

ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2017

INSIDE

November: National
Adoption Month

FEATURE STORY

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PLUS

The latest updates,
encouragement, events,
and more!





POST ADOPTION SERVICES

At New Life Family Services, we realize that adoption is a lifelong journey and different adoption related needs can arise throughout the years. New Life Family Services is committed to offering you as much support as possible to assist you in seeking answers to your questions, searching for your child's birth family, reconnecting after you have lost contact, or exploring opportunities for new levels of openness. Here are some of the many services we can offer:

- Passing correspondence between adoptive family and birth family
- Coordination of in-person contact
- Ongoing assistance with an adoptive relationship
- Obtaining information from your file
- Search and reunion services
- Resources and support

To learn more about any of these services, call or email Rebecca at 612-746-5670 or anfinrud.rebecca@nlfs.org.

EST. 1973

MINNEAPOLIS
University Campus
2900 University Ave SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414
612.623.8378

SAINT PAUL
Sun Ray Shopping Center
2109 Old Hudson Road
Saint Paul, MN 55119
651.730.4342

RICHFIELD
6517 Nicollet Ave. S.
Richfield, MN 55423
612.866.7643

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
1515 East 66th Street
Richfield, MN 55423
612.866.7643

ROCHESTER
902 North Broadway
Rochester, MN 55906
507.282.3377

WWW.NLFS.ORG

Dear Adoptive Families,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. My name is Rebecca Anfinrud and I am the Post Adoption and Administrative Social Worker at New Life Family Services.

I came to New Life in July 2013 as a Pregnancy Support Social Worker in our St. Paul office where I counseled women and men facing unplanned pregnancy situations. I helped to provide support, resources, and education, as well as worked with birth parents through the adoption process.

In 2016, I made the transition to my role as the Post Adoption and Administrative Social Worker. I am here to support adoptive families, birth parents, and adoptees at any stage of the post adoption journey.

So far in my time as the Post Adoption and Administrative Social Worker, I have worked with a number of amazing individuals and families, each having a unique adoption story. I love getting to know each person and learning how adoption has impacted their life. I have seen joy, pain, and resolution throughout the adoption journey and I am excited to continue to support others no matter what stage they are at in this process.

My hope is that as you face challenging situations, need support or resources, or simply want a listening ear regarding your adoption, you will feel comfortable reaching out to me.



As you find yourself looking for post adoption or adoptive family support, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Anfinrud, LSW
Post Adoption and Administrative Social Worker

MEET THE REST OF THE ADOPTION UNIT



JENNIFER PATRICK, LICSW DIRECTOR OF ADOPTION

Jennifer has been with New Life for more than 20 years. Having worked with birth parents in the pregnancy support unit prior to moving into her current position, Jennifer has the expertise and experience to serve both adoptive families and birth families well.



TIFFANY GEARY, LSW ADOPTION/INTERIM CARE SOCIAL WORKER

Tiffany came to New Life in 2009. She works with adoptive families through every step of the adoption process from the the home study all the way through finalization. She also works with our foster families keeping their license up to date and helping them feel supported during each placement.



BRITA WEBER, LSW ADOPTION SOCIAL WORKER

Brita returned to the adoption unit in 2016 but has over 15 years of previous adoption experience at New Life. She works with adoptive families through every step of the adoption process providing support and encouragement along the way.

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH HOW WILL YOU SHARE YOUR STORY?

One of my favorite things about being connected to New Life is when I introduce myself to someone and share where I work. I love seeing the spark in their eye, the corners of their mouth turn up into a smile, and the joy radiating in their face as they say, “We adopted through New Life. New Life helped us grow our family.”



What an honor it is to be a part of so many stories and families. I am truly humbled every time someone shares their adoption story with me. They are beautiful and difficult stories that are full of redemption and love.

We at New Life are so blessed to be used by God as He builds and creates families. You are the reason we do what we do. You and every other client who has walked through our doors – whether they are looking to build their family, or use our parenting education program, they have taken a pregnancy test, had an ultrasound, or needed an STD test. New Life exists to walk with families on their journey and provide hope and the love of Jesus.

As an adoptive family, you are our New Life “Alumni,” members of our New Life family. Our hope is that you will share your story with your circle of influence. Take the opportunities God grants you to honor your child’s story, but to also share what God has done in your family and how New Life was a part of that story.

