



**new life**  
ADOPTIONS

Fall 2018

## **ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWSLETTER**



### **INSIDE**

Unveiling New Life  
Adoptions

### **PLUS**

The latest updates,  
encouragement,  
events, and more!

### **FEATURE STORY**

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## POST ADOPTION SERVICES

At New Life Adoptions, we realize that adoption is a lifelong journey and different adoption related needs can arise throughout the years. New Life Adoptions 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:

- Exchanging 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 [rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org](mailto:rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org).

**EST. 1980**

SOUTHERN MN  
902 North Broadway  
Rochester, MN 55906  
(507) 550-1561

TWIN CITIES  
1515 East 66th Street  
Richfield, MN 55423  
(612) 746-5658

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

Adoptive Families,

It has been another eventful year in the Post Adoption Department. I am honored to work with such amazing people in many different stages of the adoption journey. My favorite part about working with adoptive families, adopted adults, and birth parents is the stories that I get to hear.

Throughout my years at New Life I have heard many remarkable stories, and I am always amazed at how different each story is. No matter how similar the circumstances, there are no two stories that are alike; each person has a unique perspective. I am also encouraged by the impact that sharing a story can have. It is both healing for the one sharing their story as well as inspiring for those who hear the story.

As an agency we are working towards sharing more of these stories in a variety of settings to help encourage others. Many people are fearful of sharing their story, but once they take the first step it is often empowering and healing. With November being National Adoption Month, consider this a great opportunity to share your adoption story with others.

Here are a few of the opportunities available through New Life Adoptions:

### 1. Public Speaking

Share your story with groups (small or large) ranging from high school classrooms, adoption event panels, church congregations and small groups, or fundraising events.

### 2. Printed Marketing Materials

Allow your story to be used in our printed marketing materials to help educate and inform the community about our services. Marketing materials may include brochures, newsletters, annual reports, etc.

### 3. Online Articles

New Life regularly publishes stories on our website and shares them through social media and email marketing. These online stories allow your story to have a greater reach and impact, providing comfort, insight, and encouragement to those in the midst of their adoption journey.

### 4. One-on-one

Use your experience to help another family in the midst of the adoption process. It can be helpful for those in the middle of the home study and waiting time to hear from others who have been through what they are experiencing.

Feel free to give me a call or send me an email, I'd love to connect with you and hear your story!



Rebecca Anfinrud  
Post Adoption Social Worker  
612-746-5670  
[rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org](mailto:rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org)

## November is National Adoption Month!

Help New Life Adoptions celebrate the beauty of adoption during the month of November! Post on Instagram and Facebook using the hashtag #NewLifeAdoption-SMN. Also, like and follow our New Life Adoptions Facebook page and Instagram account.

National Adoption Month is also a great time to show your support for New Life Adoptions by hosting a fundraiser and/or crowdfunding on social media. It is an easy and fun way to help us support the current families we are honored to serve. Email us at [info@newlifeadoptionsmn.org](mailto:info@newlifeadoptionsmn.org) to get started.



# INTRODUCING NEW LIFE ADOPTIONS



One of the things that has always made New Life unique is the comprehensive nature of our services, specifically our adoption services. In the past 38 years, New Life has been a part of building hundreds of families through adoption and providing adoption services to women and men who decide adoption is the best option for their child. As we look ahead, we are excited to solidify our commitment to offering adoption as a program of New Life Family Services with expanded services and a new brand.



**by Jennifer Patrick, LICSW**  
**Director of Adoption**

New Life's philosophy of adoption has two primary focuses:

## 1. Comprehensive Services

We provide adoption education and support that goes above and beyond the minimum requirements for adoption. Supporting birth parents throughout the process, we provide free decision making counseling and offer parenting services for those who choose to parent. We also provide a two-worker model so birth parent(s) and adoptive families both have an advocate throughout the entire adoption process.

## 2. Families for Children rather than Children for Families

We provide birth parents with Christian adoptive families who are ready to adopt rather than seeking out children for families to adopt. We go above and beyond in supporting the birth parents who work with us by providing holistic support throughout the process.

## A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Since 1980, a lot has changed both in the adoption services offered through New Life and within the culture as a whole. Most adoptions have moved from being closed to having some level of openness. There is less stigma surrounding unplanned pregnancies in general and adoption plans are less of a secret as a result. In addition, there has been a decline in domestic infant adoption nationwide over the past 10 years. Local agencies are making difficult and strategic decisions in order to adapt. Some agencies are merging or partnering together, while others have closed. In addition, the internet has become an integral part of how birth parents find adoptive parents, sometimes with little or no assistance from an agency.

