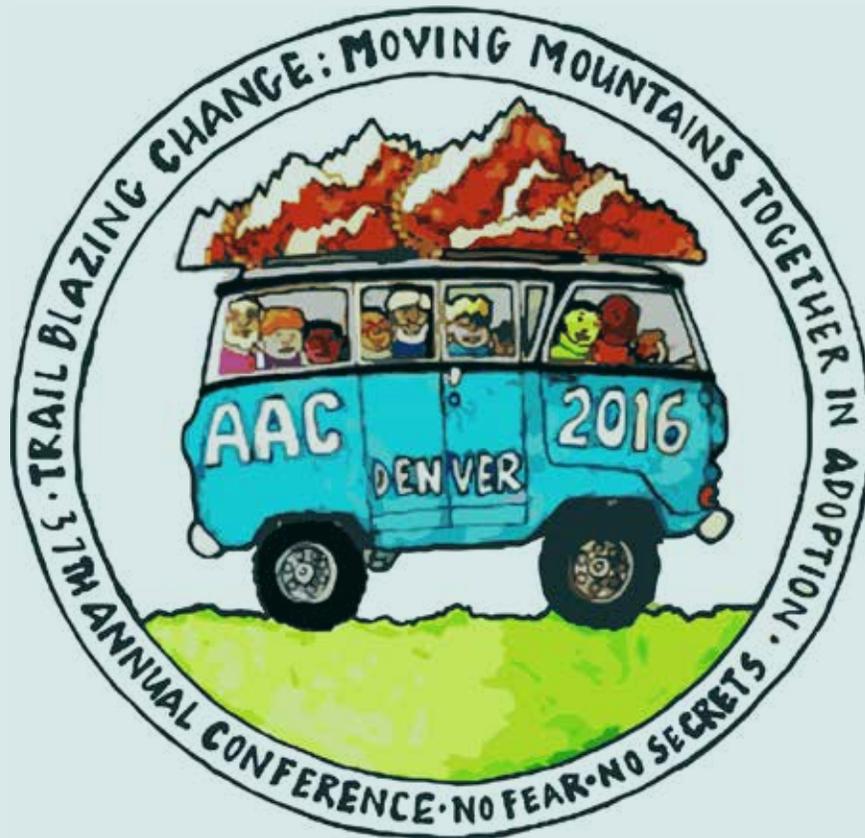


# The 37th Annual American Adoption Congress International Conference



*Logo by Mi Ok Song Bruining*

**March 30, 2016 - April 3, 2016  
Grand Hyatt Denver**

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# Welcome Conference Attendees!

## **Welcome Message from:**

Cynthia McGuigan - President and Conference Chair

Susan Harris O'Connor - New England Regional Director and Conference Co-Chair



*Bring Awareness to this Conference on Twitter and Facebook  
Twitter @AAC1978 #AACCONF  
Facebook - American Adoption Congress*

# About AAC

Founded in 1978, the American Adoption Congress (AAC) is an all volunteer-driven, tax exempt 501 (c) 3 organization, which was incorporated in 1981. AAC Board of Directors, as well as the AAC State Representatives serve entirely as volunteers and receive no monetary compensation. AAC relies on funds generated by membership dues, sponsors, grant donations and conference revenues.

Our AAC membership is made up of adoption and foster constellation members, individuals conceived through assisted reproduction, professionals, and others whose lives have been impacted by adoption and foster care.

AAC is an International network of individuals, households, organizations and support groups committed to promoting truth in adoption. Our members help promote honesty, openness and respect for family connections in adoption, foster care and assisted reproduction.

## Registration Times:

**Please plan ahead to register at the conference. Our registration desk will only be open during the times shown in the brochure.**

## Meals Included:

### ***Thursday***

Breakfast 6:30 - 10:00 AM  
Regional Lunch: 12:30 - 1:45 PM  
box lunch included (See Page 14)

### ***Friday***

Breakfast: 6:30 AM - 10:00 AM  
Awards Lunch: 12:15 - 1:45 PM

### ***Saturday***

Breakfast: 6:30 - 10:00 AM  
Reception: 8:00 PM - Midnight

### ***Sunday***

Farewell Breakfast Social: 8:30 - 9:45 AM

## Conference Committee Members

### **Conference Chairs**

Cindy McGuigan  
Susan Harris O'Connor

### **Conference Committee**

Roberta MacDonald  
Susan Friel-Williams  
Marilyn Mendenhall Waugh  
Candace Conklin  
Leslie Moran  
Desiree Stephens  
Susan Harris O'Connor  
Cindy McGuigan  
Katy Perkins

### **Art Committee**

Candace Conklin

### **Event Registrar**

Roberta MacDonald

# Conference Details

## Denver, Colorado

This year's conference is located in Denver, Colorado, known as The Mile High City. Denver is a young active city at the base of the Rocky Mountains. The Grand Hyatt Denver is located in downtown Denver just one block from the 16th Street Mall and a short stroll to the Colorado Convention Center.

## Workshops

Conference workshops will cover a variety of topics such as search and reunion, loss and trauma, historical perspectives, transracial and international adoption, identity issues, birth/first parent issues and legislative efforts. Support groups will be offered.

## Art Room

This year AAC will continue the art room and the making of quilt squares which will eventually form a quilt to be displayed in the near future. The art room will feature our artist's works, as well as serving as a respite space for attendees. Please take time to visit the art room located in Marron Peak on the second floor.

## NASW CEU's Information

Conference attendees interested in obtaining NASW CEU hours please refer to the NASW website and your state requirements to confirm eligibility. You will be require to pay for CEU's at time of registration.

## Shuttle & Transportation Information

**Please download the following from the AAC website**

Grand Hyatt Denver - A-Z Events Guide

**NOTE:** For transportation options please open the Event Guide and refer to page 6.

[http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/docs/A-Z\\_GUIDE\\_-\\_GHD\\_2015.pdf](http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/docs/A-Z_GUIDE_-_GHD_2015.pdf)

Destination Denver Guide

[http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/docs/Destination\\_Denver\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/docs/Destination_Denver_Guide.pdf)

## Workshop Proposal Submission Start Date

Workshop proposal submissions for the American Adoption Congress 38th International conference begins July 15, 2016 to TBD.

Please look for updates on the AAC website and Facebook page.

