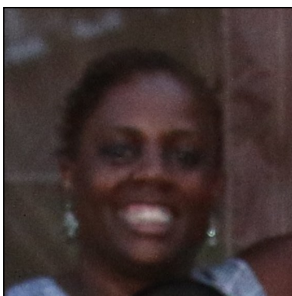
OUR NJ'S ANGELS:



Senator Diane Allen



Charles and Dorothy
Beck



Sonya Bulluck



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. The CCAI's mission is *"...dedicated to raising awareness about the millions of children around the world in need of permanent, safe, and loving homes and to eliminating the barriers that hinder these children from realizing their basic right of a family."* Since the program's inception in 1999, almost 2,500 Angels have received this honor. Here are our NJ Angels:

Senator Diane Allen

Recommended by Rep. Thomas MacArthur

Since first being elected to the New Jersey Assembly in 1996 and then to the state Senate in 1998, where she serves on the Health, Human Services, and Senior Citizens Committee, Diane Allen has been a voice for change in the field of New Jersey's adoption law. In 2014, Senator Allen helped guide a bill into law granting adult adoptees access to their original birth certificates and access to their medical histories

and the first chapters of their lives. Allen has recognized the need to restore this basic civil right to adopted adults in the spring of 2014, after years of behind the scenes advocacy by Senator Allen, both the state Senate and Assembly passed a "clean" bill by wide margins and assisted the Birthright Bill to become effective by January 1, 2017.

Charles and Dorothy Beck

Recommended by Rep. Donald Norcross

Charles and Dorothy Beck have never second-guessed their sacrifices: increased medical expenses, home remodeling and fiscal restraint, provide permanent homes to those least likely to find them and offer them a second chance at life. Dorothy's idealism originated in childhood. Her younger sister, Dawn Burns, died at the age of four because of physical disabilities. With Dawn as a source of inspiration, Dorothy decided in high school that she wanted to adopt children with disabilities. Dorothy and Charles, married in 1982, had two birth children, then began their courageous mission of adopting children with disabilities. One child is in a wheelchair and is permanently paralyzed from the waist down and another was born with severe heart issues and has had a heart transplant. Their son, adopted

at age three, was born with a rare spinal syndrome and wears leg braces. Another child, with cerebral palsy and born in Haiti, was their only international adoption. These are a few members of the diverse Beck family, which has grown to twelve children with another adoption on the way. The Beck's sacrifices and generosity have benefited some of foster care's most vulnerable children. Adopting ten children, most of whom are physically disabled or emotionally scarred, makes them true Angels in Adoption.

Sonya Bulluck

Recommended by Rep.

Senator Cory Booker

Sonya Bulluck has served twenty-six years in the Air Force Reserve with three complete combat tours. She is a mother of two, a grandmother, and an adoptive mother of five. In 2012, Sonya adopted her great niece and nephews after a family tragedy forced the children into the foster care system. Sonya has an incredible story of compassion, bravery, dedication, and love. Her mother describes Sonya best, "Sonya has given her life for her children, just as she has given her service to her country. Service before self!"

ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARDS

Randolph and Melanie McCoy
Recommended by Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Eight years ago, Randolph and Melanie McCoy considered adopting a teenager after hearing from their daughter, a school teacher, that the child had no home. Since then the couple has been certified and were suggested for foster care but decided to adopt instead. Although they could not adopt the teenager, the couple adopted three children, ages three, four, and six. In November of 2015 they will adopt three more children—two seven-year-olds and a ten-year-old. Randolph and Melanie are passionate about adoption, and they feel strongly that every child deserves to be placed in a safe, loving home in which the child will be able to learn and grow with support. Adoption has touched the McCoy family deeply, and they are dedicated to changing the lives of all the children they adopt to ensure that each of their children feels loved and has support.

Michael and Barbara O'Donnell

Recommended by Rep. Scott Garrett

Michael and Barbara O'Donnell are in the process of adopting a child from China. The child's left arm has a brachial plexus injury that leaves it immobile. The O'Donnells are working to get the child to the United States so that surgery can cor-

rect the issue. If she was not adopted, her condition will be permanent and disabling for the rest of her life.