**At New Life, here are just a few of the changes we have made since 1980:**

- We have moved from providing closed adoptions to primarily open adoptions.
- A post-adoption department was created in the 2000's to meet the ongoing needs of our families, birth parents, and adoptees as requests from birth parents and adoptees looking to open their closed adoptions increased.
- Within the last decade, we have added embryo adoption to our growing list of services as the number of embryos

available for adoption from IVF treatments continues to increase.

- We have increased our utilization of technology to help birth parents find adoptive families with the addition of a website which provides waiting family profiles online, helping to facilitate connections more easily. Technology advances also help birth parents and adoptive families keep in touch following the adoption.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As we continue to respond to the changing landscape of adoption, we have adapted to meet the needs of adoptive families and birth parents while ensuring our services are relevant and competitive.

Over the past few years, we have restructured the way our adoption team is staffed, hiring social workers who are solely dedicated to work with expectant parents (previously these social workers were also serving pregnant and parenting clients in our centers). Now with a dedicated adoption team of two Expectant Parent Social Workers and two Adoptive Family Social Workers, we are able to meet the needs of both birth parents and adoptive families very well. This positions us to grow the number of adoptions each year. In addition, New Life Family Services hired a Director of Client Services to oversee the pregnancy and medical areas of the organization, which has allowed me to focus solely on building and growing the adoption program as the Director of New Life Adoptions.

## MEET OUR ADOPTION WORKERS:



**Melanie Waller, LSW**  
**Expectant Parent Worker**



**Caitlin Johnson, LSW**  
**Expectant Parent Worker**



**Brita Weber, LSW**  
**Adoption Worker**



**Tiffany Geary, LSW**  
**Adoption/Interim Care Worker**

Once this solid staffing structure was in place, the next natural step was to focus on our branding and marketing to encourage growth in the adoption program. Over the summer, we began the process of creating a new name, logo, and brand identity for our adoption program (special thanks to the team at Malley Design for their work).

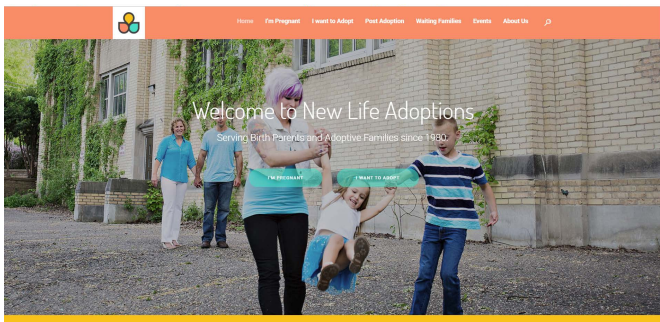
We are excited to introduce New Life Adoptions! New Life Adoptions will continue to operate as a program of New Life Family Services, alongside two existing programs, First Care Pregnancy Center and Conquerors.



and its programs



In addition to a new brand identity, we have launched a new website dedicated solely to our adoption services. Birth parents will find information and support along with approved waiting families to choose from. Adoptive families will find resources, training and support as they prepare for adoption. In addition, post adoption resources will be available for all members of the adoption triad in the years following placement.



A preview of our new website. Visit us at [www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org](http://www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org).

**We invite you help us celebrate our new identity by sharing your adoption story with us!**

We would love to hear how God has worked in you, your child(ren), and your extended family of adoption. Learn more about sharing your story at [www.newlifeadoption-smn.org/share-your-story](http://www.newlifeadoption-smn.org/share-your-story).



/newlifeadoptionsofmm



@newlifeadoptionsofmm

## ADOPTIVE FAMILY E-NEWSLETTER

Would you like to stay connected with New Life Adoptions more than just through this yearly newsletter? Well, you are in luck! New Life Adoptions sends a quarterly e-newsletter with information about upcoming events, seminars and trainings, new resources, and adoption stories.

To subscribe to the e-newsletter, please contact Rebecca with your email address at 612-746-5670 or [rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org](mailto:rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.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.
- We are expanding our post adoption services to better address the needs of adoptive families and birth parents. Hearing from you helps us know what direction to go as we continue to expand.
- We want to keep you in the loop and send you information, newsletters, and invitations to New Life seminars and events.

**You can easily update your information in one of two ways:**

1. Online at [www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org](http://www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org) under the Post Adoption menu.
2. Email your updated contact information to [info@newlifeadoptionsmn.org](mailto:info@newlifeadoptionsmn.org).

## 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.





# Reciprocal Love

## AN OPEN ADOPTION STORY

### THE JOURNEY TO ADOPTION

Kathy and her husband, Rich, always envisioned having a family of their own. After trying to conceive for many years, with countless medical visits, tests, loss and grief, Kathy believed she did not have the heart to continue down that path. Kathy and Rich began to consider adoption to grow their family, but didn't know where to start. They discussed this option with some dear friends who referred them to New Life Adoptions.