# The Trailblazer Keynote Speakers



**Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao**

**Wednesday - March 30, 2016 4:00 - 5:30 PM**

*Knowing Where We Came From, Informs Where We Should Be Going*

**Amanda Transue-Woolston**

**Thursday - March 31, 2016 9:00 - 10:30 AM**

*To be Seen and Heard:*

*How Adoptees Empower Themselves to Create Social Change*



**Dr. Amanda L. Baden**

**Friday - April 1, 2016 9:00 - 10:30 AM**

*Adoptees in the Wild: Navigating Adoption Microaggressions and Identity Challenges in Adoption*

**Mark Hagland**

**Saturday - April 2, 2016 3:30 - 5:00 PM**

*"Race: The Final Frontier? Unlocking the 'Undecipherable Codes' in Transracial Adoption"*



**Marilyn Mendenhall Waugh, Delores Teller & Kathleen Nielsen**

**Saturday - April 2, 2016 8:00 AM**

*From Rocky Mountains to the High Plains: The Courage and Grit of Women Who Relinquish*



# Films & Play

## **We're Not Blood**

**Wednesday - March 30, 2016 8:30 PM**

In *We're Not Blood*, Jeff Togman searches for his birth parents, and finds himself in the middle of a nationwide legal battle that has sealed the birth records of most adopted people, including his own. Throughout its twists and turns, the film tackles questions of identity, family, politics, and memory. Jeff will hold a Q & A following the film.



## **The Ice Cream Gene**

**Thursday - March 31, 2016 7:30 PM**

*The Ice Cream Gene* - A theatrical one woman show that depicts the day that Susan a young adult adoptee meets her first/birth mother for the first time in a hotel room. The reunion in the hotel room is a roller coaster of emotion, from giddy genetic connections to crushing disappointments. Afterwards, we'll have time for an intimate Q&A with Susan Ito.



## **You Follow - a search for one's past**

**Friday - April 1, 2016 7:30 PM**

Nisha Grayson packs her bags, and with four of her closest friends they set out on a journey. She travels from California to her birthplace in Goa, India on a quest for answers, family and identity. *YOU FOLLOW* chronicles the experiences of an adoptee with a heart full of determination. Nisha will hold a Q and A following the film.

# Wednesday - March 30

1:30 - 3:30 PM **REGISTRATION OPEN** (Aspen Foyer - 2nd Floor)

3:30 - 6:15 PM **REGISTRATION CLOSED**

3:45 - 4:00 PM Welcome (Aspen Ballroom)

4:00 - 5:30 PM **Keynote - Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao** (Aspen Ballroom)

As adopted people you can't have a true future, unless you know your past. This is true on a larger level about the world of adoption, and where it has been, and where it needs to go. As an old pioneer in adoption, I will take you through the past –the good, the bad, and the ugly –and muse about where we could go in the future.

5:30 - 6:45 PM Dinner on your own

6:15 - 8:15 PM **REGISTRATION OPEN** (Aspen Foyer - 2nd Floor)

8:15 PM **REGISTRATION CLOSED**

7:00 - 8:15 PM **Welcome to AAC 2016!**

Facilitators: Pam Hasegawa and Susan Friel-Williams  
(MT. Evans Grand Hyatt Conference Center 2nd Floor\*)

Welcome to AAC 2016! will give you the opportunity to connect with people you will see throughout the conference. Small group conversations assure you the benefit of personal interaction and exposure to a variety of perspectives. Being on time will guarantee you maximum benefit!

8:30 - 10:30 PM **FILM - *We're Not Blood*** (Aspen Ballroom - 2nd Floor)

Presenter - Jeff Togman

Jeff Togman searches for his birth parents, and finds himself in the middle of a nationwide legal battle that has sealed the birth records of most adopted people, including his own.

\*Located in separate building. Access from the Hyatt Lobby. Look for signs and board members to direct you to room location

Don't miss out on having a boxed lunch with your Region on Thursday.  
Network and share what is happening in your State and region.

(See Page 16 for location)

Learn how to Start A Support Group in your area:

[http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/support\\_group\\_list.php](http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/support_group_list.php)

# Thursday - March 31

6:30 - 9:00 AM	<b>Breakfast</b> (Aspen Foyer)
6:30 - 8:30 AM	<b>REGISTRATION OPEN</b> (Aspen Foyer - 2nd Floor)
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM	<b>REGISTRATION CLOSED</b>
6:45 - 7:45 AM	<b>Moving Meditation Yoga - Facilitator, Cathy Koley (MT. Yale)</b> Triad Sensitive Yoga - Cathy Koley combines her passion for adoption reform and yoga in this gentle practice specifically created for triad members. Trained in Trauma Sensitive Yoga by Bessel van der Kolk & David Emerson, Cathy shares her adoption healing and therapeutic yoga experience with those who've been touched by adoption.
8:30 - 9:00 AM	<b>OPENING REMARKS: Cynthia McGuigan, President</b>
9:00 - 10:30 AM	<b>Keynote: Amanda Transue - Woolston</b> (Aspen Ballroom) Discover how adoptees create meaningful change in adoption beginning with their personal experiences and moving outward toward adoptee community advocacy. Follow the presenters journey from inward to outward, from unheard to heard.
10:30 - 11:00 AM	<b>BREAK</b>
11:00 AM - 12:15 PM	<b>WORKSHOP SERIES 100</b>

## **101 Stories Matter: Black, German, American & Adopted**

Presenter - Rosemaria Pena (MT. Princeton)

During the Post WWII Occupation Period an estimated 150,000 children were born to soldiers of the occupying forces and German women. More than 9,000 were the children of African American and Moroccan soldiers. I will discuss the lived experiences of the only cohort of adoptees who were systematically expelled from their country of origin simply because of the color of their skin. As a community leader for fifteen years and a dual heritage adoptee, I have interviewed many adoptees, assisted with family searches and reunions, and have been a participant observer and moderator in a number of closed Internet forums.

## **102 Empowered Poetry: Our Voices, Our Stories**

Presenter - Dr. Garnet Wind (MT. Columbia)

This poetry workshop is designed to give voice to adoptee conference attendees. Participants will create two poems and will leave the session with an impromptu poem, a second poem to polish, and a format for expressing experiences and ideas through writing poems. Adoption is the main theme. Participants will reflect and can choose to write about their experiences, perceptions, issues they faced and/or continue to face. Activities and prompts will be provided to stimulate creative thinking and writing. Participants will learn how to edit their poems and how to use literary techniques for emphasis to make their voices stronger.