There is so much power in a story. We are connected by hearing other people’s experience, by learning from them, being inspired by them, and being called into action by them.

November is National Adoption Month. What are you planning to do in your family and with your church or friends to celebrate adoption this year?

Our hope is to continue to expand our reach and serve the families of Minnesota with the hope and love of Jesus.

Callie Wayt, J.D.
Director of Development

2018 ADOPTION EVENTS

EMPOWERED TO CONNECT

New Life, in conjunction with Evergreen Church, is hosting a simulcast of the Empowered to Connect Conference in April 2018. The Empowered to Connect Conference is a two-day event presented by Show Hope and the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development.

Come experience practical teaching in a safe and supportive community as we work to equip families, churches, and professionals to better serve children impacted by adoption and foster care. Featuring Trust-Based Relational Intervention® methods developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross from the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, this conference helps bring attachment and connection in families.

When: April 13th-14th, 2018

Where: Evergreen Church, 2300 E 88th Street, Bloomington, MN 55425

Cost: Suggested donation of \$30 per individual or \$40 per couple.

To register, email anfinrud.rebecca@nlfs.org or call 612-746-5670.

POST ADOPTION SEMINAR: TRIAD PANEL

The triad panel includes all members of the adoption relationship: the adoptee, adoptive parents and birth parent(s). You’ll hear the birth parent(s) share about their journey in making an adoption plan, the adoptive parent’s story in what led them to pursue adoption, and the adoptee’s experience in this unique relationship.

Tuesday, November 13th, 2018

7:00pm-9:00pm

New Life Family Services

1515 East 66th Street, Richfield, MN

MEET BRITTANY

AN ADOPTEE STORY



My Gotcha Day

April 24, 1990 was my Gotcha Day (a term used to describe the anniversary of the day a new member joins a family through adoption). A quick 55 days after I was born, my world changed in the best possible way. I never could have imagined all that life would bring me and let me experience.

I was adopted through New Life by my parents Lee and June in 1990, but before my adoption was fully finalized, my adoptive dad, Lee, died of a heart attack. My adoptive mother had to then fight to keep me as a single mother, which was not readily allowed at that time. By the grace of God, she was able to legally adopt me on October 4th, 1990.



In 1992, my mother remarried to a man named Mark, who I had already viewed as my dad. On June 13, 1993, he legally adopted me and my older brother Brandon, who had also been adopted through New Life Family Services.

“Chosen,” not Adopted

I grew up knowing I was adopted. It was no secret. I mean, I looked like Pocahontas compared to the rest of my family, so it’s not like they could hide it! Having another sibling that was adopted too made the sibling bond closer, since we had that in common.

My brother Brandon and I were proud of being adopted, (we preferred the word, “chosen”), yet still were so proud to bear the last name of our mommy and daddy. I remember in court when my dad adopted us that my brother and I were over the moon excited to become one of the “Scott’s.”

I understood what adoption meant at a young age. I was taught how Jesus cared for all people, especially those who didn’t have a place to go or needed love. I always viewed adoption as such a selfless act versus a selfish act. To be able to put your child ahead of your needs, feelings, and plans is beautiful, selfless, and sacrificing. I think because my parents taught me this, my whole outlook on adoption was so positive and I was never angry or hurt by the notion of being “given up.”

I never once questioned my adoptive parents love for me (except for those few times during my teen angst years, but I digress). I always felt loved and accepted no matter what I did. No matter what I said. No matter what.

A Heart of Empathy

I had a closed adoption up until I was eighteen. That was honestly okay with me, as I was always told that my birth mother was very young and not quite ready to be a momma yet. I understood at an early age why I was placed for adoption and my parents did a phenomenal job in explaining all the limited information they knew.

My birth mother was just 15-years-old at the time, and was contemplating having an abortion. I can’t even fathom trying to raise a child at fifteen. Today, at age 27 even I am uncertain if I am raising my child correctly half the time! It would have been so much “easier” for her to abort me versus going through nine months of pregnancy and then giving me to another family to raise.

“It would have been so much easier for my birth mom to abort me versus going through nine months of pregnancy and then giving me to another family to raise.”

At that time, everyone in my birth mother's life told her they didn't think she could handle being pregnant. New Life helped change her mind, to realize she can do this, she can choose life and place her child for adoption.