"The whole thing was full of prayer; doors opening and closing. We approached our journey in the same way, God closed and opened doors for us. We had the mindset to be okay with wherever God sent us. We didn't know what New Life meant for us, but we were open to whatever God had planned."

As Kathy and Rich began the adoption process with New Life Adoptions, they always held their focus on the next step in front of them. After every visit with their social worker, they read and prayed through all of the information they received. Little did they know that the day they prayed over their application and mailed it in to New Life Adoptions was exactly nine months before their daughter Hannah was born.

### CHOOSING LIFE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Hannah's birth mother, Inga, had learned of her pregnancy following a difficult divorce. Already a single mother to a four-year old daughter and unsure how she could add a new baby to the mix, Inga found herself at New Life for support. "As I watched my baby move on the ultrasound monitor, there was no denying that choosing life was the right choice, but I also strongly felt that this was not my baby to raise. This child was a gift God was allowing me to give to a family that so desperately needed and wanted a child of their own."

Inga hoped she would be able to choose a family before Christmas in order to bless them with the news of being chosen as a gift on her favorite holiday. When she got down to the last profile book in the stack, she knew she had found the family for her child.

"When I read their profile, my heart skipped a beat. They started it out with a story of 'someday.' How they would someday take their little one to the zoo. As I read this story, I knew that these were the parents of my little girl. Rich and Kathy radiated the love of Christ just from their pictures."



*Inga pictured with her birth daughter, Hannah, now 10 years old.*

**"This child was a gift God was allowing me to give to a family that so desperately needed and wanted a child of their own."**

"In December of 2007, our social worker set up a meeting with Inga. I remember writing down her name, Inga, and looking at it. I was so emotional when I realized this was all



real. This was a real person with a real child. I was putting myself in her shoes when I looked at her name. How hard it must be to make that choice. I remember constantly thinking, ‘How could I ever thank or repay this woman enough for what she is choosing to do?’”

Rich and Kathy’s first meeting with Inga and her parents was comfortable as they easily connected with one another. Kathy described their relationship as, “a rose quickly opening.”

**“How could I ever thank or repay this woman enough for what she is choosing to do?”**

Inga remembers that meeting in detail. “Instantly, I knew that they were my baby’s parents. The excitement and nervousness I saw in their faces was a total reflection of how I felt. As we shared our stories, it was more and more evident that God had prepared our families for each other. From having attending the same small church, somehow without meeting each other, to having quite a few mutual friends, God’s hand was evident. There was no denying that this was the family for me.”

In fact, soon after that meeting, Inga called her social worker with her decision adding, “Tell them Merry Christmas.”

### THE GIFT OF OPENNESS

Hannah was born in March of 2008. Kathy reflects on that special day, “I don’t think I was emotionally prepared for the moment when Rich handed Hannah to me, and I don’t think a person can be prepared. When you receive the gift of a human being from another human being, it really is indescribable. I held overwhelming admiration for Inga, she filled a hole in our hearts. We reciprocate our love for her and the gift of our daughter with our open adoption relationship.”

Ten years later, Rich and Kathy are still very close to Inga, “Our relationship with Inga has grown incredibly. I consider her my friend, even though she’s 19 years my junior. I know I can trust her and I can call her anytime. I just love her.”

Inga has found hope through her story. “Hannah, is my healing grace. She has helped me heal from a painful past and turn to see what my God has for me with a hope that

**“We reciprocate our love for her and the gift of our daughter with an open adoption relationship.”**

could only be a result from the blessings of her life.”

“I met a wonderful man who loves me, we are now married, and we have been blessed with another child together. Through all of the changes in my life, Rich and Kathy have been a constant. They have become wonderfully close friends. We share the joys and the hurts while learning how to navigate our stories together. Hannah is a beautiful, confident girl, who has the privilege of knowing her siblings.”

Kathy describes Hannah, now 10 years old, as soft hearted, funny, and intelligent. “She’s in an accelerated program and loves to read, which she developed from both nature and nurture. Hannah has given her heart to Christ and grows closer to Him every day.”



*Inga pictured with her oldest daughter, husband, and youngest child.*

After going through the adoption process, Kathy has a great admiration for all birth parents. “In order to participate in either side of adoption, you need to have courage and trust. In my perspective, the birth parents are incredibly courageous. It was never about me, it was about a baby. To entrust other people with your child takes strength and love.”