### **103 The Impact of Infertility on Adoptive Parenting**

Presenter - Phyllis Lowinger (MT. Yale)

All members of the adoption constellation have suffered losses. The birthparents deal with the life long loss of not raising their biological child. The adopted persons suffer the loss of not being raised by their biological parents. The adoptive parents suffer the loss of not ever knowing who their FANTASY biological child would have been. The purpose of this workshop is to understand how these losses are resolved can impact how adoptive parents deal with the life long challenges of parenting a child that is their's thru adoption.

### **104 Liberation Among Landmines: Race and Culture in Adoption & Foster Care**

Presenters - Krista Woods and Katy Perkins (MT. Princeton)

In order to help people continue to develop healthy identities as adults, we must first take a critical look at the impact that society's response (and lack thereof) has on various racial and cultural groups that impact people and often our clients. Participants will learn how race and culture are crucial to human development and emotional well-being, especially in foster care and adoption systems. Discrimination, institutionalized racism, and white privilege will be discussed, along with ways that professionals can help promote, advocate, and celebrate racial diversity while supporting clients and families in the healing process due to trauma.

### **105 Someone Like Me: Identity Lessons I Have Learned**

Presenter - Pam Sweetser (Aspen Ballroom)

Identity lessons I have learned from my own adopted children's journey, and from so many others in my 24 years as Executive Director of Heritage Camps for Adoptive Families. What their losses and their journeys have taught me and how those lessons have profoundly impacted my own identity and life expectations.

### **106 Post Placement Services to Birth Parents: Retreats and Support Groups**

Presenters - Lori Scobee and Caroline McDermott (MT. Wilson)

Strong post placement services to birth parents are often overlooked by adoption professionals. In this workshop you will see how one agency in Ohio is making a difference by offering birth mother retreats and support groups to birth moms all over the country. You will receive information about how to plan and execute these types of services in your area of the country or how to utilize the services Caring for Birthmothers is already providing. You will also hear moving testimonials from mothers who have attended retreat or meet ups and the impact it has had on their healing.

12:00 - 5:00 PM **Art Room** (MT. Harvard 3rd Floor)

12:30 - 1:45 PM **Regional Lunch - Boxed** (See Page16 for Location)

**NOTE:** Pick up Boxed Lunches in Aspen Foyer - 2nd Floor

2:00 - 3:15 PM **WORKSHOP SERIES 200**

## **201 The Heart of an Adoptee: Recognizing Grief**

Presenters - Reshma McClintock (MT. Oxford)

Reshma is an international adoptee from Calcutta, India. She was adopted at 3 months old and grew up in the US. She recently returned to Calcutta on the 35th Anniversary of the day she left and was the subject of a documentary called "Calcutta is My Mother". What she found in her birth city was shocking; immense grief. Growing up as a well adjusted adoptee and well connected to her family the grief was surprising and overwhelming. She's on a mission to help the world better understand what the heart of an adoptee looks like by sharing her story candidly.

## **202 Youth Visual Studio - Providing Youth Voice in Heart Gallery Recruitment**

Presenters - Beverly Gmerek and Kristi Griffith-Jones (MT. Columbia)

Join us to learn how Colorado Department of Human Services partnered with local community members to provide a fun and unique experience for older teens. The teens got to experience an amazing journey across a college campus and use Go Pro's to film their own recruitment video made this project "cool" and "fun" for everyone involved. Their amazing journey included exploring a local university providing inspiration while letting us learn about them.

## **203 An Adoptive Father's Epiphany**

Presenter - John Brooks (MT. Yale)

An adoptive father shares his experience of losing his daughter Casey to suicide at 17, and his search for answers. While writing his memoir, *The Girl Behind The Door*, he learned about attachment disorders in orphaned children, still misunderstood among mainstream mental health professionals. He also shares lessons learned too late.

## **204 Donor Conceptions: Past Present and Future That Needs Action**

Presenter - Kris Probasco (MT. Princeton)

Donor conceptions began in 1884, with secrets, lies and anonymity, just as our adoption history. There are approximately 1,000,000 donor offspring in the United States. This workshop will discuss the lessons learned from the past, what current donor conception programs are providing. We will discuss modern eugenics as consumer driven and market based, where children are increasingly regarded as made to order. A look to the future for a national donor conception registry and mandatory limits of children per donor will be in place.

## **205 Search and Reunion: Ask an Angel**

Presenters - Vanessa Waite, Natalie Manolakis, Kimberley Haskitt and Jennifer Johnston (Aspen Ballroom)

A panel of award-winning search volunteers discuss their experiences with search and reunion. This is a safe environment to ask questions and discuss the struggles of your own search. Discussion will include: tips for searching (including using social media), preparing yourself emotionally, reflections and personal experiences and much more!

## Thursday - March 31 (Continued)

- 3:15 - 3:45 PM **SPOKEO Coffee Break** (Aspen Foyer - 2nd Floor)
- 3:30 - 5:00 PM **REGISTRATION OPEN** (Aspen Foyer - 2nd Floor)  
5:00 PM **REGISTRATION CLOSED**
- 3:45 - 5:00 PM **SUPPORT GROUPS** (See Page 16 )
- 5:30 - 7:00 PM Dinner on Your Own
- 7:30 - 9:00 PM **PLAY: *The Ice Cream Gene*** - Susan Ito (Aspen Ballroom)  
A theatrical one woman show that depicts the day that Susan a young adult adoptee meets her first/birth mother for the first time in a hotel room. The reunion in the hotel room is a roller coaster of emotion, from giddy genetic connections to crushing disappointments.
- 9:00 - 11:00 PM Hospitality Meetup (Aspen Foyer)

