



FALL Newsletter 2012



November is National Adoption Month.

1976 Gov. Dukakis proclaimed an adoption awareness week in Massachusetts.

1984 President Reagan expanded that to a National Adoption Week

1995 President Clinton proclaimed November National Adoption Month, stating:

“For many people across the United States, adoption provides a means for building and strengthening families. It places children into loving, permanent homes where they can flourish and grow up to become happy, healthy, productive members of our national community. Adoption also enables adults to experience the unique joys of parenthood.”

Much of the emphasis of these proclamations and campaigns has been to move children from the foster care system to permanency. Every day at Adoptions With Love we are doing our part to keep children out of the foster care system. Through our work with expectant and birth parents, we counsel them to make appropriate choices for their children. Many of the women with whom we work are already single parents, struggling to care for the children that they have at home or trying to work within the child welfare system to regain custody of their children. By providing counseling and resources, we strive to enhance the lives of many children; not only those have we placed for adoption, but for their siblings also. When parents make a plan to place a child for adoption it is a courageous and loving choice; one that is made with deep personal sacrifice. Those not touched by adoption in a personal manner usually have very little understanding of the adoption process and how it is one of the journeys in life that touch so many of us. You can use National Adoption Month to educate those around you.

Speaking of foster care. **WE NEED FOSTER FAMILIES.** If you are thinking of helping AWL in a meaningful way, we can use your help. Periodically, we need a temporary home for a baby while birth parents are receiving counseling and making up their minds about an adoption plan for their child. The baby is usually with your family from two days to two weeks. If you are interested please call 617-964-4357 or email acohen@awlonline.org.

In October, Nancy and I did something a little bit different on behalf of AWL. We formed a team to walk and raise money for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer and the American Cancer Society. With the help of our families (including members of the AWL family) and friends we raised over \$2500. Four of us walked on the damp day in memory and in honor of all who are dear to us who have been touched by breast cancer. Next year we will organize earlier and ask more of you to join us. So many of us have been a part of the fight against breast cancer and we feel it is a worthy cause for AWL.

Thus far this year we have placed 36 infants into loving homes. Here are some of the new additions to the AWL family celebrating Halloween at the agency. Best regards,

Halloween!



Breast Cancer Walk



A letter from Nancy By Nancy Rosenhaus, Associate Director



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To all the parents who adopted through AWL from 1986 to 1992.

Your children are now over 21 years of age and as such, they now become our CLIENT too. We want to alert you that if a contact is made to Adoptions With Love from your son or daughter's birthparent, under law, we have to contact your child directly.

As parents, we understand that our young adult children, 21 or older, are still our children. But the law is very clear that we must contact them directly. We are not trying to bypass you, their parents. If you receive a call from AWL asking how we can reach your son or daughter because we have some information for them, please understand why we are doing this. If you have a special concern about your child receiving this information, please alert us so we will understand the situation better. However, we are required to contact them directly and we will encourage them to share this contact with you.

Some young adults who contact us tell us that they have shared this information with you already. Some say it is their right to privacy. We encourage you to have a conversation with your son or daughter about the fact that now that s/he is over 21, it may possibly happen that Adoptions With Love may be in contact with them someday. You can share with them how they may contact us directly.

We receive daily inquiries from young adults as well as birth parents who are interested in looking for one another. We have a SEARCH/REUNION program that has been growing in popularity. We also

feel that everyone who entertains the idea of searching must be made aware of the ups and downs of the process. It is a journey. We require that a young adult come to meet with us PRIOR to engaging in a search for a birthparent. There are many reasons for this, but mostly it is because young adults don't always know what the actuality of the "finding" may feel like. They don't have the life experience to look ahead, and a 21 year old typically looks at the present, not the possible issues that may lie ahead. It is our job to frame these out for them so they understand what issues may arise.. For this reason, we ask that they come in for at least one appointment. That appointment has a fee of \$125. This can feel quite steep for some young adults and they may need your assistance.

In past newsletters I have written some things that feel controversial to some folks. They have emailed me and we have had a discussion. I welcome your emails and feedback. You can reach me at nrosenhaus@awlonline.org

You can also follow Adoptions With Love on facebook. We would appreciate your going to our page and "like" us. The way to reach our page is:

<http://bit.ly/AWLfacebook>



Search and Reunion



Last Spring AWL teamed up with two local adoption social workers, Debbie Olshever and Ellen Glazer, to expand our post-adoption services. Debbie and Ellen offered a group for adoptive parents whose teens and young adults were considering connecting with birthparents or who were involved in search and reunion. This group was followed by a group for adoptees and focused on their concerns and questions, hopes and fears about search and reunion. Both groups were well and enthusiastically attended, and inspired Debbie and Ellen to launch the Adoption Connections Network and an accompanying newsletter, Shared Journeys.

