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NJ•ARCH Features:

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



CHILDREN'S AID
AND FAMILY SERVICES

www.cafsnj.org

TEENS NEED FAMILIES, NO MATTER WHAT



National Adoption Month is an initiative of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau with a goal to increase national awareness and bring attention to the need for permanent families for children and youth in the U.S. foster care system. Each year, the initiative focuses its outreach and awareness-raising efforts around a new adoption-related theme. For the 2017 National Adoption Month initiative, the theme "Teens Need Families, No Matter What," highlights the importance of identifying well-

prepared and committed families for the thousands of teenagers in foster care. Many of these young people are less likely to be adopted, often because of their age, and will too often age out of the system without a stable support system. Securing lifelong connections for these teens, legally and emotionally, is an urgent need and critical component of their future achievement and overall well-being. Because the importance of adopting teens has been the focus of National Adoption Month for the past two years, the Children's Bureau website

has highlighted a new aspect of this vital work. For 2017, it features valuable resources to help child welfare agencies build an effective response system, which is a vital component to ensure a strong pool of adoptive families who are equipped and prepared to parent teenagers. Check out their website at www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/about/ or additional resources at the Child Welfare Information Gateway at www.childwelfare.gov/.

ADOPTES BIRTHRIGHT ACT UPDATE

Adult adoptees continue to request and receive their "non certified" Original Birth Certificates (OBC) via the Adoptees Birthright Act that was implemented on January 1, 2017. According to NJ Vital Statistics as of early November, over 4,000 adult adoptees have requested their OBC's

and over 3,900 have received them. There have been rare instances where Vital Statistics did not have the OBC if the adoptee was born outside of NJ although the adoption was finalized in NJ. As of November 3rd, Pennsylvania adult adoptees born in PA may now request their non-certified OBC.

For information on obtaining a NJ OBC, log onto our NJ ARCH website and view the "NJ Adoptees Birthright Act" tab on the bottom of the home page. For PA OBC's visit www.health.pa.gov/MyRecords/Certificates/Pages/Adoption.aspx#.WgCS7_lo6Bd.

OUR ANGELS IN NJ:



Liza Kirschenbaum



Debra E. Guston



ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARDS NEW JERSEY "ANGELS" RECOGNIZED

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption (CCAI's) Angels in Adoption® Program honors a wide spectrum of individuals and organizations making extraordinary contributions in adoption, permanency and child welfare. Each year, the Angels in Adoption® awardees travel to Washington, D.C., to celebrate both their hard work and dedication to the issues and participate in special events designed to engage them in using their personal experience to effect change on behalf of children in need of families. Since the program's inception in 1999, over 2,500 Angels have received this honor. *Here are our NJ Angels:*

Liza Kirschenbaum

Recommended by Senator Cory Booker

Liza Kirschenbaum started an organization with no resources or infrastructure and grew it into a fully functioning, statewide operation serving thousands of formerly abused and neglected children—2,236 of whom have been adopted over the last ten years into safe homes with loving families. Before Liza laid the framework for the establishment of Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children

(CASA of NJ) in January of 2000, only two local nonprofit CASA programs operated in New Jersey. Through Liza's work at a northern New Jersey law firm, she realized that children removed for abuse and/or neglect needed better legal representation. At the time, law guardians were only statutorily required to stay on a case until the termination of parental rights phase. Liza began training attorneys to provide pro bono representation for a child from the child's removal from home all the way to the child's placement in a permanent home. In that capacity, Liza learned about CASA and the need for lay advocacy in both the court and the community. After participating on a steering committee to develop CASA of NJ, Liza left private practice (taking a 70% pay cut) to start CASA of NJ, with the vision of establishing a CASA program in every county and bringing CASA advocacy to every child who needed it. Through her work, and through years of infrastructure development, fundraising, and productive partnerships, a CASA program was established in every judicial vicinage by 2009. By 2011, CASA programs existed in every county of the state.

Debra E. Guston

Recommended by Senator Robert Menendez

Debra E. Guston has thirty years of experience in handling adoption cases in New Jersey. She has represented over 1,000 New Jersey adoptive families in finalizing their adoptions and has represented scores of birth parents as they made the difficult and courageous decision to place children for adoption. Ms. Guston worked with Angel William S. Singer, Esq., to develop the legal framework for adoptions by same-sex couples in New Jersey before New Jersey's courts recognized that the state's statutes authorized such adoptions. In May 2017, Ms. Guston assumed the post of President of the Academy of Adoption & Assisted Reproduction Attorneys, an international, credentialed association of over 465 attorneys worldwide with significant expertise in adoption and assisted reproduction law. Ms. Guston is the Chair of the New Jersey State Bar Association's Family Law Section Adoption Sub-Committee and is the lead coordinator of annual adoption continuing legal education classes for the New Jersey Institute of Continuing Legal Education. She is also the current President of the Board of Trustees of the

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ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARDS

ACLU of New Jersey and is a Visiting Lecturer at Rutgers School of Law, where she teaches Family Law.