## Friday - April 1

- 6:30 - 9:00 AM **Breakfast** (Aspen Foyer - 2nd Floor)
- 6:30 - 8:30 AM **REGISTRATION OPEN** (Aspen Foyer- 2nd Floor)  
8:30 AM - 3:45 PM **REGISTRATION CLOSED**
- 6:45 - 7:45 AM **Moving Meditation Yoga - Facilitator, Cathy Koley (MT. Oxford)**  
Triad Sensitive Yoga - Cathy Koley combines her passion for adoption reform and yoga in this gentle practice specifically created for triad members. Trained in Trauma Sensitive Yoga by Bessel van der Kolk & David Emerson, Cathy shares her adoption healing and therapeutic yoga experience with those who've been touched by adoption.
- 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM **Art Room** (MT. Harvard 3rd floor)
- 8:30 - 9:00 AM **Announcements and Give-Aways**
- 9:00 - 10:30 AM **Keynote: Dr. Amanda Baden** (Aspen Ballroom)  
Race, culture, and socialization for adoptees? How do adoptees cope with adoption and relinquishment stigma? I will present two frameworks that I developed to answer these questions: 1. Reculturation (process of birth culture reclamation), and 2. Adoption Microaggressions (insults, slights, and invalidations related to adoption and relinquishment status).
- 10:30 - 11:00 AM **BREAK**
- 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM **WORKSHOP SERIES 300**

### **301 Six Word Adoption Memoirs**

Presenters - Andrew Tash and Derek Frank (MT. Oxford)

Jean Strauss pointed out a trail in 2013, encouraging those involved in adoption experiences to give voice to their narratives. Taking this cue, Derek and Andrew invited participants at 2014 AAC conference to speak about their adoption experiences, narrowing them to a 6-word memoir. We will screen these short-form films and engage in dialogue about increasing the visibility of adoptees, birth parents and the unique challenges they face to a general populace.

### **302 Keynote Workshop Panel**

Presenters - Mark Hagland, Dr. Amanda Baden and Amanda Transue-Woolston (MT. Columbia)

This workshop allows attendees another opportunity to ask question to some of AAC's individual keynote speakers regarding the work they have done. Panelists will speak briefly and open the space for comments, questions and answers

### **303 Connecting the Dots: Adoption and The Modern Family**

Presenters - April Dinwoodie and Kathleen Nielsen (MT. Yale)

In today's world, the landscape of the American Family is rapidly changing; families built through assisted reproduction technology, transracial families, and families headed by gay and lesbian parents are just some examples of families in the 21st Century. In this presentation, we seek to draw analogies between all that we have learned from the adoption experience to help better guide today's modern parents. This presentation will discuss the research base in this area while also including a diverse panel of individuals who reflect diverse parenting experiences.

### **304 Colorado: Two Years, Five Bills, Four Unanimous Votes!**

Presenters - Rich Uhrlaub, Hon. Lori Saine, Shayne Madsen and Betsy Clark Murray (MT. Princeton)

Something unprecedented happened during the 2014-2015 Colorado legislative sessions. A flurry of new laws were passed, giving the state one of the most comprehensive records access laws in the nation -- not just for adult adoptees, but also siblings and parents by birth and adoption. What finally worked?

### **305 It Takes Two to Hug: Strengthening Attachment in Adoptive Families**

Presenter - Jeannine Zoppi (MT. Wilson)

This workshop addresses how attachment styles of adoptive parents play a key role in relationships with their adopted children. Focus will be on how parent attachment styles and childhood experiences influence parenting and parent-child relationships. Through discussion and sharing of experience, adoptive parents will learn how better awareness of their own feelings and thoughts and those of their adopted children can promote more secure attachment.



12:15 - 1:45 PM

**AWARDS LUNCHEON** (Aspen Ballroom)

2:00 - 3:15 PM

**WORKSHOP SERIES 400**

### **401 Mitigating & Managing Collateral Damage: Impact of Adoption on 1st Family**

Presenters - Susan Bednarz, Denise Roessle, Kathy Aderhold and Richard Kish (MT. Oxford)

The loss of a child is traumatic, but it isn't the only impact of adoption for birthparents. It also affects their future relationships, their ability to trust and let themselves fall in love again, and their decisions to have and parent more children. This panel will explore those challenges with real-life stories from mothers, fathers and spouses (some in reunion, some not), how they managed them, and found ways to break through the past and move on.

### **402 'Flip the Script: Adult Adoptee Anthology' published by The An-Ya Project**

Presenters - Mei Mei Akwai Ellerman, Susan Harris O'Connor, Mi Ok Bruining and Meggin Nam Holtz (MT. Columbia)

"The Flip the Script: Adult Adoptee Anthology," published by the "An-Ya Project," offers a unique merging of the literary and artistic creative force of Adult Adoptees. This panel of four women writers/poets/photographers/actors/filmmakers/practitioners, and scholars, represents the diverse disciplines and multiple artistic genres featured in the volume. They also embody the 50 contributors' fierce and complex wisdom, personal accomplishments and activism.

### **403 How To Choose An Adoption Competent Therapist**

Presenter - Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao (MT. Yale)

There are many excellent and experienced therapists. Many of them think that if they are adoptive parents, adopted persons, birth parents, or have worked with anyone –ever- in the adoption constellation that they are then competent to see all clients with adoption foundational issues. That is not true.

### **404 Male Adoptees: Cowboy Up or Man Down?**

Presenter - Rich Uhrlaub (MT. Princeton)

As men who were relinquished and adopted, we face some unique challenges in a society that sends constant mixed messages about success, failure, identity, family, romance and rights. Whether you view your adoption story as a pleasant hike in the hills, a rodeo, or a war zone, we'll swap tales around a metaphorical campfire and mine for the gold life offers us.

**Workshop is only open to male adoptees.**

### **405 The Donor Sibling Registry (DSR) - A Global Registry for Donor Families**

Presenter - Wendy Kramer (MT. Wilson)

Since 2000, the DSR has connected more than 12,350 donor conceived people with their half siblings and/or their donors. Accordingly, they have been able to create and explore these new familial relationships. They have been able to understand their ancestry and learn about their medical backgrounds. In addition, the DSR has helped to eliminate much of the stigma associated with being a gamete donor or a donor conceived person. Behind the scenes, but very actively, the DSR's research, education, and counseling services have been instrumental in creating momentum towards establishing positive reforms in the reproductive medicine industry.

**406 Opening a Closed International Adoption: The Journey**

Presenter - Lee Varon and Jose Varon (Crestone Peak 2nd Floor)

Opening a closed international adoption: the journey. What is it like to open a closed international adoption? What are some of the challenges? What things can help to make the process easier? If an adoption has been closed, is there an optimal time to open it? How to maintain connections after a re-union. A single adoptive mother who adopted her son as an infant and her adult son will discuss their experience.