A Family Reunited

I was fortunate enough to meet both my birth mother, Jennifer, and her family, and my birth father, Chhoeum, and his family shortly after I turned eighteen. My adoptive parents were so very supportive of this and selfless in encouraging me to meet them.

I was pretty scared to open myself up to the possibility that my birth parents might choose not to meet me. I have seen the devastation of that happening first hand, so I went in guarded and apprehensive. After notifying my birth parents that I wanted to meet them, I quickly heard back that both sides of my birth family wanted to meet me. I cried and felt both nervous and excited at the prospect of meeting them.

I met my birth mother, Jennifer, and her family first, then my birth father's family a few weeks later. It's funny because my parents kept pointing out how similar our personality traits, expressions, and physical appearances are. I never had that kind of comparison growing up, so it was fun to find out "whose eyes i had", etc.



Brittany and her husband, Andrew, puff painted t-shirts to wear at New Life Family Services' Walk for Life declaring the biggest truth in her life, "I wouldn't be alive if not for New Life."

I went from having two siblings to having eight. Yep, eight. I have so many aunts, uncles, grandmas, grandpas, and cousins. It is just the best. Thank goodness for social media, because although we all live in the same state, we are hours apart. Through technology, we can stay connected with each other, which is such a blessing.

I married my elementary school sweetheart Andrew (cue the awes) in 2013 and it was amazing to have my entire birth mom's family, birth dad's family, and my foster parents present at my wedding. I cried seeing them all stand when the parents were honored. It took each and every one of them for me to get to where I am today. We just recently found out that the social worker who facilitated by adoption in 1990 attends the same church as my mom! The way God orchestrates things is amazing, isn't it?

Flash forward a couple years to 2016. I was told in my early teen years that I probably wouldn't be able to have kids. Did you hear that? That was God laughing. I had that hanging

over me for years and was intent on adopting as many children as legally possible since I just wanted to be a mommy. Well, when we were looking into becoming foster parents, I found out I was pregnant. My miracle baby! Only by the grace of God were we able to have a feisty son named Aiden in February 2016. Both my birth mother and adoptive mother were able to be with me that day, which was incredibly special.



Brittany invited her birth mother to join her at the hospital for the delivery of her son.

"If it hadn't been for New Life Family Services, it is quite possible I would not be alive."

Although our plans for fostering have been postponed, that is still our vision. We will adopt. However and whenever that opportunity comes about, we are ready for it. Babies and kids of all ages need love, and we have plenty to go around. If we can change the course of a life like my parents did with me, that is a challenge I am so willing to accept.



Brittany's son, Aiden, today.

If it hadn't been for New Life Family Services, it is quite possible I would not be alive. I am so thankful for their outreach to expectant mothers in crisis. Had they not been listening and obedient to what God had called them to do all those years ago, I probably wouldn't be here, and that is a sobering thought. They are helping so many women, children and families. I am thankful and proud to be able to share my story with and through them. To God be the glory. •

ADOPTIVE FAMILY E-NEWSLETTER

Would you like to stay connected with New Life more than just through our yearly newsletter? Well, you are in luck! We are sending an e-newsletter that will go out quarterly. This e-newsletter will include information about upcoming events, seminars and trainings, new resources, and adoption stories.

If you are interested in subscribing, please contact Rebecca with your email address to be added to the list. Call her at 612-746-5670 or email her at anfinrud.rebecca@nlfs.org.

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Even if you correspond with the birth family directly, it is still important to keep current contact information on file with us. We would love to communicate by email, but having a current phone number and address on file is also a good idea.

Here's why:

- Sometimes a birth family reaches out to us if they can't get ahold of you.
- If you are working through a change in your relationship with the birth family, sometimes it is helpful to talk it through with us or someone else who has been there.
- We can provide you with resources that would be helpful to you on your journey.
- Hearing from you helps us know how to meet your needs and the needs of future adoptive families.
- We want to keep you in the loop and send you information, newsletters, and invitations to New Life seminars and events.

Update your information in one of two ways:

1. Online at www.nlfs.org under the Adoption menu, Post Adoption, then scroll down to Update my Information on the left hand side.
2. Email your updated contact information to adoption@nlfs.org

TAKE OUR SURVEY

Here at New Life we are exploring more options to support adoptive families throughout their adoption journey.

