



Adoptions With Love, Inc.

Spring 2010 Newsletter

State of the Agency



February 2010

I am very proud to report that 2009 was another very good year at AWL. We had 38 placements, with one set of twins making a total 39 children. Thirteen of those placements were working with women and men in MA. I can report that, even in these difficult economic times, AWL ended the year in the black. As I reported in our last newsletter, we continue to see an increase in need on the part of birth parents.

The fees charged for placements usually cover most of the expenses for the birth parents during the pregnancy and for 6 to 8 weeks after placement. However, we do use your fund raising donations to supplement fees that do not cover everything. This usually occurs in cases where the birth parents are homeless and we put them up in a motel prior to securing an apartment for them. We also have helped several birth parents with the purchase of beds and other household goods when they are starting from scratch. Some of the women with whom we work do not have health insurance and we must pay their medical bills. Doctors require down payments and for those women who do have private health insurance, there are often large deductibles and co-pays which AWL will pay. We are fortunate that in MA we all have health insurance and access to excellent health insurance.

Your donations have also helped with education scholarships for several young women. We have been able to help a young woman with her tuition for cosmetology school and a few others with training to become a medical assistant or a Certified Nursing Assistant. This is one of the goals of the agency among others; assisting women when they make an adoption plan. We want to help them establish a future for themselves and in many cases the children they already have at home.

Your fund raising dollars go to help people. Please donate generously!

We also need your help in another area. **FOSTER HOMES ARE NEEDED!!!**

We now have four families who are licensed as foster homes through AWL, but recently we learned that we need more. We use foster homes on very short notice, for two days to two weeks. Because this happens on short notice and everyone has such busy lives, we need a lot of back ups. Karen Strem, our office manager, and my husband and I have become licensed foster homes, to serve in crisis situations. This is wonderful, rewarding, yet tiring work. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!** If you are interested, please give us a call at the office- 617-964-4357.

Another growing aspect of the work we do at AWL is search and reunion. As our children grow older, curiosity about their birth family is normal. A good place to start is with the information we gave you when your child was placed with you. As your child grows into adolescence, he or she is forming his or her identity and this is an important piece of who they are. If there is information you are not sure how it should be shared, give us a call, we can help or make a referral.

We are finding that some people are doing their own searches on Myspace and Facebook, which can be risky. Some of these reunions have worked beautifully and others have been disasters. Please be open and honest with your children so that they come to you first before doing a search and reunion without your guidance. If your child knows you are willing to help, they will ask for it. This journey can be a wonderful experience for everyone, but it is important to move cautiously. It is important to be respectful of everyone's feelings. Although all members of the adoption triad are intimately connected; in many ways all are strangers. Take time to get to know one another. Remember, we are here to help.

Please check out our article about the 25th Anniversary Celebration.

With warm regards,

Amy S. Ghe





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A letter from Nancy ... By Nancy Rosenhaus, Associate Director

Finally it is spring. We can all give a sigh of relief from surviving another New England winter and have renewed energy and excitement with the promise of some lovely weather ahead. Spring reminds me of the exhilaration in the eyes of new parents who finally survived their ordeal with infertility and the arduous process of adoption. They now have abundant energy in the pleasure of snuggling a newborn baby in their arms! Remember this? It is a moment you never forget and we never forget.

Personally, it is incredibly rewarding to see the happiness beam in the faces of a newly formed family or enlarged family. It is wonderful to see the sparkle of pride in a new brother or sister's eyes as they show off their new baby. There is so much happiness ahead and the weight of infertility is lifted. I can actually SEE this in our families. It is as if breath has been breathed back into them. This always brings me enormous pleasure.

Currently I am running a new parents group. It is full of laughing parents and baby noises. They can now look back and share their stories of despair, but with the knowledge that they have been successful in their journey to become parents (or parents again!). They are so incredibly bonded with their son or daughter. They know the joy that adoption has brought to them but they are also cognizant of the birth parent's feelings.