*Kathy and Rich with their daughter, Hannah.*

Inga adds, “I see my future being intertwined with Rich and Kathy for the rest of my life. We are family. God has brought us together in unimagined ways that have blessed all of us. Each season of life triggers moments of grief and joy that are a bittersweet part of our adoption story. I am confident that God has gifted us to each other as we move and experience this awesome, beautiful life together.” •

*Special thanks to Alison Lea Photography for volunteering her time and talent to provide photos for this story.*



## RECOMMENDED ADOPTION RESOURCES

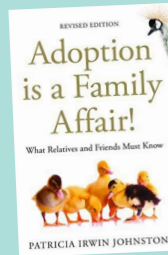
Articles, books, websites, and more



### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

#### **ADOPTION IS A FAMILY AFFAIR!: WHAT RELATIVES AND FRIENDS MUST KNOW** By Patricia Irwin Johnston

This is a great resource to share with family and friends about topics in adoption to help them understand your journey better. Many people have questions about the adoption journey simply because they don't know how it all works. This book will help explain those pieces so they can understand what you may be experiencing.



#### **WITH ONE HEART: A GUIDE TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BIRTH AND ADOPTIVE MOTHERS IN OPEN ADOPTION** by Kristen A. Morton

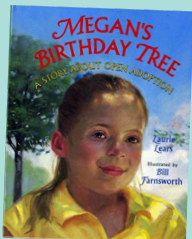
This is written from the perspective of a birth mother. It addresses the lasting relationships that can develop within adoption between an adoptive mother and birth mother. It outlines how to help build this relationship.

#### **GROWING UP BLACK IN WHITE** By Kevin D. Hofmann (2010)

This book's author, Kevin D. Hofmann, is a black man who was adopted by a white family. He shares about his experiences and struggle with race while not fully fitting into the box of "black" or "white." He tells about the tensions he felt and his journey to find his identity.



### CHILDREN'S BOOKS



#### **MEGAN'S BIRTHDAY TREE: A STORY ABOUT OPEN ADOPTION**

By Laurie Lears and Bill Farnsworth

This is a story about a young girl, Megan, who was adopted. Her parents are still in contact with her birth mother. It talks about how Megan cherishes this relationship, but also the tension she feels when her birth mother decides to move to another town.

#### **ROSIE'S FAMILY: AN ADOPTION STORY** by Lori Rosove

This book is about a puppy who was adopted into a dog family. Looking at her from the outside, she looks like she does not fit in, but she learns about how she really does belong in this family even though she may look different.

#### **DID MY FIRST MOTHER LOVE ME?: A STORY FOR AN ADOPTED CHILD**

by Kathryn Ann Miller

This book lovingly addresses the feelings many adopted children have in wondering if their birth mother loves them. The mother in the story is able to share a letter with her daughter that explains her birth mother's loving decision to place her into this family. This story brings reassurance that the child's birth mother really does love her, and wants the best for her.

## 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.

**mnadopt.org**  
**612-746-5137**

### **EVERMORE COMMUNITY**

Evermore Community was started by a few adoptive parents. Their vision is "to be a community of like-minded, Christ-centered people who are committed to being the hands and feet of Jesus." Evermore Community offers counseling and life coaching, support groups, education, and respite care for adoptive and foster families.

**evermorecommunity.org**

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### **ADOPTION LEARNING PARTNERS**

For a fee you can complete an online seminar to gain education on a wide variety of adoption topics including many post adoption matters. They add webinars regularly, so check back often.

**adoptionlearningpartners.org**

### **THE DONALDSON ADOPTION INSTITUTE (DAI)**

Although now closed, the Donaldson Institute's groundbreaking research and educational materials are still available online.

**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.

**adoptivefamilies.com**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Post Adoption Seminar: Adoptive 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 lead them to pursue adoption, and the adoptee's experience in this unique relationship.

**Tuesday, November 13th • 7:00pm-9:00pm**

1515 East 66th Street, Richfield, MN 55423

**RSVP** to Rebecca by Wednesday, November 7th

### Laugh for Life

featuring comedian John Crist

**Rochester: February 1st, Autumn Ridge Church**

**Twin Cities: February 2nd, Grace Church**

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

### Birth Mother Brunch

**Saturday, May 11**

Calvary Church, Roseville, MN

Encourage your child's birth mother to join us!

### Empowered to Connect Conference

This live simulcast features 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.

**Friday, April 5th & Saturday, April 6th**

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (both days)

1515 East 66th Street, Richfield, MN 55423

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

### Walk & Run for Life

**Summer 2019, 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!

### FOR REGISTRATION & INFO

[rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org](mailto:rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org)

612-746-5670

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

New Life Adoptions is a program of New Life Family Services.



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## LAUGH FOR LIFE

featuring John Crist

**FEBRUARY 1ST & 2ND**

Bring your family and laugh  
with us as we support life.

**TICKETS AT:  
NLFS.ORG**