We have created a quick survey to help us know how you would like to be supported. We would love to have your input! By completing this survey you will have the option to be entered into a drawing for one of three \$25 Target gift cards.

Simply follow the link to take the survey.

www.surveymonkey.com/r/NLFS-adoptivefamilies

EMBRYO ADOPTION

A unique life-affirming way to grow families

by Jennifer Patrick, MSW, LICSW
Director of Adoption

Since our adoption services began in 1980, we have facilitated over 800 adoptions, including our first embryo adoption in 2012. Staying true to our values and beliefs that life begins at conception, here at New Life we have taken hold of this new and unique way to grow families.

We know that you, as adoptive families, may get questions about adoption from people looking to adopt, so it may be helpful for you to have a little information about this unique way for families to adopt.

So what is embryo adoption?

In pursuit of building a family, many couples today go through In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) treatments when they are not able to conceive otherwise. After this process, couples may have remaining embryos stored and need to make decisions about what will happen to these embryos. One option is to make these embryos available for another family through embryo adoption.

Because we affirm that life begins at conception, we believe that assisting families in the transfer of these embryos through embryo adoption is a way to both support the next step of giving life to these embryos, and assist a couple who is interested in growing their family.

How does embryo adoption work at New Life?

New Life Family Services works in collaboration with National Embryo Donation Center (NEDC) in Tennessee and the Snowflakes Adoption Program, a division of Nightlight Christian Adoptions in California, to provide embryo adoption for families seeking to adopt embryos for implantation.

New Life completes the embryo adoption home study that follows a similar process to traditional adoption home studies. The adopting parents and the donating parents are then matched by choosing one another through NEDC or the Snowflakes Program. They can choose to meet each other and have ongoing contact just like in traditional open adoption.

If you or someone you know would like more information about embryo adoption, visit our website or call us at (612) 746-5658.

If your child is 18...

This message is for you! Due to your child's newly acquired "adult" status, New Life is obligated to honor him/her with the same confidentiality we maintained with you during your home study and waiting process, and over the years since you adopted your son or daughter.

We are requesting your child's current contact information so we can be in direct contact with him/her regarding questions, possibilities for speaking engagements, applicable seminars, support networks and other opportunities that may arise.

Contact our Post Adoption Social Worker with this information. Better yet, encourage your son or daughter to contact Rebecca directly.

RECOMMENDED ADOPTION RESOURCES

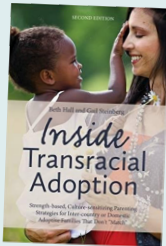
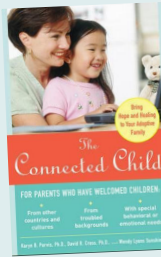
Articles, books, websites, and more



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

THE CONNECTED CHILD: BRINGING HOPE AND HEALING TO YOUR ADOPTIVE FAMILY By Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross

This book is written by the same woman who helped create the Empowered to Connect conference. It is a hope-filled resource for parents who have welcomed children into their family through adoption or foster care.



INSIDE TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION: STRENGTHS-BASED, CULTURE-SENSITIZING PARENTING STRATEGIES FOR INTER-COUNTRY OR DOMESTIC ADOPTIVE FAMILIES THAT DON'T “MATCH” By Beth Hall and Gail Steinberg

This book is written by two mothers who both adopted children transracially. Together, they also founded Pact, An Adoption Alliance, to serve adopted children of color and their families. This is a great resource throughout the adoptive parenting journey!

THE OPEN-HEARTED WAY TO OPEN ADOPTION: HELPING YOUR CHILD GROW UP WHOLE By Loring Holden with Crystal Hass

This book offers tools and insight into how to have an open adoption. It covers common open-adoption situations and how real families have navigated typical issues successfully.



COME RAIN OR COME SHINE: A WHITE PARENT'S GUIDE TO ADOPTING AND PARENTING BLACK CHILDREN

By Rachel Garlinghouse

This book talks about adopting and parenting transracially. A great resource for families considering transracial adoption, families who have adopted transracially, adoptees, birth parents, and professionals. It includes extensive resource lists, discussion/reflection questions for adoptive parents, and advice and research from experts in the adoption field.