We have made 38 wonderful placements this past year. Each one is very special and different. Our AWL couples are just phenomenal people; they have so much compassion for the birthparents of their baby. This is the recipe for a fabulous adoptive placement.

Our families continue to surprise me with the amount of empathy they have for the birthparents. They have shared a birth, hours in the hospital, meetings with extended family members, dinners, etc.

Over the years, our couples continue to send the most beautiful pictures and albums, proudly sharing their child(ren) with the birth family. This brings such comfort to the birth parents and their families. When we receive these pictures in the office we all love opening these packets and marvel at the growing children.

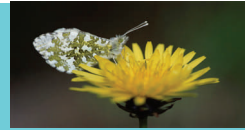
We continue to hear from the birthparents and the peace of mind they have with their adoption decision. They feel they have chosen the exact right family for their baby. For certain, they are grieving, but also working hard to better themselves and the lives of the children they are parenting. It is very rewarding to know that I have touched the life of a person in crisis and eased their journey just a little bit.

From time to time, I also get the opportunity to meet the child, now a young adult who wants me to know that they have had a great life and they are very comfortable with their adoption story. Each one of these opportunities brings me that feeling of renewed energy, the promise of what lies ahead. It reminds me of spring.



The Way Home . . . By Janet Giesser

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In short – after months of discussion, my husband and I decided on a compromise. We would become licensed foster parents for AWL in lieu of adopting a third. We thought it would be simple. A nice fix for my wanting a baby; a short-term commitment; and it wouldn't interfere with our life as a young family.

Boy – were we wrong! After taking in two beautiful infants, each for a few short nights, our family quickly realized that there was something magical about the experience. Between birthday parties, gymnastics classes, homework and multiple loads of laundry – we slowed down and enjoyed these amazingly beautiful babies. We actually slowed down and enjoyed each other. We took time to talk, listen, play. The things that usually kept us so frenetically busy seemed less important.

Our girls, both of whom we adopted through AWL, loved playing “big sister” – especially our youngest! They loved being little mother's helpers with bottles and diapers. They suddenly asked such great questions about their own journeys. Were they ever in foster care? Did their birth mothers name them? Why didn't they “get to go somewhere fun before coming home?”

It was a wonderful, intimate time for storytelling. It was a sort of reverse-exploration of their home-coming and a great reason to look at old pictures and videos. It was joyful! Pure joy!

Neither of our girls was ever in foster care. We knew how common a part of the domestic adoption story it was. We knew we wanted to give back. It seemed like such a small thing, easy for us. It was something that would enrich our lives, but also show our girls that giving back was not only

important – it was essential.

As I said to my girls just before writing this – “I need to go write a quick article for Nancy.” The immediate response was, “when will she give us another baby to care for?” Talk about magical!

Babies come home to families in so many different ways. But everyone remembers that tender moment of being handed a child. In an instant – you are overwhelmed with feelings of possibility. Whether delivered by a doctor, nurse, foster parent or partner – that hand-off is the beginning of a profound and permanent adventure. Being part of that process - loving a baby on its way home, delivering a child to his or her parents, watching a couple become a family or a family grow – THAT is an incredible privilege.



We need Foster Homes !!

If interested or know someone

Call us 617-964-4357

25th Anniversary Celebration! Calling all volunteers...

Three years ago, AWL celebrated its 20th anniversary with a wonderful afternoon of family fun at The Thoreau Club in Concord. We started the planning process with the hopes of getting 200 people to attend. It had been many years since a reunion had been held, and we did not know what to expect.

Fast forward to September 17, 2006. We were overwhelmed by the incredible response of adoptive families who were interested in participating. We had over 600 children and families in attendance, over 50 volunteers, activities for kids of all ages ranging from face painting, art projects, and mad science to sports, games, pony rides and a petting zoo. The weather was fantastic -actually hot! The outdoor swimming pools had a lot of action! We could not have asked for more. Some families traveled thousands of miles just to be there. It was wonderful to see so many people connecting - some for the first time as new adoptive parents, and others who had not seen each other in over a dozen years.

