



## *Spring Newsletter 2012*

Time flies. It has been almost a year since our last Newsletter. It has been a busy year. The first big event of 2011 was our move to new offices. If you have not visited our new space yet, please come by and say hello.

Our 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion Celebration on September 18<sup>th</sup> 2011 was a great success. The committee that organized the event, under the leadership of our board members Susan Heffron and Janet Giesser, was fantastic. The venue was perfect and the weather that was ordered for the day put the icing on the cake. It was wonderful to see so many of you there! There were over 500 of you! Thank you to all the volunteers.

Our board was also very busy this year. It spent a great deal of time revising our mission statement and updating our Articles of Organization and By-Laws. These are very important projects in keeping an agency functioning well. The new mission statement adopted by our board is:

“Adoptions With Love is the preferred Domestic Adoption Agency providing compassionate, confidential and trustworthy services to find the best home for each child with lifelong support for everyone touched by adoption.”

2011 was a very successful year at Adoptions With Love, Inc. We placed 46 infants into 45 families; one set of twins. We continue to subsidize approximately one third of our placements and several of our families have been able to secure grants through the Stone Family Foundation and the Good Morning Adoption Fund. We look forward to continuing to help create families and easing the financial burden.

This year we have embarked on the task of Strategic Planning with the assistance and guidance of consultants from SOAR 55. We are in the process of forming our committee of stakeholders who will help us develop a vision and plan for the next five years of AWL success. Our team from SOAR 55 is dynamic, intelligent and energetic and we are excited about formulating the Strategic Plan with them and our committee.

Through your continued donations we have been able to aid birth parents re-build their lives and continue their education and training after they make adoption plan for their children. The period of time after a birthparent makes an adoption plan for the child is one filled with sadness and grief. We have been able to make referrals to experienced mental health professionals around the country so that the women can continue with counseling. The financial stability of AWL allows us to provide this continued quality care for a significant time after placement. We are very proud that this is a vital part of our work.

Looking forward we are planning to hold some educational/support groups this Spring. Three will be designed specifically for fathers. The groups will be facilitated by Dr. Ray Levy, psychologist and adoptive father; Nancy will be facilitating a group about talking to your children about adoption and I will be running a group which addresses the issues of “being found” on Facebook and how it relates to adoption. Ellen Glazer, LICSW and Deb Olshever, LCSW will be lead two group addressing search and reunion; one for parents and one for teenagers. We hope to repeat these groups in the Fall.

Please join us for these groups. We are always looking how to best meet the needs of all members of the AWL family and appreciate your input.

*Amy S. Glazer*



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



### Inside this issue:

From Amy	1
From Nancy	2
Nuala	3
Christine	4
Anniversary	5

Adoptions With Love  
246 Walnut St.  
Suite 103  
Newton, MA 02460  
tel (617) 964-4357  
[www.adoptionswithlove.org](http://www.adoptionswithlove.org)

Recently we received an email that said: "we will not be sending any more letters and pictures as stipulated in the picture agreement we agreed to at the time of the adoption 17 years ago". Receiving a communication like this brings both concern and sadness to the staff of AWL. In the 26 years that AWL has been creating families through adoption, we hope that we have forged relationships that go much further than the legal agreements of adoption.

I would hope that most families have been sending letters and pictures to their child's birth parents file, for your child, rather than due to a stipulated picture agreement. We have found over the 26 years at Adoptions With Love that the picture and letter program has had many positive effects. It has kept birth parents in touch with us by updating their information and keeping access to the birth parent, so that if medical information became necessary or the time came that a young adult wanted to learn more about their birthparent, the search/reunion process can go smoothly. It also helps birth parents feel very good about the decision they made regarding relinquishing a child and are able to follow their lives a little bit to put any worry to rest.

It was very difficult to tell this birth mother that the family did not plan on sending her any more updates of their 17 year old. Just because someone turns 17 or 18, the birth parent does not stop wondering how they are doing in life. Actually, the opposite occurs and they start worrying and can find themselves in desperate turmoil. It takes so little to write a letter and send a few pictures. I wonder why someone feels so strongly about this. When you adopt a child, his or her birth parents are also a part of them.

When and if your son or daughter meets their birth parents, they could say: your parents were so wonderful to share the letters and pictures with me to give me such peace of mind OR, they could say, all I wanted was a picture or short letter but your parents would no longer send that to me. Sending letters and pictures even past the age of 17 does not diminish your role as their parents.

I work with many birthmothers and I know that they never forget the child they placed for adoption, even if they went on to have 4 more children. To receive letters and pictures for 17 years and then be told we will no longer be doing this for a birth parent is very hard to understand. I would be interested in hearing your thoughts about this. Please email me at [nrosenhaus@awlonline.org](mailto:nrosenhaus@awlonline.org).

Our search and reunion program is growing and developing. We receive daily inquiries from young adults and parents as well as birthparents who want us to know how to locate each other if/when the time comes. This is a journey that young people come to, with many stops and starts until they decide the best route to take. It is a process.

On another note, we have updated our website and I think it looks terrific. It may be accessed at: [adoptionswithlove.org](http://adoptionswithlove.org). We have also started a blog.



We have a new feature of a DONATE NOW button.