3:15 - 3:45 PM *Break*

3:45 - 5:30 PM **REGISTRATION OPEN**  
5:30 PM **REGISTRATION CLOSED**

3:45 - 5:00 PM **SUPPORT GROUPS** (See Page 16 for Location)

5:00 - 7:15 PM Dinner on Own

5:15 - 7:15 PM Representative and Board of Directors Meetup (Location TBD)

7:30 - 9:30 PM **FILM - *You Follow - A Search for One's Past*** Nisha Grayson (Aspen Ballroom)  
When steps in the right direction lead to forks in the road, when loyalty and commitment come from unlikely strangers - Nisha faces an emotional series of unexpected challenges that test her character.

9:30 - 11:00 PM Hospitality Meetup (Aspen Foyer)

**AAC IS SEEKING STATE REPS in:**

Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming

**INTERESTED?**

Contact a Regional Director or the AAC President - [Cynthia McGuigan](#)  
or Vice President - [Roberta MacDonald](#)

<b>Support Groups - Thursday &amp; Friday</b>	
<b>Support Group</b>	<b>Location</b>
Adoption/Foster Constellation	MT. Columbia
Female Adoptee	Aspen Ballroom
Birth/First Parent	Crestone Peak 2nd Floor
Adoptive Parent	MT. Princeton
Professional	MT. Harvard
Male Adoptee	MT. Oxford
LGBTQ	MT. Wilson
Assisted Reproduction	MT. Yale

<b>Lunch With Your Region</b>			
<b>REGION</b>	<b>ROOM</b>	<b>REGION</b>	<b>ROOM</b>
<b>New England</b>	Crestone Peak 2nd Floor	<b>Southwest</b>	Aspen Ballroom
<b>Mid-Atlantic</b>	MT. Oxford	<b>West</b>	MT. Princeton
<b>South</b>	MT. Yale		
<b>Midwest</b>	MT. Columbia	<b>International</b>	MT. Wilson

<b>Identify U.S. Region</b>					
<b>New England</b>	<b>Mid-Atlantic</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Southwest</b>	<b>Midwest</b>	<b>West</b>
Connecticut	Delaware	Alabama	Arizona	Illinois	Alaska
Maine	Maryland	Arkansas	Colorado	Indiana	California
Massachusetts	New Jersey	Florida	Kansas	Iowa	Hawaii
New Hampshire	New York	Georgia	Missouri	Kentucky	Idaho
Rhode Island	Pennsylvania	Louisiana	Nebraska	Michigan	Montana
Vermont	Virginia	Mississippi	New Mexico	Minnesota	Nevada
	Washington, DC	North Carolina	Oklahoma	North Dakota	Oregon
	West Virginia	South Carolina	Texas	Ohio	Utah
		Tennessee		South Dakota	Washington
				Wisconsin	Wyoming

# Saturday - April 2

6:30 - 8:30 AM **Breakfast**

6:30 - 8:15 AM **REGISTRATION OPEN** (Aspen Foyer - 2nd Floor)

8:15 AM **REGISTRATION CLOSED**

8:00 AM - Noon **Art Room** (MT. Harvard 3rd floor)

8:00 - 9:30 AM **Keynote Panelists: Delores Teller, Marilyn Mendenhall Waugh and Kathleen Nielsen** (Aspen Ballroom)

Women who have suffered the heartache of relinquishment share their intimate stories of loss and longing, search and joy, guilt and forgiveness as well as acceptance and endurance. Spoken with candor and humor, across different generations and adoption practices, each speaker tells her own journey of discovery and recovery.

9:30 - 9:45 AM **BREAK**

9:45 - 11:00 AM **WORKSHOP SERIES 500**

## **501 The Adult Adoptee's Codebook for Effective Mental Health Care**

Presenter - Julie Lopez (MT. Oxford)

The experience of relinquishment is a traumatic one. The losses are immeasurable, and the experience of the infant/child/adolescent/adult adoptee are often misunderstood or misdiagnosed, even by mental health professionals. This workshop will present a "codebook" for professionals and lay people to more accurately understand the adoptee experience through a trauma-informed lens. Leave this workshop empowered with clinical terms to correctly and accurately understand and normalize the adoptee experience.

## **502 Ethics in Search - Discussion of Search Procedures from Ethical Standpoints**

Presenters - Susan Friel-Williams, Debra Allen and Mary Wilson (MT. Columbia)

Our presenters bring a wealth of experience to our topic, both as recognized Search Angels and Licensed Professionals. Contrary to perceived beliefs, Search Angels and Professionals 'do' work together frequently and mentor each other in skills, knowledge and practices. We will discuss briefly the history of search, the start of the search angel movement, and the reason that search angels often decide to go after licensing and credentials as licensed investigators, as well as the different tools available to each.

## **503 Open Adoption Over Time: The Rest of the Story**

Presenters - Rebecca Patton Falco, Kevin John Falco, Rachelle Damron, Tina Miller-Primus and Kimberely James (MT. Yale)

Rebecca and John Falco adopted five children at birth, the first four of these adoptions were fully open. Their older children are now 21, 19, 18, and 15. Over time, each relationship between triad members has evolved in different ways. This workshop will explore open adoption relationships over the course of a child's life with perspectives shared by the adoptive parents, birth parents, and adoptees. Some of the issues explored will include what support was given or needed, mistakes along the way, and whether open is the solution to triad member grief.

**504 Walking Softly in the Wilderness: Expect the Unexpected**

Presenter - LeAnne Parson (MT. Princeton)

A sure-footed guide to changing the scene. LeAnne will be your official trail guide as we explore the deeper realities of the adoption journey. Her level-headed advice on gear selection, packing, and trip planning will allow you to gain insight, courage, confidence and felt-safety for getting the most out of your wilderness trip. Together we will explore the wisdom desired when dealing with the unexpected in restoring relationships, walking in reunions, stepping into search and navigating the rapids of relationship river.