Our committee was quite small, but we accomplished all of our goals and then some. We produced a program with advertisements from vendors and many tribute ads from families thanking the agency. We presented Amy and Nancy with a gift recognizing the achievements that the agency had made as a small thank-you for all that they have done for each of us in building our families. We raised money to help support key initiatives of the agency and board (name these here... medical records, etc). It was a very special day.

In 18 months, we will be celebrating another milestone - 25 years! We will be starting to organize the committees soon and we would like your help to ensure that AWL's 25th anniversary is just as successful as the last. We will have an AWL25 event committee and various sub-committees (entertainment, food, sponsorship, etc) so there will be many opportunities for you to get involved.

If you are interested in volunteering to be on a committee, please call Karen at 617-964-4357 or email kstrem@awlonline.org. Your input and participation is welcome. If you have older children (teens/young adults) who would like to participate or help us plan activities, please let us know. Thank you all in advance... **Our first meeting will be Thursday May 6th.** Please call to join us!

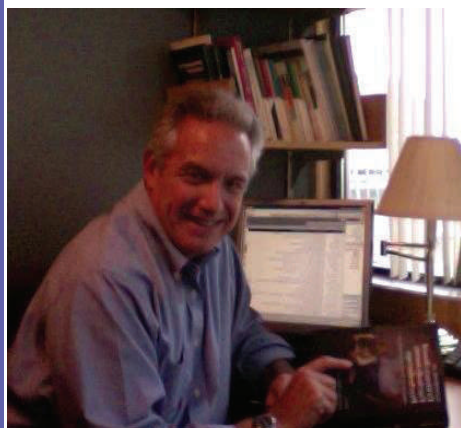
Susan Heffron and Janet Giesser
AWL 25th Anniversary Co-Chairs



*Our first meeting will be
May 6th! Call to join us*



Meet the Board—Ray Levy



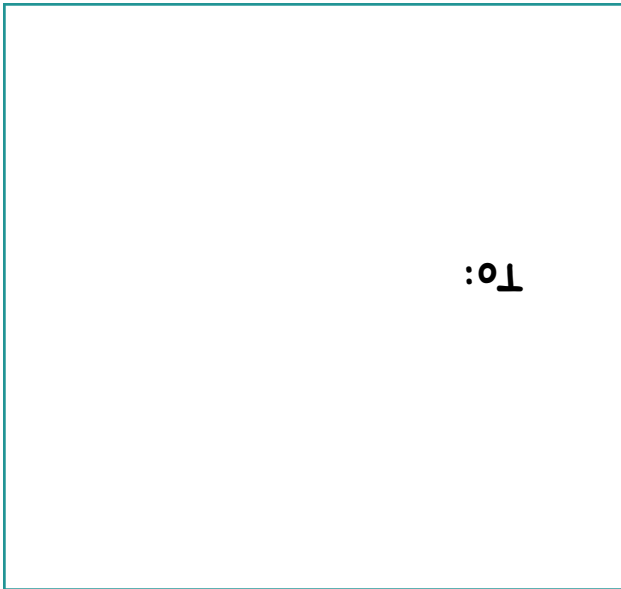
Ray joined the Board when it expanded in 2006. He was actively involved during the 20th anniversary celebration and has offered consultation in rare situations to Amy and Nancy when questions have arisen concerning complex psychological issues related to adoptees and adopted parents. He has recently been serving on the Search Committee of the Board helping to create ways for those adopted through AWL to search for their birthparents or for information about their birthparents with the help of the agency.

Outside his membership on the Board, Ray is a Clinical Psychologist in Private Practice in Cambridge and on the Faculty at Mass General Hospital where he is Clinical Director of the Psychotherapy Research Program. He has recently co-edited a book with findings from research on psychotherapy.



Our newest babies !!!





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