



new life
ADOPTIONS

BIRTH PARENT NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020

Serving birth parents and adoptive families since 1980.



It has now been just over a year since we launched our new name, logo, and website and the response has been very positive. Our updated branding has allowed us to reach new people while spreading the word about adoption.

Will you help us continue to boost our visibility?

1. If you haven't already, go check out our New Life Adoptions of Minnesota social media accounts and follow us. You can find us @newlifeadoptionsofmn on Facebook and Instagram.

2. Also consider "recommending" or reviewing us on our New Life Adoptions' Facebook page. This gives others an accurate glimpse of what we do and how we help adoptive families and birth parents through the adoption process.

3. Share your adoption story on social media and tag us!

CONNECT WITH US:

@newlifeadoptionsofmn



www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org

Dear Birth Parents,

The adoption journey is different for everyone; no two stories are alike. For some, they find hope and healing on their journey, while others feel stuck in the stages of pain and grief.

Our goal at New Life Adoptions is to provide support whether you placed recently or made an adoption plan decades ago.

We are here to help you along the way, whether you want to share your story with others, connect with another birth parent one-on-one, attend our annual Birth Mother Brunch, or reach out for one of our many Post Adoption Services.

If you don't know what you need, but know you are searching for a next step, we can help with that, too. Take a moment to reach out today!



Rebecca Anfinrud, LSW
Post Adoption Social Worker
612-746-5670
rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org

P.S. Our annual Birth Mother brunch is now scheduled for Saturday, September 12th. Despite this delay, I am excited for this opportunity to meet you in person. I would love to see you there!

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POSTPONED

Due to COVID-19, we will be postponing the Birth Mother Brunch, originally scheduled for May 9th. Please mark your calendar for Saturday, September 12th and join us for this special 20th annual event.

Theme: A Mother By A Different Name

Birth mothers are mothers, they just go by a different name. We want to recognize and honor birth mothers for who they truly are: mothers. Hear from our panel of mothers about their unique role in each being a Mother by a Different Name. An adoptive mother, birth mother, and birth grandmother will all share about their perspective of the same adoption story.

Come to the table, there is
a place for you here.

You are not alone.

Our stories are different,
but our choices are the same.

For life, for love,
for letting go.

To hope for joyous return.

To be comforted in
the waiting.

Come, sit beside me.

Tell me your story,
and I will tell you mine.

Let the tears fall freely.

Let the healing begin.

-Cindy Clough, Birth mother

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

GRACE CHURCH

9301 Eden Prairie Rd.

Eden Prairie, MN 55347

Enter at Door 1

MORE INFORMATION

newlifeadoptionsmn.org/birth-mother-brunch

All birth mothers attend free of charge and are encouraged to bring a guest. Each guest is kindly asked to pay \$10 at the door in the form of cash or check.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Adoption is often talked about from the perspective of the adoptive family and the birth parents, but what do adoptees have to say?

We asked both children and adults who were adopted through New Life Adoptions about how they have experienced adoption.

What does adoption mean to you?

Support in a loving two-parent home. Adoption means having the opportunity to thrive alongside my siblings who are also adopted. In addition to celebrating my African culture, I am able to learn about my parents' cultures.

What do you enjoy about being adopted?

I enjoy having an understanding of multiple cultures. Also, I am thankful to have siblings that can relate to my adoption experience. My view of the world is different in a positive way due to how graciously my parents and extended relatives welcomed me into their family.

What do you tell others about adoption?

Adoption is an excellent parenting choice that unites a child with another family. Both the parents and the child benefit from an adoption. It is not one-sided. The parents have the opportunity to open up their homes and invest deeply into a child's life. A child is placed in an environment with the potential to pursue his or her goals and dreams.

MEET CHARIS, AGE 20





MEET AVA, AGE 10

What does adoption mean to you?

Adoption means to me I get to live and do things that I might have not be able to do if I didn't get adopted. And I also get to have two great parents.

What do you want the birth parents who will be reading this newsletter to know?

Adoption is probably one of the best decisions you'll make in your life. It might be scary at first, but it's a wonderful thing that you and the child can have.

What would you tell others about adoption?

It's a really cool story that you can tell and by adoption you can change a child's life in a beautiful way.

What does adoption mean to you?

Adoption means a mom (or a mom and dad) aren't able to take care of their child so they ask a different family to take care of them.