Debbie and Ellen hope to see some of you at the first Fall meeting of the Adoption Connections Network on **DECEMBER 11, 2012**. This will be a parents meeting at Adoptions With Love. The first Fall meeting for adoptees will be on **JANUARY 10, 2013**. All meetings will be at 7:00pm to 8:30 pm on a "drop in" basis meaning you need not come to every meeting. Participants can come once or many times. The fee will be \$40 and those who plan to attend are asked to contact Claudia at Adoptions With Love 617-964-4357 by the Friday prior to the scheduled meeting. Meetings will be confidential but with participant's permission, Debbie and Ellen hope to include non-identifying themes and content in their newsletter.

If you would like to receive Shared Journeys by email, please call or contact AWL with your email address to: info@awlonline.org. The following is an excerpt from the first issue of the newsletter:

We are grateful to Jessica, a 19 year old college student, who attended the first meeting for adoptees and then sent us this...

See Jessica's lovely letter on next page

Letter from Jessica about SEARCH



If someone were to ask me how I personally felt about adoption, I would probably have said that it was the worst thing that anyone could have done to me. Little did I know that it wasn't done to me, it was done for me. It took me 18 years to figure out that being adopted wasn't a life ending curse, but a life giving gift.

I found my birth parents 2 years ago on Facebook, not knowing that it would change my life forever, and not necessarily for the better. It caused so much pain and heartache not just for me, but for everyone involved, and I feel responsible for changing everyone's life as we all knew it.

My goal in life isn't to change young people's minds about looking for their birth families, just to tell them that it is okay to wait. I do not regret finding my birth mother and father, but I do wish I had waited a few more years. I was not mentally and emotionally ready to deal with everything that had happened, and after talking with a few other adoptees I know that I am not the only one who feels this way.

The analogy I tell people is a very true one. Kids believe in Santa Claus until some kid on the playground ruins it for them and says he isn't real. Adopted kids live life thinking their birth parents are these amazing people who are perfect, until one day it become finally apparent that they are just like everyone else.

Growing up, I thought my birth mother was Jennifer Aniston because she was my favorite actress. I loved dreaming about my Jennifer Aniston birth mother, and ever since the day I found out that my birth mother was no Jennifer Aniston, I wish I had waited. I tell people to hold on to Santa for as long as possible. By Jessica

We love receiving all the beautiful holiday cards with pictures and updates that you mail to us each December. REMEMBER WE HAVE A NEW ADDRESS:

246 Walnut St. Suite 103 Newton, MA 02460

Remember to change our address in your address labels! And please always put your return address on correspondence.



New Staff at AWL



Stacey Kideckel, Birth Parent Coordinator

skideckel@awlonline.org

Stacey coordinates services for expectant/birth parents who are considering placing a child for adoption. Her warmth and compassion help her to establish longstanding relationships with birth parents both during pregnancy and after placement. Stacey also maintains the picture files for birth parents that have placed a child for adoption. Being adopted herself, she has a unique understanding of this tender time. Her soft spoken voice brings calm to everyone she talks on the phone with. Stacey has a Bachelor's Degree from Northeastern University in Criminal Justice and worked at a variety of positions helping others before coming to Adoptions With Love.



Ali Reeder is our new graduate student studying for her MSW @ Wheelock College. In my first few months at AWL, I've been amazed at the unique and extensive community that is connected to adoption and how AWL works to support each part of that community. I'm looking forward to supporting birth families, adoptive families and adoptees in any way I can!

More new staff : Claudia Goldman

Claudia Goldman recently joined the staff of Adoptions With Love in September 2012 as the Office Manager. She is primarily responsible for managing and ensuring operations and procedures run smoothly on a daily basis. She continuously looks for methods to improve things! With her enthusiasm, warmth and compassion, she helps provide assistance and support to our adoptive families and expectant birthparents. She is also responsible for maintaining picture files for birth parents that have placed their children through AWL. Claudia studied psychology in college, is currently enrolled in a 500 hour Yoga Teacher Training Program, is Reiki 1 certified and most importantly she is the mother of three amazing children. cgoldman@awlonline.org



Karen Strem our former office manager is in graduate school and is working for AWL 2 days a week.

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