**505 Black Adoptees/Black Adoption, Race & Adoption Narratives**

Presenters - Shannon Gibney and Amandine Gay  
(Aspen Ballroom)

How have black adoptions and black adoptees, in the diasporic context, changed the dominant narrative on adoption? What are the ramifications, in terms of policy, practice, and culture of adoption as an institution, and transracial and same-race black adoption in particular? Black adoptees, will discuss recent achievements as well as coming opportunities for both structural and individual/triad transformation in the institution of black adoption as it is currently practiced.

**506 Claiming our Space**

Presenter - Nancy Verrier (MT. Wilson)

There are at least two things that make adoptees hesitate to take up space in the world: feeling abandoned by their first mothers and living with people who may be very different from them. These experiences create the false self through the mechanisms of coping and adaptation. Through sharing and discussion with the guidance of the facilitator adoptees can help one another understand the beliefs that hold them back and challenge those beliefs so that they may become more authentic, claim their space, and fulfill their potential.



11:00 AM - 11:15 AM     *BREAK*

11:15 AM - 12:30PM     **WORKSHOP SERIES 600**

### **601 Adoption/Addiction**

Presenters - Nicole Burton and Daryn Watson (MT. Oxford)

Adopted people are over represented in treatment centers and institutions. The presenters will share their own experiences of addiction and recovery and intertwine their adoption stories. After each person shares we will open it up for discussion from the group. The workshop will be open to talking about all addictions and a safe place for people to share their stories and any struggles they are having today.

### **602 Bi-racial Adoption in the Era of the Civil Rights Movement**

Presenter - Lisa Richesson (MT. Columbia)

When a birthmother doesn't want to relinquish her child for adoption, but is forced or coerced into doing so, what are the repercussions? I was one such mother. It was 1970 and the civil rights movement was in full swing. But I was to learn that liberal sentiments only went so far. I was a young, unmarried, middle-class white teenager faced with the decision to reluctantly relinquish my child for adoption, because his father was black. As much as I wanted to celebrate the birth of my son, I faced prejudice, hatred, and social ostracism.

### **603 Adoption Agencies: Moving from Opponent to Ally**

Presenters - Dana Stallard (MT. Yale)

Historically, adoption was regarded with shame and secrecy. Adoption agencies, whether intentionally or not, perpetuated this notion. This interactive presentation will explore agency practices that undermined adoptee and birth/first parents' ability to deal with the truth, exemplified by the idea that after an adoption, everyone "should just move on." With this history of harm and exploitation, how can we now validate and honor the experiences of this community? Have we progressed past our reputation of protecting the best interests of adoptive parents to advocating on behalf of adoptees and birth/first parents? If so, have we done enough?

### **604 From Group Care to Family Life**

Presenters - Toni Heineman (MT. Princeton)

Foster children, removed from neglectful and/or abusive families and placed in congregate care are often at the greatest risk for disrupted placements and failed adoptions. The culture of orphanages and group homes--whether housing six or sixty children--is different from the culture of families. Group homes have staff who must adhere to clearly defined policies and procedures. In contrast, the implicit "policies and procedures" in families are based in relationships. Family members live, love, and work together for each other and the long-term good of the whole. The impact of institutional living must be better understood to promote successful adoption.

### **605 Blazing Subtle Trails: Reforming at the Hyperlocal Level**

Presenters - Lori Holden and Addison Cooper (Aspen Ballroom)

Sure, changes in policy are necessary, but they're not the only changes needed. Explore models that succeed at cultivating openness at the heart level - individual by individual - in domestic, international, and foster adoption settings. Learn about resources to facilitate open-heartedness in families, the constellation, and the adoption community at large.

**606 Adoptee Romantic Radar Revisited**

Presenter - Ron Nydam (MT. Wilson)

Why do we fall in love the way we fall in love? Why do we find one person attractive and not another? What is it that really drives romantic interest? This workshop reviews the manner in which the challenges of relinquishment may inform the romantic interest of the adoptee. It is assumed that relinquishment is a significant narcissistic wound of some sort. Adoptees may deal with the challenges of early on relinquishment in a variety of ways, one of which may be the formation of intimate relationships that facilitate the grieving involved. Clinically, this workshop is informed by object-relations theory.

12:30 PM

**Art Room - Pick up of all Art**

12:30 -1:45 PM

Lunch on Own

1:45 - 3:00 PM

**WORKSHOP SERIES 700**

**701 DNA Tests Change Everything!**

Presenter - Kevin Thomas (MT. Oxford)

DNA test results have changed EVERYTHING. EVERY adoptee and birthparent wanting to search (or even not wanting to) SHOULD BE TESTING!!!! The more that test, the better chances we have. I'm beating the secrecy system...you can too! Let me show you how we did it!

**702 The Journey to Parenthood: Finding the Humor Within the Adoption Process**

Presenter - Debbie Scheer (MT. Columbia)

This workshop is truly a mini comedy show. Yes adoption needs to be taken very seriously but if we change the lens that we use to view the adoption process we find that there can be humor around every twist and turn. Come laugh a little as Debbie shares her own adoption story, the story of adopting her boys and everything in between.

**703 Rehoming in Adoption: Clinical Exploration into the Darker Side of Adoption**

Presenters - Amy Curtis and Melanie Chung-Sherman (MT. Yale)

Reuters (2013) published an investigative report exposing a darker side of international adoptions coined, "rehoming," in which legally adopted children were privately placed by their adoptive parents through underground and unregulated networks. The practice, without legal, ethical and clinical oversight, opens vulnerable children to exploitation and abuse. Thorough assessment regarding family dynamics, legal standing, and the adoptee's mental and physical well-being, within his or her family are critical to the protection of children by child placement staff. This workshop will explore the clinical implications and applications to consider when working with adoptees and families impacted by rehoming.

**704 Internet Searching for Family: How to Blaze that Trail**

Presenter - Marilyn Mendenhall Waugh (MT. Princeton)

An adoption search, at times, can seem like tackling a steep mountain climb without a guide or the proper footwear. Reconnecting with family is possible if you utilize accurate, updated, user-friendly Internet sites. Learn how to search reliable, ethical locations that are available to the general public free of charge or at a minimal cost.

**705 Recognizing Relinquishment As a Critical Variable**

Presenter - Delores Teller (Aspen Ballroom)

This workshop will provide specific assessment, treatment planning, and ethical considerations when adoptees present for mental health care across the lifespan. Ethical decision making and practice implications will be reviewed along with historical and cultural issues that shape adoptee adjustment and healthy attachment.