David C. Baker

Recommended by Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen

David C. Baker served in the Vietnam War in an Army Canine Unit and later returned to Vietnam to help children there. He is currently working with a small temple in Vietnam

that cares for eight orphans—including a handicapped eight-year-old girl who was abandoned—by raising money for the children's medical and education expenses. David supports the orphanage by providing food, toys, and money. He cuts lawns in order to raise money for his projects and contributes money from his personal income (VA Pension). His wife's family in Nha Trang, Vietnam, assists in

this work as well. David started a program that pays \$100 to anyone who brings in a baby who has been found abandoned. Beyond his work specifically with orphans, David has promoted child welfare in the region by raising money to support day-cares and children's clinics.

Congratulations to all our NJ Angels!!

NJ ARCH LIBRARY DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF NATALIE HAMILTON

On October 26th family, friends, and co-workers gathered to dedicate the NJ ARCH lending library to our long-time warm line worker and librarian Natalie Hamilton who passed away in December 2016. As mentioned in the last NJ ARCH newsletter, Natalie started with NJ ARCH in its inception in 2003 and virtually single handedly created our wonderful free lending library by reviewing, ordering and categorizing the over 1500 books and videos. Natalie wrote the "Natalie's Library Corner" in this newsletter where she wrote about 50 articles reviewing over 150 books. Natalie knew just about every book in our library and loved the



library space, therefore we knew that dedicating the library in her memory was the right thing to do. This dedication ceremony included agency VP's, past and present agency Directors, supervisors as well as a few adoption community leaders. In addition, family gathered from California, Canada and locally to join us for this dedication. The ceremony

was heartfelt and filled with gratitude for our Natalie who dedicated the last 13 years to Children's Aid and Family Services, she served the NJ ARCH and KinKonnnect Programs by being the informed, competent voice behind the warm line calls, the knowledgeable librarian who knew each book and the friendly face behind many exhibit tables around the state.

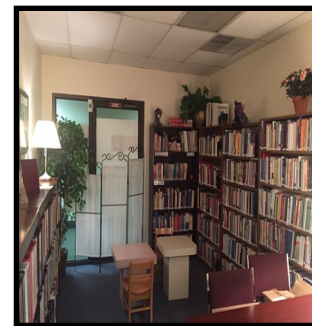
We miss our good friend and colleague and know that she will never be forgotten.

Welcome to the "*The Natalie Hamilton Memorial Library*."

DID YOU KNOW?

**LOOKING FOR
POST-ADOPTION
COUNSELING?
CONTACT NJ ARCH FOR A
FULL LIST OF PRIVATE
AGENCIES AROUND THE
STATE THAT OFFER FREE
COUNSELING FOR
FAMILIES WITH ADOPTED
AGES 5 TO 21;
INCLUDES DOMESTIC AND
INTERNATIONAL
ADOPTIONS
CALL 877-4ARCHNJ
(877-427-2465)**

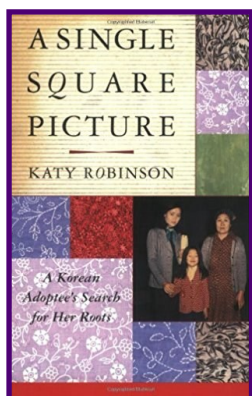
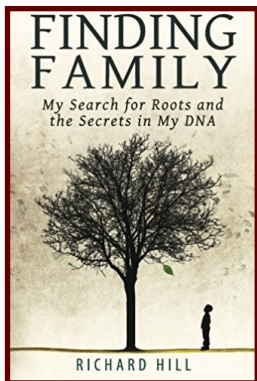
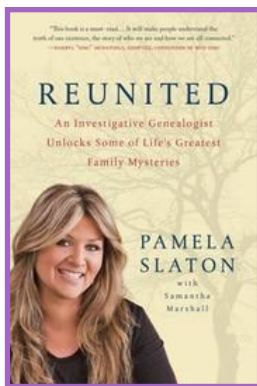
WWW.NJARCH.ORG



DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 1,500 Books
and Videos in our
NJ ARCH / KinConnect
Library.

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



NATALIE'S LIBRARY CORNER

Welcome to Natalie's Library Corner!

Now that the Adoptees' Birthright Act has passed in New Jersey, many adult adoptees have successfully received copies of their original birth certificates. Having this bit of their history is so momentous, yet often brings more questions and a more immediate need to continue their search. The search and reunion process in adoption brings about an array of feelings and emotions for all members of the adoption triad. These books highlight the process and provide readers with insight on the process, emotions, and potential outcomes.

Reunited: An Investigative Genealogist Unlocks Some of Life's Greatest Family Mysteries by Pamela Slaton is a collection of true stories detailing some of Ms. Slaton's most prevalent cases. Ms. Slaton is an investigative genealogist, who is herself an adult adoptee. Her successes have been chronicled on the O Network television show, *Searching For*. Ms. Slaton resides and works in New Jersey. Her book begins with her own search and

difficult reunion and continues with her journey to help others. She states, "These are the stories of adoptees and their search for themselves. The impulse to search is about the basic human need to connect with those who gave you life. At a minimum it offers closure. It fills in the missing pages in the story of our lives . . . beyond that, the search teaches us something profound about humanity and blood ties that bind despite decades of separation."

