

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>National Adoption Month and Day</i>	1
<i>NJ's Angels in Adoption</i>	2
<i>OBC Milestone</i>	3
<i>Olympic Athletes Shine</i>	4
<i>Natalie's Library Corner</i>	5
<i>DCP&amp;P Waiting Children</i>	5
<i>Conferences and More</i>	6

### NJ•ARCH Features:

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



CHILDREN'S AID  
AND FAMILY SERVICES

[www.cafsnj.org](http://www.cafsnj.org)

## NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH: EVERY CONVERSATION MATTERS



For over two decades, National Adoption Month has been promoted and celebrated every November in communities across the country. Many national, state, and local agencies, as well as foster, kinship care, and adoptive family groups will help educate their communities through programs, events, and activities that help raise awareness about the thousands of teens currently in foster care who are waiting for their own permanent, loving families.\*

National Adoption Month is an initiative of the Children's Bureau which focuses on outreach and awareness-raising efforts on new adoption-related themes to help support professionals working to find permanency for children and youth in foster care.

This year's theme is "**Every Conversation Matters.**" Teenagers who are in foster care are more likely to age out without strong or stable family support.

Securing lifelong connections for teens in foster care, both legally and emotionally, is a critical component in determining their future achievements, health, and well-being.

This year's National Adoption Month website includes resources and tips to help child welfare and legal professionals develop and support both formal and informal opportunities for young people to share their voice and perspective. Hearing from youth who have experienced foster care, whether they've been reunited with family, achieved permanency with an adoptive family, or entered adulthood independently, can help educate communities and shape child welfare and adoption processes and policies. Their stories can inform recruitment practices, training resources for families, and other permanency support services. For more information on National Adoption Awareness month and to download resources, please visit

[www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/)

The highlight of National Adoption Month is National Adoption Day, which this year occurs on Saturday, November 20th. This gives the country the opportunity to celebrate children adopted throughout the year and particularly during the month of November.

NATIONAL



**ADOPTION DAY**

Celebrating a Family for Every Child

In 2020, celebrations took place virtually with over 700 adoptions finalized throughout NJ from the Division of Children and Families (DCF). This year it is estimated that about 500 adoptions will be finalized.

Thinking about fostering and/or adopting? Contact NJ ARCH at 877-4ARCHNJ (877) 427-2465 or e-mail us at [warmline@njarch.org](mailto:warmline@njarch.org) and we would be happy to share information.

## ANGELS IN ADOPTION:

### Meet our National Angels!



**Hoda Kotb**



**Jenny and David Marrs**



**Tatyana McFadden**



## ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARDS

### NEW JERSEY "ANGEL" RECOGNIZED AT VIRTUAL GALA

On October 20, 2021 the Congressional Coalition on Adoption (CCAI's) Angels in Adoption® Program honored individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions in adoption, permanency and child welfare. As one of Washington, D.C.'s most inspiring events, this program brings awareness to the millions of children around the globe who don't have families to call their own. The Angels in Adoption program celebrates individuals, families, and organizations from around the country that support vulnerable children. This year's event was held virtually once again.

The Angels in Adoption Gala honored over 75 angels from 40 states, including four National Angels Honorees. This outstanding group included Tatyana McFadden (U.S. Champion Athlete: 20-time Paralympic medalist, 24-time major marathon winner, track and field world record holder), Jenny and Dave Marrs (home renovation stars on HGTV's Fixer to Fabulous), and Hoda Kotb (co-anchor, NBC News' TODAY; co-host, TODAY with Hoda & Jenna).

#### ***Here is our NJ Angel:***

#### **Elizabeth Occhipinti**

*Recommended by Senators Robert Menendez & Cory Booker*

Elizabeth Occhipinti and her husband have five children including two adopted from Korea and they are licensed foster parents living in Somerset County, NJ. Through their experiences they realized how big the need was for prepared and supported foster and adoptive families, and how few resources existed to meet that need in the local community. They took action, some might say radical action, to establish Miriam's Heart and build this nonprofit from the ground up to serve Central NJ, and beyond. Through Elizabeth's dedicated volunteer leadership over the course of many years, Miriam's Heart has created an array of resources to ensure that more children realize their preciousness as part of prepared and supported families. Her tireless work has resulted in the development of adoption grants, a network of experienced adoptive parents and professionals to come alongside families in process, education scholarships, support groups for parents and kids, respite care events and resources, trauma training, increased adoption and foster care awareness in the community, and a program to provide practical help (clothing, furniture, toys, supplies, etc.) to county resource families. As a result of the partnerships that she has developed with private agencies, the faith-based community, the county