**706 Three Generations, Three Perspectives of First/Birthmothers**

Presenters - Marianne O'Brien and Arlene Donovan (MT. Wilson)

Birthmothers from different generations will present their stories and show the progress and changes (or lack thereof) that is being made in adoption reform. The workshop will also highlight where more help and reform is needed, from the perspective of three different generations of birthmothers.

3:00 - 3:30 PM **AAC Coffee Break** (Light Snacks and Beverage)

3:30 - 5:00 PM **Keynote: Mark Hagland** (Aspen Ballroom)

Transracial adoption is a complex phenomenon that poses conceptual and social challenges to all those in the adoption constellation. In his keynote, Mark, a well-known speaker and writer on transracial adoption, will engage his audience to help them re-frame adoption as a whole. Is race the "final frontier" in adoption?

5:00 - 7:30 PM Dinner on Own

8:00 - Midnight **MT. Sophris Reception** (MT. Sopris - Lobby Level)

**Sunday - April 3**

8:30 - 9:45 AM **Breakfast Social** (Aspen Ballroom/Foyer)

*Biographies*  
**Presenter Biographies**

# Presenter Biographies

**Aderhold, Kathy (Nurse and Nurse Mid-Wife)** - is a mother of adoption loss, surrendering her daughter in 1972. Kathy found her daughter and has been reunited since 1998. A frequent speaker at seminars and workshops as a nurse, a nurse-midwife, and a legal nurse consultant, she serves on the Board of Directors for Adoptees-In-Search, Denver's largest adoption support group. **(401)**

**Allen, Debra - (Certified AZ Confidential Intermediary)** - left her career in law enforcement with 25 years as a detective and discovered a love for helping those separated by adoption reconnect. She is a certified AZ Confidential Intermediary, and Arizona Private investigator, and a member of the American Adoption Congress, Arizona Private Investigator's Association and the World Association of Private Investigators. **(502)**

**Baden, Amanda Dr. (Ph.D)** - is an Associate Professor at Montclair State University (NJ) and a licensed psychologist with a practice in New York City. She has published numerous articles and book chapters focusing on transracial and international adoption identity, counseling for adoptees and birth parents, and racial and cultural issues in adoption. Amanda is a Senior Research Fellow of the Donaldson Adoption Institute, a member of State the Board of Psychology for New York State, and co-chairs the Biennial Adoption Initiative Conferences in New York City. She is an adult adoptee from Hong Kong. **(Keynote, 302)**

**Bednarz, Susan** - Susan Bednarz surrendered her first born child to adoption in 1986 after a 5 month stay in a maternity home. She blogs about adoption at [writingmywrongs.com](http://writingmywrongs.com), is founder of [ehbabes.com](http://ehbabes.com) (a site providing search and reunion assistance to individuals separated by Kurtz network of agencies), and speaks frequently on adoption and reunion and its impact on the first family. **(401)**

**Brooks, John** - John Brooks had been a senior media financial executive until losing his daughter, Casey. He has since turned to writing, public speaking, suicide prevention activism and working with teenagers in Marin County, CA. His memoir, *The Girl Behind the Door*, will be released by Scribner in February, 2016. **(203)**

**Bruining , Mi Ok (LICSW)** - Mi Ok Song Bruining is a Korean adoptee. She lives in Providence, RI where she works as a licensed clinical social worker for the RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She is an accomplished artist, award-winning poet, and published writer. **(402)**

**Burton, Nicole** - Author and playwright of *Swimming Up The Sun*'. Nicole has presented many workshops at the AAC. In 2014 she hosted a wonderful workshop where adopted people had submitted forms about their experience. Nicole is in reunion with her birth family. **(601)**

**Chung, Melanie Sherman (LCSW-S, CTS, LCPSA)** - is a Certified Trauma Specialist and a practicum student through The Theraplay® Institute. As a Korean adoptee, she is passionate about child welfare, adoption issues, and mental health issues. Her greatest joys are her children, husband and close friends. **(703)**

**Cooper, Addison (MSW, LCSW)** - runs Adoption at the Movies ([www.adoptionlcsw.com](http://www.adoptionlcsw.com)), a film review blog for adoptive families. He's written for *The New Social Worker*, *Adoptive Families*, *Adoption Today*, *Focus on Adoption* and *The Huffington Post*. Addison has ten years' experience in foster-care adoption as a social worker, therapist, and clinical supervisor. **(605)**

**Curtis, Amy (LPC)** - is an adoptee, who has worked in the field of adoption and foster care for over 30 years. She is also working on a Ph.D. in Family Therapy through Texas Woman's University, with a research focus on attachment and trauma healing through the eyes of the adopted person. **(703)**

**Damron, Rachelle** - Manager at All American Vapor in Grand Island, NE. Mother of five, including Emily (currently age 21), who was adopted by the Falcos at birth in a fully open adoption. **(503)**

**Dinwoodie, April** - is Chief Executive of the Donaldson Adoption Institute. She is a nationally recognized thought leader on adoption and foster care. She is a co-founder and Vice President of the Board of Fostering Change for Children, a progressive nonprofit that helps drive innovation in the child welfare system. Before joining DAI, April created a specialized mentoring program called "Adoptment," in which adults who were adopted and/or spent time in foster care serve as mentors to youth in care. April is a transracially adopted person. **(303)**

**Donovan, Arlene** - is a birthmother in reunion for almost ten years with her daughter, Arlene lives in Southern California. She has two other sons and several grandchildren. She is the CUB Treasurer and is active in adoption reform. **(706)**

**Ellerman, Mei Mei Akwai (Ph.D., MA, BA)** - was adopted at 7 months [NYC], lived and studied in Europe until age 23. After Harvard Ph.D. she taught Italian literature and film for 30 years. Social activist, writer [2 memoirs in progress], she is Co-founder of the An-Ya Project and scholar at Brandeis Women's Studies Research Center. **(402)**

**Falco, Kevin John** - is a Student at the University of West Georgia. Birth son of Tina Miller-Primus and Kevin Primus who planned his adoption, and adopted son of the Falcos. **(503)**