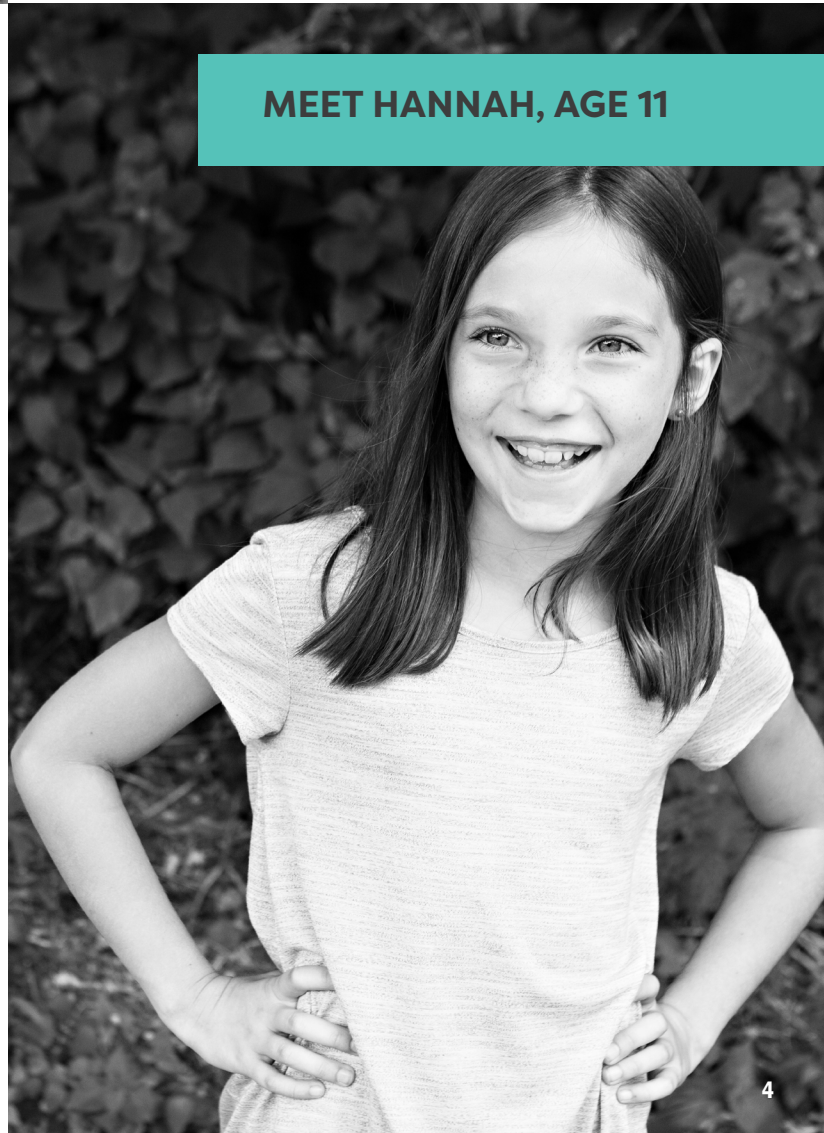
What do you enjoy about being adopted?

Because I'm in an open adoption I enjoy seeing my birth family. Why – because it's good to know where I came from.

What do you want others to know about adoption?

Adoption doesn't mean birth parents don't want to take care of you. It means they want to take care of you but are unable. Adoption means they love you.

MEET HANNAH, AGE 11





MEET ELLIANA, AGE 14

What does adoption mean to you?

Adoption means that I have life. It means that I have a loving family and a home where I feel safe. Without adoption I might not have had those things.

What do you want the birth parents who will be reading this newsletter to know?

Adoption might seem scary at first, but it is the best possible thing you could do for your kid. You are choosing to save your child's life and give them things you might not have been able to give them otherwise.

What would you tell others about adoption?

Adoption is love. You are choosing to give your child life.

What does adoption mean to you?

It means belonging to a family that is loving and caring. It helps that I understand the circumstances of why I was adopted. Even though we're not related by blood, we're still family.

What do you enjoy about being adopted?

I think being adopted is just fun in general. It's a story I can share with others. I like that I know both my birth family and my adoptive family. I know the almost 100 cousins on the adoptive side of my family and I know the two cousins on the birth side of the family. I like adoption because it gives me more – more family, more love, more friends.

What do you tell others about adoption?

That I get together with my adoptive family and my birth family and we do all sorts of crazy things, from roller skating to baking cookies to eating pizzas. Mostly, we just have fun together. I'm so glad that I live with my brother and that I have two sisters and another brother who live with my birth mom. I think adoption is "more" – more family, more fun, more love.



MEET MICAH, AGE 20

YOU HAVE A UNIQUE STORY.

SHARE IT!

New Life Adoptions has a variety of opportunities for you to use your story to share the beauty and uniqueness of adoption.