DCP&P, and other organizations such as Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO), Show Hope and Care Portal, Miriam's Heart is a go-to resource, providing unparalleled leadership in the community as an advocate for foster care and adoption. She demonstrated remarkable dedication to the mission in the face of the pandemic, innovating fresh ways to advocate for kids and support families, and ensuring crucial funding needs were met so that critical resources for those most at risk would be protected. Elizabeth's years of dedicated volunteer service, helping hundreds of families throughout Central NJ, set her apart as an exceptional advocate and voice for foster and adopted children. Visit her site at [www.miriamshheart.org/](http://www.miriamshheart.org/)



*Congratulations to our NJ Angel and all the Angels in Adoption!*



Angels in Adoption®

## ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE MILESTONE

January 2022 will be a milestone month for many adult adoptees. This time will mark the five-year anniversary of the implementations of the **Adoptees Birthright Act, Public Law 2014, c. 9** allowing adult adoptees born and/or adopted in New Jersey to request an uncertified copy of their Original Birth Certificate (OBC) from the NJ Office of Vital Statistics. Response has been very good with the total number of requests completed since 2017 now over 6,700. Looking to seek information on what to do next after



receiving a copy of your OBC? Contact NJ ARCH and/or the NJ Coalition for Adoption Reform & Education (NJCARE) for resource information on support groups, search specialists, mental health professionals and more. For more information about the Act, or to download the forms, please

visit our website at [www.njarch.org](http://www.njarch.org) and select "NJ Adoptees Birthright Act," or go directly to the "New Records System for Birth Parents, Adult Adoptees" at [www.nj.gov/health/vital/adoption](http://www.nj.gov/health/vital/adoption). Birthparents who wish to share their contact information and/or medical history may also use this last website.

Want more information? Contact NJ ARCH at 877-427-2465 or e-mail us at [warm-line@njarch.org](mailto:warm-line@njarch.org).

## OLYMPIC ATHLETES SHINE\*

To make it to the Olympics takes fierce dedication and training on the athlete's part and a huge commitment from the family. There were many victories and medals for Team USA at the summer Olympics. Throughout the history of the Olympics, there have been many athletes whose families were formed through adoption. This year's summer Olympics included several of those athletes, some of whom you may not be aware.

Simone Biles, the most decorated U.S. gymnast and one of the greatest gymnasts of all time, was adopted out of foster care as a young girl by her maternal grandfather and his wife.

Jordan Windle, a member of the U.S. diving team, was born in Cambodia and adopted at 18 months of age by a single man in California.

Yul Moldauer, a member of the U.S. men's gymnastics team, was born in South Korea and adopted as a baby by a couple in Colorado.

Paige McPherson, the only Taekwondo competitor in U.S. history to make it to the Olympics three times, was born in Abilene, Texas and placed for adoption when she was four days old.

Track and field athlete and world record holder for the women's 100 meter hurdles, Keni Harrison, grew up in a large family with ten other children, eight of them having also been adopted.

These amazing athletes certainly shined brightly in the Tokyo Olympics! They are truly an inspiration to all young people – work hard and follow your dreams!

We now look to February when more athletes will descend on Beijing to compete in the 2022 Olympic Winter Games. Like the summer games, there will surely be athletes whose families were formed through adoption. We will have to tune in to learn more about each of the athletes, and cheer on all these men and women who represent Team U.S.A. and make us proud!



\* Contributing article by Janet Pollio from Concerned Persons for Adoption. To learn more about this NJ adoption support group please visit [www.cpfanjanj.org](http://www.cpfanjanj.org).

## DO YOU KNOW?

**NJ ARCH OFFERS FREE TRAINING WORKSHOPS FOR ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUPS!**

E-mail [dwfried@njarch.org](mailto:dwfried@njarch.org) to discuss how we can do a virtual training for your group!

-Telling your Child Difficult History

- Trans-Racial Adoption and foster care

- Basics of Special Ed. In NJ

- Adoption and Foster Care in the School

- Foster and Adoptive Care Situations: Workshop to Help Foster Parents Deal with Difficult Behaviors

- The Adopted Child's Journey: Questions Along the Way

- Who Am I? The Complexity of Teen Identity and Adoption

\*\*\*\*\*

*Have a question about adoption, foster care or kinship care?*

*We are here to help you.*

Contact our warm line at: 877

-4ARCHNJ

(877-427-2465)

or e-mail us at

[warmline@njarch.org](mailto:warmline@njarch.org)



## DID YOU KNOW?

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



Contact NJ ARCH or log  
onto our website to see  
our list at  
[www.njarch.org/library](http://www.njarch.org/library)

Or Call  
1-877-427-2465

We can send you the books  
for free with an envelope  
to send it back to us for  
free!