**DONATE  
NOW**

Recently, a family decided that in lieu of gifts for their one year old's birthday, they asked people to donate to Adoptions With Love. Most did this through Paypal. It was a very nice gesture. You may wonder what does Adoptions With Love do with donations. Good question. We do not use our donations for operating expenses. Thankfully we are in a very good position not to need that. This is what we do use our fundraising for:

- Subsidies for families without means for adoption

- Subsidies for families who adopt children who have drug/alcohol exposure or who are hard to place for other reasons

- Educational expenses for birthparents who want to better their futures by taking college classes, EMT courses, C N A classes, GED programs.

If you are inclined to donate, Adoptions With Love is a non-profit charitable 501(c) (3) tax deductible organization. So visit our new website and take a look around !



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

# our new address



We love receiving all the beautiful holiday cards with pictures and updates that you mail to us each December. This year many of them finally arrived after making their way from our old Needham Street address forwarded to us at:

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 any correspondence to us.

My name is Nuala Sullivan-Wall and I am thrilled to be part of the AWL team. I started working as an adoption social worker twenty two years ago and feel very passionate about my work. I work with all members of the adoption triad. I provide compassionate, supportive and informative counseling to birthparents and I am still in touch with many of the birthmothers whom I worked with over the years. Some of the birthmothers that keep in touch placed over twenty years ago!!! It is amazing to share the joy with a birthmother who has gone on to graduate college, fulfill her dreams and pursue what she had wanted to do in her life. I enjoy doing home studies and getting to know pre-adoptive families. It is truly amazing to see an adoptive parents' joy after they bring home their precious baby. I feel fortunate to be part of it all. Post placement work is also very exciting. Babies change a great deal in six months!! When I worked for Brightside, before they closed their adoption program, I was able to facilitate several hundred searches and reunions for adult adoptees and birthparents. I actually found a birthmother who was eighty eight years old and reunited her with her seventy two year old birth daughter before she passed away. It was one of the most touching experiences I have ever been part of. I also have worked part-time as a hospital social worker at Baystate Medical Center. I volunteer on weekends to work with developmental delayed clients and I have been taking out the same two clients for twenty years now!



Conference room activities!

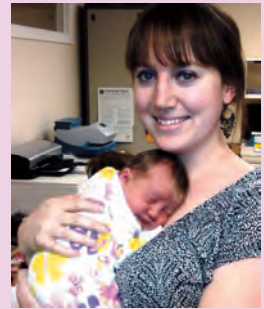


## *Educational Series Spring 2012*

### *And Meet Christine*



My name is Christine Mealey and I joined the staff of Adoptions With Love as the Birth Parent Coordinator this past summer. I have a BA in Sociology from UMASS Amherst. I am very excited to be working in the field of adoption. It is something I have always wanted to do. Before coming to AWL I worked at a foster care agency in several different roles. It was an interesting and eye opening experience that has made me appreciate adoption even more. I love my role here where I am able to help the birth parents create an adoption plan and find permanent and loving homes for these children. I spend a lot of time speaking with them on the phone and building relationships with them. I also spend a lot of time on the phone answering questions adoptive parents have for me. I also take care of sending pictures back and forth to and from birthparents. Anyone who meets me knows I love babies! Once you put a baby in my arms you will have a hard time getting them back! Outside of work I like to travel, read and cook.



### **We are proud to announce our Spring Educational Series**

You may have already received a special mailing about the series of workshops we will be officering this May and June.

- A group for adoptive father's only
- I was found/I found her on FACE BOOK: now what do I do?
- Talking to children about adoption
- Parents talk about the possibility of searching
- Teens talk about the possibility of searching

All groups will be limited to 12 participants and will be at the office of Adoptions With Love. We hope you will join us for one or more of these informative and exciting sessions.



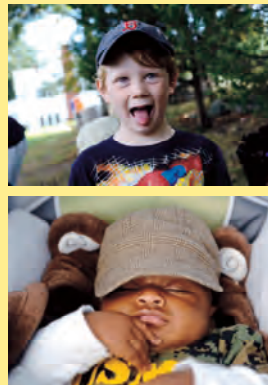
# 25th Anniversary Day!



Our 25th Anniversary celebration was a total success. Everyone had a fantastic time and it was so much fun to see all the families created by Adoptions With Love. Below are just some of the highlights from that day.



## A DAY OF FUN FOR EVERYONE



Building Families Through Domestic Adoption

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
BOSTON MA  
PERMIT NO. 56500

#### **AWL STAFF**

Amy S. Cohen, LICSW, Executive Director  
Nancy Rosenhaus, LICSW, Associate Director  
Nuala Sullivan Wall, LSW, Social Worker  
Debra N. Olshever, M.Ed., LCSW  
Karen Strem, Office Manager  
Christine Mealey, Birth Parent Coordinator  
Jean Stokowski, Receptionist  
Sandy Rohtstein, Bookkeeper

#### **AWL Board of Directors**

Deborah Goldberg, President  
Chris Counihan  
Janet Giesser  
Susan Heffron  
Michael Krupa  
Ray Levy  
Michael Winter  
Drew Zalkind

Adoptions With Love, Inc.  
246 Walnut Street  
Suite 103  
Newton, MA 02460