BENEFITS OF SHARING:

1. Bring awareness to adoption.
2. Give another birth parent hope for their adoption plans.
3. Change the language used when talking about adoption.
4. Strengthen your sense of community with others.
5. Educate others about adoption.

If you are interested in sharing your adoption story on a panel, in written form (blog, newsletters, etc.), or one-on-one with someone considering an adoption plan, please contact Rebecca at 612-746-5670 or rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org.

POST ADOPTION SERVICES FOR YOU

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

New Life Adoptions is committed to offering as much support as possible to assist you in seeking answers to your questions, searching for the child you placed, reconnecting after you have lost contact, or exploring opportunities for new levels of openness.

Here are some of the many services we can offer:

- Ongoing assistance with an adoptive relationship
- Resources and support
- Search and reunion or reconnecting services
- Obtaining information from your file
- Passing on updated medical information (with or without ongoing contact with the adoptive family)
- Passing letters, pictures, and updates between birth family and adoptive family
- Coordination of in-person contact

Contact our Post Adoption Department to learn more about these services.

612-746-5670 • info@newlifeadoptionsmn.org

A GLIMPSE AT OUR BLOG

New Life Adoptions maintains a blog on our website consisting of adoption stories, support, and information on adoption related topics. Here's a glimpse at some of the content you will find on our blog. Read more at www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org.



Why Open Adoption?

Over the years, openness in adoption has changed dramatically. Since 1980, when New Life Adoptions began providing adoption services, the norm has gone from solely closed adoptions to nearly all adoptive placements having some level of openness. In some cases, these are very open adoptions in which birth families babysit, have overnight...



The Importance of an Adoption Competent Therapist

Think back to when you were in the adoption process. There were likely people who did not understand adoption or the type of adoption you were pursuing. They may have said too much or too little or said all the wrong things. The same is true for a therapist. If you choose a therapist who doesn't understand adoption, he or she may focus too much...



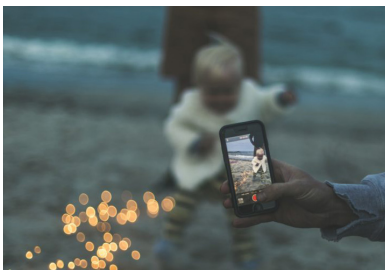
Note to My Baby (written by a Birth Mother)

Placing my daughter for adoption was one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make. It was not made quickly or easily. It took months of counseling with my wonderful and caring social worker at New Life Adoptions, much prayer, and deep thought. As my pregnancy progressed, I grew to love my baby more, and it hurt to think of her not...



The Superpower of Words (written by a Birth Mother)

Some things that I've written down are hard to even say out loud. Whenever emotions seem to overtake my day or attitude, I lean on the power of words for inspiration (e.g. the Bible, therapists, Instagram), and, more importantly, I lean on writing down my own words as a way to let go of these emotions. Emotions, I know now, may simply be...



Navigating Social Media in an Open Adoption

Because social media keeps changing, this conversation is likely going to require more than one conversation. Likely, this will be an ongoing dialogue as social media changes, and as your open adoption relationship evolves over time. Communication through social media is like other forms of communication in openness; it is unique in each...

Do you have an idea for our blog or a personal poem/story to share?

We would love to hear about it! Send a note to rebecca@newlifeadoptionmn.org.

Update Your Information

Even if you have ongoing contact with your birth child(ren) and the adoptive family, it is still important to keep current contact information on file with us. Email is a great way to communicate, but having a current phone number and address on file is also a good idea.

Here's why:

- Sometimes an adoptive family or adopted adult reaches out to us if they can't get ahold of you. We want to be able to reach you to help get you reconnected.
- If you are working through a change in your relationship with the adoptive family, sometimes it is helpful to talk it through with us or someone else who has been there.
- We are expanding our post adoption services to better capture what you are interested in. Hearing from you helps us know what direction to go in order to meet your needs.
- We want to keep you in the loop! By keeping your contact information updated we can send you information, newsletters, or invitations to birth parent events.

Take a minute now to update your information in one of three ways.

1 ONLINE
Visit us online at newlifeadoptionsmn.org and click on "Update My Information" found under the Post Adoption tab.

2 EMAIL
Send us a quick email to info@newlifeadoption-smn.org with your current contact information.

3 PHONE
Give our Post Adoption Department a call at 612-746-5670.

CALLING ALL WRITERS!

Do you enjoy writing and want to share about how adoption has impacted your life? We have a few options just for you.