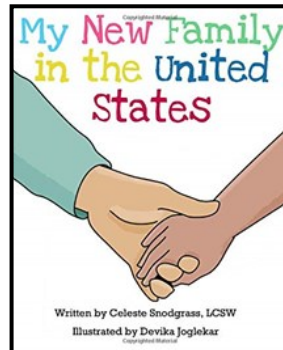
*Touched by  
Kinship Care?*

Visit the Kinship Care  
Clearing House at  
[www.kinkonnnect.org](http://www.kinkonnnect.org)



## NATALIE'S LIBRARY CORNER

### Welcome to Natalie's Library Corner!



**My New Family in the United States** by Celeste Snodgrass, LCSW is this month's featured book. With beautiful illustrations by Devika Joglekar, the book asks questions that are on the minds of all internationally adopted children when they first arrive in their new homes. Written for children and teens, this book helps the reader understand the meaning of adoption and what their new life in the United States will be like. Each page asks a question that an adoptee may have and then details an answer in an all-inclusive and nonjudgmental manner. Some questions are complex like *What does it mean to be adopted?* *What is a family?* While other questions are more pragmatic like *Where do families live?* *Where will I sleep?* and *What are the bathrooms like?* The author helps children to understand the routines and culture of family life in the United States including what the school day will look like, what are common rules and expectations in homes and com-

munities, as well as holidays and events. Children also learn what the differences are between living in the United States compared to their home country. This is a wonderful book to help your child engage in conversation and feel comfortable asking questions. This particular version was written for a child born in China, but most of the book is universal to all international adoptions. In the NJ ARCH library, we also have a Spanish version of the book for children born in Colombia called, **Mi Nueva Familia en los Estados Unidos**.

Be sure to check out both at <https://njarch.org/library/>.



**Mi Nueva Familia en los Estados Unidos** es el libro que recomendamos este mes. Tiene hermosas ilustraciones por Devika Joglekar, el libro formula preguntas que están en las mentes de todos los niños adoptados internacionalmente cuando arriban a sus nuevos hogares. Escrito por niños y adolescentes, este libro ayuda al lector a entender el significado

de la adopción y lo que serán sus vidas en los Estados Unidos. Cada página tiene una pregunta que un niño adoptado pueda tener y luego los detalles en la respuesta de una manera amplia y sin prejuicios. Algunas preguntas son complejas como, ¿Qué significa ser adoptado? ¿Qué es una familia? Mientras otras preguntas son más pragmáticas como, ¿Dónde viven las familias? ¿Dónde dormiré? y, ¿Cómo son los baños? La autora ayuda a que los niños entiendan las rutinas y cultura de la vida en familia en los Estados Unidos incluyendo cómo es un día en la escuela, cuáles son las reglas comunes y expectativas en las casas y las comunidades, tanto como los eventos y festividades. Los niños también aprenderán las diferencias entre la vida en los Estados Unidos comparado con su país de nacimiento. Este es un libro excelente para ayudar a su niño a entablar una conversación y sentirse cómodo haciendo preguntas. Esta versión en particular fue escrita por un niño nacido en Colombia, pero la mayor parte del libro es universal para todas las adopciones internacionales. En la biblioteca de NJ ARCH, nosotros también tenemos una versión del libro para niños nacidos en la China llamado, **My New Family in the United States**.

Asegúrese de buscar ambos libros en: <https://njarch.org/library>.

## DC&PP WAITING CHILDREN



**Dominic**  
**Born April 2011**

Dominic has an infectious laugh and smile. He is very charming, affectionate, and talkative. He does extremely well with adults who can provide one on one attention. Dominic enjoys reading and word search puzzles words in his leisure time. He is a high energy young boy who enjoys playing soccer, basketball and football outdoors with his peers. Dominic is a creative thinker and can put together puzzles and build amazing Lego creations. There is something unique about Dominic, his colorful imagination with an interest in Superheroes. Currently, Dominic would do best in an adoptive home as the youngest and or only child and a home without domestic pets. Dominic responds very well to attentive female caregivers, so this would be an important member of any potential adoptive family considering him.