CHILDREN'S BOOKS

ADOPTED LIKE ME: MY BOOK OF ADOPTED HEROES By Ann Angel

What do Moses, Marilyn Monroe, and Nelson Mandela have in common? They are all accomplished people and they were all adopted! “Adopted Like Me” features 20 stories of adoptees - men and women of diverse races, nationalities, and talents who have made outstanding achievements in their lives.

ABC, ADOPTION & ME - A MULTI-CULTURAL PICTURE BOOK By Gayle H. Swift

“ABC, Adoption & Me” expresses children’s complicated feelings in a way that makes them feel normal and makes it easy for them to discuss adoption with their families. This book celebrates the blessing of family and addresses the difficult issues as well. Exuberant, multi-cultural illustrations depict a wide range of families.

BLACK GIRLS CAN: AN EMPOWERING STORY OF YESTERDAYS AND TODAYS

By Rachel Garlinghouse

This book parallels ten courageous Black women with today’s little girl, demonstrating how the courageous actions of yesterdays can help today’s young girls shine.

LOCAL RESOURCES

MN ADOPT HELP Line

MN ADOPT provides services to support all members of adoption relationships. The HELP phone line is an excellent resource for adoptive parents and birth parents who are looking for resources including therapists who understand adoption.

www.mnadopt.org • 612-746-5137

NATIONAL RESOURCES

ADOPTION LEARNING PARTNERS

Adoption Learning Partners is an online adoption education community. For a fee you can complete an online seminar to gain education on a wide variety of adoption topics including many post adoption matters. Some of you may have used this resource as a part of your home study education, but they add webinars often, so there may be something new there just for you!

www.adoptionlearningpartners.org

THE DONALDSON ADOPTION INSTITUTE (DAI)

Their mission is “To provide leadership that improves adoption laws, policies and practices - through sound research, education and advocacy - in order to better the lives of everyone touched by adoption.” Check out what they are up to and how you can be involved on their website

www.adoptioninstitute.org

THE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES MAGAZINE

This publication has a website full of resources as well as an online community of other adoptive families. They offer support to families at every stage in the adoption process and beyond.

www.adoptivefamilycircle.com

RECOMMEND A RESOURCE

Do you have a favorite book or resource that has helped you in your adoption journey? Share your favorite adoption resource with us. Email your resources to adoption@nlfs.org.



and its programs



First Care Pregnancy Center

Our four pregnancy center locations offer free pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, STD testing, decision making counseling, and parenting education classes.

Learn More:

www.firstcaremn.com



Conquerors

The Conquerors program provides support for women who have had at least one abortion and are struggling with the pain of that experience. The program provides a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere where one can receive support while gaining freedom from the issues their past abortions may be causing.

Learn more:

www.conquerorsafterabortion.org

www.nlfs.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Laugh for Life

featuring the original creators of Triple Espresso

Rochester: February 9, 2018, Autumn Ridge Church

Twin Cities: February 10, 2018, Grace Church

Doors at 6:00 p.m., Show at 7:00 p.m.

Birth Mother Dinner

Friday, May 11, 2018

Calvary Church, Roseville, MN

Registration at 6:00 p.m.

Dinner & Program at 6:30 p.m.

Encourage your child's birth mother to join us! More details at www.nlfs.org.

Walk & Run for Life

Summer 2018, TBA

This family-friendly event includes a 5k Fun Run, Kid's Race, 2 mile walk, and an optional lunch. It's a great way to support New Life and adoption!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY REPRESENT LIFE IN YOUR CHURCH

New Life Family Services is seeking volunteer Church Ambassadors to help represent New Life within your church.

As a Church Ambassador you will help represent New Life to your church, keeping them informed about upcoming events at New Life as well as creatively finding ways to engage your church and church ministries in the work that God is doing here.

You can help host a Baby Shower, coordinate our Baby Bottle Fundraiser for your congregation, gather a team to walk in our Walk for Life, host a Diaper Drive or find another creative way to partner that reflects the heart and mission of your church.

To serve in this way, email: churches@nlfs.org.

SHARE YOUR STORY

New Life has a variety of ways that we use past stories to share the beauty and uniqueness in adoption. If you are interested in sharing your adoption story on a panel, in written form, or one-on-one with someone thinking about starting the adoption process, please contact us to learn about upcoming opportunities.

POST ADOPTION CONTACT

Rebecca Anfinrud
anfinrud.rebecca@nlfs.org
(612) 746-5670

CONNECT WITH US:



vimeo