- We are looking for guest bloggers who would like to write a post for the blog on our New Life Adoptions website. This can be on a topic related to adoption including: Why you share your story, grief in adoption, how to make an adoption plan, why you chose New Life, a letter to other birth parents, and more.
- We would also love to hear your personal adoption story and be able to share it through print pieces like this newsletter and within the stories section our website to encourage others who may be considering adoption for their child.
- We also have opportunities for you to share your story on a video, panel, or with groups of various sizes.

If you are interested in sharing, please write your story and send it to us! If you would prefer meeting with us to tell your story, we can write it for you. Every adoption journey is unique and our goal is to show how different each situation can be.

Interested? Contact Rebecca at 612-746-5670 or rebecca@newlifeadoptionsmn.org.

BIRTH PARENT RESOURCES

Articles, books, websites, and more



RESOURCES

MN ADOPT HELP Line

MN ADOPT provides services to support all members of adoption relationships. They have up-to-date information about support groups and resources available by phone and on their website. The HELP phone line is an excellent resource for birth parents and adoptive parents who are looking for resources including therapists who understand adoption.

www.mnadopt.org • 612-746-5137

BRAVELOVE

New Life is proud to be a partner agency of BraveLove, a non-profit pro-adoption movement that seeks to change the perception of adoption through honest, informative, and hopeful communication that conveys the heroism and bravery of birth moms. Read BraveLove's blog or check out their many video testimonies for encouragement in your own journey.

www.bravelove.org

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION

The National Council for Adoption's mission is to meet the diverse needs of children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and all those touched by adoption through global advocacy, education, research, legislative action, and collaboration. The National Council for Adoption provides a resource list for birth parents to connect with other birth parents on a national level.

www.adoptioncouncil.org

BOOKS

YOU SMILE WHEN YOU SHOW ME GRACE by Michelle Thooft

Written by a birth mother who placed through New Life Adoptions, *You Smile When You Show Me Grace*, formerly published in part as *The Gift of Sam: A Story of Unspeakable Grace*, is the continuing story of one woman's crisis pregnancy, the adoption of her son, and the recent reunion of their two families.



TO HAVE AND NOT TO HOLD: THE BONDING OF TWO MOTHERS THROUGH ADOPTION by Lorri Benson

To Have and Not to Hold is the poignant account of Lorri's momentous decision to place her daughter for adoption, the resulting heartache, and later, the unexpected joy of reconnecting with her daughter and her daughter's adoptive mother.

THOSE THREE WORDS: A BIRTH MOTHER'S STORY OF CHOICE, CHANCE, AND MOTHERHOOD by Christine Bauer

When Christine Bauer heard those three words "you are pregnant" at the tender age of 18, she was devastated. *Those Three Words* takes readers along on Chris' emotional journey about the power and importance of choice, the gift and anguish of adoption, and the deep bond of maternal love.



HIGHLIGHTED RESOURCE



Bellis

Bellis is a multi-service nonprofit with no political or religious affiliation or agenda. It's volunteers, including birth parents, adopted persons, adoptive parents, and adoption social workers, bring adoption education and awareness into schools and communities. The organization also provides peer-based support services. We are featuring two of these peer-based services in this newsletter that we recommend for you as a birth parent.

1. Adoption Connection

Bellis hosts an evening of Adoption Connection once every other month. These meetings are open to birth parents, adoptive parents, adopted persons, and birth or adoptive grandparents to have dedicated time for in-depth conversation and support. Through these gatherings, many birth mothers have found meaningful connections with others who can relate to their story.

2. Stronger Together

is a weekend retreat hosted by Bellis in September that offers birth mothers an opportunity to talk, reflect and learn together. Retreat programming is designed to offer new skills and perspectives that can be helpful on the journey as a birth mother. Of course, perhaps the greatest benefit is simply time with others who can relate to your unique experiences. This creates long-lasting friendships and a much-needed network of support.

Learn more and RSVP for these events at www.mybellis.com.



TWIN CITIES
6517 Nicollet Ave. S.
Richfield, MN 55423
612-746-5658

SOUTHERN MN
40 16th Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904
507-550-1561

www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org

CONNECT WITH US:   

www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Girls Night Out
with Annie F. Downs
August 10th: Rochester
August 11th: Minneapolis

Grab your friends for a fun night out with a purpose! As women, let's learn how we can support the women New Life Adoptions and our affiliated programs serve every day.



Registration will open in May.

Birth Mother Brunch
POSTPONED
September 12, 2020
Grace Church
Eden Prairie, MN

Theme:
A Mother by a Different Name
Join us for our 20th annual Birth Mother event.



For more information & registration details,
visit www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org.



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(612) 746-5658
www.newlifeadoptionsmn.org

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