**Kaylee C.**  
**Born May 2005**

Kaylee is an outgoing, outspoken, and high-spirited 16-year old. Kaylee is slow to warm when meeting new people; however, she is affectionate and talkative when she is comfortable. Kaylee recently found a new passion in equine therapy. Because of her love of animals, Kaylee desires to be a veterinarian as a career path. Kaylee enjoys cooking, one of her signature breakfast dishes include a steak & egg sandwich with her secret sauce, pancakes and cornbread. An avid Eagles fan, Kaylee loves all things Philadelphia. She enjoys staying active primarily by swimming and horseback riding and hopes to find a family who shares these interests. Although she does not always enjoy school, Kaylee is motivated to do well, advocating for herself and working hard to meet her goals. Kaylee desires be a part of a family that is willing to love and accept her as their own. She would like a family with both older and younger siblings, and that has dedicated family time and is not overly strict.



**Wendell**  
**Born March 2007**

Wendell is a friendly and energetic 14-year-old. He has been described as an outdoorsy young man who enjoys camping, swimming, biking, and exploring nature. Wendell is said to be a great helper in the kitchen who enjoys cooking his own food and loves cake baking. Wendell enjoys expressing himself musically and artistically. He enjoys playing the drums and takes great pride in his intricate drawings. Wendell is athletic, frequently engaging in basketball and karate. He is also a gamer and enjoys video games. This multifaceted youth is looking for a forever family who will support his abounding talents and interests.

*For more information on Dominic, Kaylee or Wendell, please call 1-800-99-ADOPT.*



## DID YOU KNOW?



**For those who  
adopted  
internationally:**

Even if you have a certificate of citizenship for your child, their status may not be listed correctly with social security.

To check, call  
Social Security  
Administration  
at  
**1-800-772-1213**

For more info:  
[www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5doc.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5doc.htm)

This also may be a good time to review your child/adult adoptee's paperwork including:

- Final Adoption Decree
  - Birth Certificate
  - Current Passport
  - Naturalization / Citizenship papers
- Social Security Card with the updated Citizenship status (if obtained prior to obtaining citizenship).

# NEW JERSEY ADOPTION RESOURCE CLEARING HOUSE

76 SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE  
SOUTH ORANGE, NJ 07079

VISIT US AT [WWW.NJARCH.ORG](http://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](mailto:WARMLINE@NJARCH.ORG)  
[LALINEACALUROSA@NJARCH.ORG](mailto:LALINEACALUROSA@NJARCH.ORG)  
[WWW.NJARCH.ORG](http://WWW.NJARCH.ORG)



[www.cafsnj.org](http://www.cafsnj.org)



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

## DISCLAIMER

While New Jersey Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJ ARCH) or Children's Aid and Family Services makes every effort to present accurate and reliable information, neither NJ ARCH nor Children's Aid and Family Services guarantee the completeness, efficacy or timeliness of such information. In addition, reference herein to any specific product, process, service, organization, or viewpoint does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation or favoring by NJ ARCH or Children's Aid and Family Services.

## CONFERENCES AND MORE

Looking for a conference, support group or other adoption-related events? Check these out!

### Spence Chapin Services for Families and Children

offers many events for pre- and post- adoptive families. For more info visit: <https://spence-chapin.org/events-calendar/>

**Holt International** offers many services and adoption information sessions. For more info visit:

[www.holtinternational.org/pas/coaching-and-education/](http://www.holtinternational.org/pas/coaching-and-education/)

### Wide Horizons for Children

offers many adoption information sessions and post adoption services. For more info visit: <https://whfc.org/adoption/>

**November 19—21, 2021:** Adoptive Parents Committee (APC), 41st Annual (Virtual) Conference. Visit:

[www.adoptiveparents.org/annual-conference](http://www.adoptiveparents.org/annual-conference)

### Save the Date!

**March 5, 2022:** 39th Annual "Let's Talk Adoption" (virtual) conference. Sponsored by Concerned Persons for Adoption (CPFA) and Rutgers University, [www.cpfanjer.org](http://www.cpfanjer.org)

**March 25-26, 2022:** 10th Annual Biennial Adoption Initiative, sponsored by St. Johns University and Montclair State. <https://adoptioninitiative.dryfta.com/index.php>

**June 15-17, 2022:** National Council on Adoption Conference, Indianapolis, MN. <https://adoptioncouncil.org/ncfa-conference/>

Interested in e-learning and other virtual training? Check out NJ ARCH's Virtual Support section on the NJ ARCH website!

If you have an adoption, foster care and/or kinship-related question, contact our warm line at: 877-4ARCHNJ (877-427-2465) or e-mail us at [warmline@njarch.org](mailto:warmline@njarch.org). We are here to help you!



*The staff at NJ ARCH wishes you and your family a happy and safe holiday!*