Finding Family: My Search for Roots and the Secrets in My DNA by Richard Hill is an autobiography detailing the author's lifetime search for his birth family. Able to piece together much of his life story through his own detective work, it isn't until he utilizes DNA testing that he is able to put all the pieces together. Mr. Hill's story is suspenseful and fascinating. The final section on DNA brings to light an understanding of how DNA truly works in the search process.

A Single Square Picture: A Korean Adoptees Search for Her Roots by Katy Robinson is the author's quest to find her birth family in South Korea.

Adopted at the age of seven, Ms. Robinson has some memories of her birth mother and a single photo taken the day she left South Korea. She returns to South Korea as an adult and begins a search. She stated, "I wanted once and for all, to piece together the two halves of myself and create one continuous story that was my life – something that I assumed came naturally to everyone else not adopted". During her first trip she finds her birth father and a connection to her past. She returns again for a year filled with cultural understanding, more birth family contact, and a better understanding of who she was, and who she has become.

All these books and many more on search and reunion can be borrowed from our library. Are you thinking about searching? We can help you find the resources that you need. Give our warm line a call at: 1 (877) 4ARCHNJ or 1 (877) 427-2465.

- Cynthia Lapidus BSW, CSW

A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The 18th Annual "A Home for the Holidays," an entertainment special celebrating the joys of adoption. This year the special is called, "Home for The Holidays with Josh Groban" and will air on Tuesday, December 19th on CBS at 8:00 pm EST. Each year, the Dave Thomas Foundation

works with CBS to offer a heartwarming hour-long television show spotlighting waiting older children. This entertainment special with other artists celebrate families whose lives have been changed through adoption. AHFTH features uplifting stories of adoption from foster

care and raises awareness of this important social issue. 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 information, log onto www.davethomasfoundation.org

DCP&P FEATURED CHILDREN



Josh Born 8/20/2011

Josiah is a bundle of energy in constant motion. He has powerful upper body strength and loves exercising. In his residence he is able to self-propel down the corridor in his wheelchair while the brakes are set on stop! He recognizes the caregivers in his life and loves to be in an area with peers and staff who truly enjoy this little guy. At school Josiah has been described as 'the most popular' student, beloved by his teachers and aids. He has learned some sign language and is currently acclimating to new hearing aids. It has been

medically assessed that he is unable to hear; however his caregivers sense a reaction to some sounds. Josiah enjoys community outings to the barber, to church services and his personal favorite, sitting in a Walmart shopping cart.



Mealani Born 2/2012

Mealani is a stunning girl whose winning personality and expressive eyes captivate everybody she meets. A lover of toys and cartoons, she can frequently be found playing with her Barbie dolls or stuffed animals. Mealani is an active and motivated

student who loves school and interactive teaching toys. A quick learner, she is learning to use sign language to communicate and is asserting her independence by propelling herself in her wheelchair without assistance.

Mealani is diagnosed with respiratory disease and a swallowing delay. She requires a feeding and breathing tube, but she is making great progress with regard to breathing on her own and staff is hopeful that she will eventually no longer need the breathing tube.

Mealani would flourish in a home setting with a stay-at home parent who is flexible and willing to learn.

For more information on Josh or Mealani, please call 1-800-99-ADOPT.

DID YOU KNOW?



NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY IS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH

ABOUT 200 NEW JERSEY CHILDREN AND THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE U.S. WILL HAVE THEIR ADOPTIONS FINALIZED IN NOVEMBER.

APPROXIMATELY 900 CHILDREN WILL BE ADOPTED THROUGH DCP&P IN 2017!

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THESE FAMILIES WHO CHOSE TO GIVE THESE CHILDREN A FOREVER HOME!



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www.cafsnj.org



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

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ADOPTION TAX CREDIT

Tax season is right around the corner. Do you know about the Adoption Tax Credit? This federal tax credit can be claimed if you adopted a child from foster care, private adoption in the United States, or an International adoption, as long as the child was under age 18 at the time of adoption. You also qualify if you adopted a relative's child, but not for a step-parent adoption. The tax credit is also available for expenses incurred during a failed adoption in the United States and for a non-finalized adoption in the United States. A tax credit is better than a tax deduction, as it is subtracted from the amount you owe on your taxes. How much you will be

able to use will depend on your income and tax situation. If your adjusted gross income is below \$241,920 you



may be eligible to receive either the full credit or partial credit. The full credit is \$13,570 per child. If you adopted from foster care and receive a subsidy, your child, according to tax laws, is considered a special needs adoption. For a special needs adoption, you can claim the federal tax credit even if you had no adoption expenses. For all other adoptions, you can only receive credit for qualifying

adoption expenses (these can include attorney's fees, agency fees, homestudy costs, court costs, travel, and more). For more information on the tax credit, be sure to check out NACAC (North American Council on Adoptable Children's website at www.nacac.org/help/adoption-tax-credit/.

Looking for a conference this fall? Check out the Adoptive Parents Committee (APC) conference on Sunday, November 19th from 8 am—5 pm located at St. Francis College, 180 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201. For more information visit, www.adoptiveparents.org.