Zara Phillips

Recommended by Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen

Over the last twelve years, Zara has presented at various conferences such as National Association of Social Workers Addictions Institute Yearly Conference, the American Adoption Congress, St. John's University on Search and Reunion, on addiction and adoption, and on the impact of adoptees having their own children. She is the author of *Mother Me, An Adoptee's Journey to Motherhood* and the documentary *Roots Unknown*, in which she interviewed a number of adult adoptees in various stages of search and reunion as well as their families. As host of Montclair TV34's Arts Up Close, she interviewed Darryl McDaniels (CCAI 2006 National Angel in Adoption) in a segment that won top honors for Best Visual Media: "Arts Up Close: D.M.C." Zara and Darryl co-wrote a song to bring awareness to open records—"I'm Legit"—which has become very popular in the adoption community. For the past five years, Zara has worked with adoptive families where teens are struggling with addiction and relationships. Her most recent work is *Beneath My Father's*

Sky, a play written and performed by Zara that debuted to a sold-out crowd at the United Solo Festival in New York in 2013 and won Best Direction Award.

Deborah Spivack

Recommended by Senator Robert Menendez

Deborah Spivack is an attorney whose practice is devoted exclusively to adoption issues in NJ, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. Clients include adoptive parents, birth parents, agencies, and children. Deborah's clients benefit from her diverse experience in representing different parties in her work—and from her unique perspective as an adoptive parent herself. She understands the needs of everyone in the adoption triad and advocates thoughtfully. Deborah is guided by the principle that every child needs at least one person who has committed to be the child's champion for a lifetime. She is a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA), and she is frequently invited to speak to audiences—adoptive parents, agency staff, judges and court staff, colleagues in the attorney community—about adoption issues.

Congratulations to all our NJ Angels!!

OUR NJ'S ANGELS:



Randolph and Melanie
McCoy



Zara Phillips



Deborah Spivack

DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 500 Books
and Articles in our
NJ ARCH Library.

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



THE GIRLS WHO WENT AWAY
BY ANN FESSLER



BIRTHMOTHERS
BY MERRY BLOCH JONES



ADOPTION REUNIONS
BY MICHELLE MCCOLM

NATALIE'S LIBRARY CORNER

Hello, Readers! Welcome to
Natalie's Library Corner!

With the recent passing of the "NJ Birthright Law" birth parents may register and elect to have their "Original Birth Certificates" released to their adult birth children by January 1, 2017. Birthparents can release their names or they can choose not to, but all birthparents must supply their medical information.

I feel that the birth mother experience would be a good topic to discuss during National Adoption Month.

A great read about birth parents is a book by Ann Fessler titled, *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade*. This book brings to light the untold stories of the 1.5 million women who surrendered their babies for adoption rather than raising them alone. The stigma and shame rendered by society was too great to bear for both mother and child in the post-World War II era. Often it was the parents of these young, unmarried, pregnant women who pressured them into giving up their babies. They were given no other options.

Society's punishment exacted a mighty toll on all of its victims, sparing no mercy. Little if any attention was paid to the lifelong effects of forcing a mother to give up her child. No compassion was offered to these young women. Ann Fessler traveled throughout the United States and interviewed over 100 women who, for the first time, bared their souls in the telling of the shocking details of their experiences.

The inequality of the sexes was never more apparent. For young men who engaged in premarital sex, their status was often elevated. For young women, the opposite was true. Abortion was illegal in most states and was cost prohibitive as well as life threatening. Young women were expelled from school, shunned by family and friends and sent away to maternity homes to bear their children alone. The advice given by the medical community was, "Have your baby!" "Go home!" "Resume your life!" "Forget!"

It has since been realized that surrendering a child is not a thing that one can ever forget. It bears no resemblance to the natural order of things. This is a life-altering experience which leaves in its wake a haunting, gnawing feeling that does not go away. Some

professionals feel that healing can only occur with the finding of the lost child.

An adoptee herself, the author begins and ends her book with her own personal account of search and reunion.

I found this book to be a timely addition to adoption literature. We, as a society, are trying to understand the human condition and to "right the wrongs" of years of injustice and cruelty. National debate continues about reproductive rights as well as search and reunion.

Other books on this subject include:

Birthmothers
by Merry Bloch Jones

Adoption Reunions
by Michelle McColm

Birth Bond
by J.S. Gediman and L.P. Brown

Birthright
by Jean A. Strauss

Beneath A Tall Tree
by Jean A. Struass

Mom, Dad, I'm Pregnant
by Jayne E. Schooler

Mother, Can You Hear Me?
by Elizabeth Cooper Allen

ACCESS TO ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES (OBC) LAW

On May 27, 2014, New Jersey enacted the Adoptees' Birthright Bill, Public Law 2014, Chapter 9, which from January 2017 will allow access to their original birth certificates (OBC) for individuals who were born in NJ and subsequently adopted or who were born elsewhere and adopted in NJ.

The Department of Health (DOH) and Office of Vital Statistics has been working on regulations for implementing the law since its enactment. In August 2015, DOH posted documents that birth parents of NJ adoptees may file with the Office of Vital Statistics to indicate their preference regarding contact. See adoptionrecords.nj.gov/arms/a/index.html for details and forms. The document of contact preference-whether direct, through an intermediary

whom the parent may name, or no contact - may be filed at *any time into the future*. A birth parent changing her/his mind at any time after filing, may file a new form reflecting that change and the adopted person will be notified.

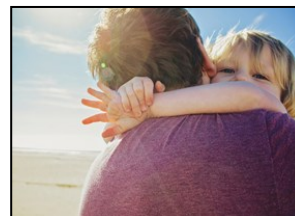
A birth parent's request for redaction of personal information about her or himself from the copy of the OBC must be filed by **December 31, 2016** to be valid. In this case, too, a birth parent may rescind the request for redaction after that date and authorize the Registrar to release an unabridged copy of the OBC to the adoptee.

In either case, birth parents filing their preference regarding contact or a request for redaction must complete a family history document

(health, social and cultural history) and send it with the form to the Office of Vital Statistics.

It is important for birth parents to be aware that some adoptive parents received copies of the order of adoption ("decree") issued when their child's adoption was finalized in court. These documents contained the names of the child and the birth parent(s). The choice of a birth parent to withhold personal information on the OBC of a son or daughter by requesting redaction of that information, cannot prevent disclosure of identifying information that may be available to the adoptee through his or her adoptive parents or by other available means. For more information visit NJ Coalition for Adoption Reform and Education (NJ CARE), website at nj-care.org or visit their NJ CARE Facebook page.

DID YOU KNOW?



NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY IS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST

OVER 250 NEW JERSEY CHILDREN AND THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE U.S. 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



DCP&P FEATURED CHILD



Edwin

Born April 2000

Innovation? Yes, innovation is in Edwin's future. He is an extremely intelligent young man who really enjoys working with his hands. In a matter of

seconds Edwin is able to take anything apart and easily put it back together. As a child Edwin was able to put complex Lego sets together. Edwin has since graduated to more advanced creations by re-purposing gaming and electronic equipment. Because Edwin is described as an introvert his style of communication is generally through something he has created, whether it be a drawing or something he has fixed. He is also fascinated with nature,

especially reptiles and insects. Spending time outdoors observing nature is another favorite activity. The ideal family for Edwin will understand his complexity while also encouraging him to find greater passions. We are seeking a strong two-parent home to appropriately advocate for Edwin. Ideally Edwin will be the only child. For more information on Edwin please call 1-800-99-ADOPT.

NEW JERSEY ADOPTION RESOURCE CLEARING HOUSE

76 SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE
SOUTH ORANGE, NJ 07079

VISIT US AT WWW.NJARCH.ORG

EDITOR:
DANA WOODS FRIED
201.740.7129

WARMLINE
877.4.ARCHNJ
OR
877.427.2465

FAX
973.378.9575

EMAIL

WARMLINE@NJARCH.ORG
LALINEACALUROSA@NJARCH.ORG
WWW.NJARCH.ORG



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resource
for those
touched
by adoption.*

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“A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS” AND MORE

The 17th Annual “A Home for the Holidays,” an entertainment special celebrating the joys of adoption, will be broadcast on Friday, December 18th on the CBS Television Network. At 9 pm EST. Each year, the Dave Thomas Foundation works with CBS to offer a heart-warming hour-long television show spotlighting waiting older children. For the first time, the show will travel across America to bring music's biggest artists together with children from foster care—and their new families. Musical talent will include Christina Aguilera, Jason Derulo, Rascal Flatts, and Ed Sheeran who will dedicate



their performances to these amazing children and their new adoptive families. Dave Thomas, the Founder of Wendy's, who was adopted, began the Foundation. Through this, thousands of families have obtained information on adoption, especially older child adoptions. For the past 12 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 information, log onto www.davethomasfoundation.org

Congratulations to Concerned Persons for Adoption (CPFA) for winning the “Drenda Lakin Memorial Award for Continuing Services to Adoptive Families” by the national organization, VFA—Voice for Adoption. VFA stated that they were particularly impressed by CPFA's annual “Let's Talk Adoption” conference coordinated by non-paid, committed volunteers
Congratulations to CPFA!



*Happy Holidays to all from
your friends at NJ ARCH !*