**Falco, Rebecca Patton (J.D., M.A., M.T.S.)** - has been branch director of an adoption agency, litigation associate, coordinator of sexual assault support services, high school teacher, and youth minister. She is an adoptive mother of five, with articles published in *Adoption Today*. Rebecca has two books: *Everything In Its Own Time* and *Sunday Confessions*. **(503)**

**Frank, Derek (MA)** - An adoptee, father, filmmaker is in reunion and actively directing films about adoption experiences. **(301)**

**Friel-Williams, Susan (Licensed Investigator)** - is the Southern Regional Director of the American Adoption Congress. She started her career in Family search in the 1980's. She is the Former Adoption Search Host for America Online and a licensed investigator in Florida who specializes in Family and Media Search. **(AAC 2016 Welcome! ,502)**

**Gay, Amandine (MA)** - After graduating from the Institute of Political Science in Lyon with a masters in communication, in 2007, Amandine Gay turns to drama in 2008 and enters the Conservatory of Dramatic Art in Paris 16. She immediately starts performing on stage, film and television. In 2012 she decides to turn to writing and starts with scripts for short television series. In 2014, she makes her directorial debut with a report on the #ContreExhibitB events and a feature-length Afro-feminist documentary entitled : *Speak Up/Make Your Way*. She is also a regular contributor to the information website, Slate.fr. **(505)**

**Gibney, Shannon (MA, MFA)** - is a writer, educator, and activist in Minneapolis. Her Young Adult novel *See No Color*, which features themes on transracial adoption, will be released by Carolrhoda Lab in November, 2015. Her writing has appeared in a variety of venues, including The Crisis, Gawker, and Inside Higher Ed. Gibney is Faculty in English at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), where she teaches critical and creative writing, journalism, and African diasporic topics. **(505)**

**Gmerek, Beverly (MPS, BS)** - is an adoptive parent and marketing professional her background includes specialized recruitment of rural adoptive/foster families. She has a BS in advertising from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Master in Prevention Science from the University of Oklahoma. **(202)**

**Grayson, Nisha - (BA, MS)** - is a graduate student that has established a blog about her experiences of being a trans-racial adoptee, shared her perspective and narrative at adoption agency trainings for adoptive parents and social workers, volunteered with Pact An Adoption Alliance, and recently became a co-facilitator for the PACER Triad Support Group. **(FILM)**

**Griffith-Jones, Kristi (MC/SC)** - has been the Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Specialist for Colorado Department of Human Services for the past four years. Ms. Griffith-Jones has presented at the National At-Risk Youth Education Network conference (2014) and the North American Council on Adoptable Children conference (2015) on foster care and adoption issues. In addition, Ms. Griffith-Jones is a former foster parent and adopted two teens from Ethiopia. **(202)**

**Hagland, Mark - (BA, MS)** - is an adult Korean adoptee. He was born in South Korea in 1960, and adopted in infancy by parents of Norwegian-American and German-American descent. He was raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and attended the University of Wisconsin (BA) and Northwestern University. **(Keynote, 302)**

**Hasegawa, Pam (BA)** - was galvanized at an ALMA meeting in 1975 and joined the ranks of adoption reformers. Chairing the NJ ALMA chapter 1978-1985, she moved to Japan and rejoined colleagues in NJ to continue working for legislative change which resulted in a new adoption records law (FINALLY) enacted in 2014. **(Welcome to AAC 2016)**

**Haskitt, Kimberley** - With private investigation training from the University of Washington, Kimberley Haskitt connects adoptees to their lost family members. As a professional researcher and writer, she focuses on the power of DNA testing and its impact on adoptees in searches. She intends to enroll in a genealogy certification program this fall. **(205)**

**Heineman, Toni** - is the founder and Executive Director of A Home Within, a national non-profit dedicated to meeting the emotional needs of current and former foster children. She teaches, mentors, and writes extensively on relational trauma. Her most recent publication is Relational Treatment of Trauma: Stories of Loss and Hope. **(604)**

**Holden, Lori** - writes at LavenderLuz.com. She's the author of The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption: Helping Your Child Grow Up Whole, written with her daughter's birth mom and acclaimed by the adoption constellation. She presents around the US. She has written for The Huffington Post, BlogHer, Parenting and Adoptive Families. **(605)**

**Holtz, Meggin Nam(BFA)** - A Korean adoptee, works as an actress, artist and filmmaker in NYC. Nam has performed on Broadway and the West End in 'The King and I,' and has toured the US in 'Miss Saigon' and "Flower Drum Song." She is producing a documentary on adoption, 'Found in Korea.' **(402)**

**Ito, Susan - (MFA)** - is the author of The Mouse Room. She co-edited the literary anthology A Ghost At Heart's Edge: Stories & Poems of Adoption (North Atlantic Books). She is a creative non-fiction editor at Literary Mama, and her work has appeared in Growing Up Asian American, Choice, Hip Mama, The Bellevue Literary Review, Making More Waves and elsewhere. She has performed her solo show, The Ice Cream Gene, around the US. She teaches in the Creative Non-fiction MFA Program at Bay Path University, and is working on a theatrical adaption of Untold, stories of reproductive stigma. Her website is <http://susanito.com>. **(PLAY)**

**James, Kimberly** - Country and Rock Productions at GA Music Awards and Owner at CBM Records. Mother of seven, including Skye (currently age 18), who was adopted by the Falcos at birth in a fully open adoption. **(503)**

**Johnston, Jennifer** - In her search for her own family, Jennifer Johnston developed many skills that helped her thrive as a search angel. She was able to reunite in 2013, and after offering to help one person in need, she has built a network of 300 adoptees in as little as one year. She is passionate about helping others and dedicates more than 60 hours per week to helping adoptees fill in the blanks and reunite them with their lost ones. She is honored to be a small part in their life story. **(205)**

**Jones, Amanda (LCW, JD)** - is a licensed clinical social worker and attorney, working with children, adolescents, and families. She completed her graduate training with in Michigan's foster care system. She currently works as an Adoption Preservation Therapist specializing in improving attachment to heal adoptive families. Additionally, Mandy provides therapy through The Theraplay Institute. **(604)**

**Kish, Richard** - is the spouse to a first mother. Ignorant to the complexities of adoption until he married, he speaks from the perspective of an outsider, watching someone he loves struggle with adoption trauma, search, reunion and the effects of all on their marriage. **(401)**

**Koley, Cathy** - Adoptee Speaker/ Writer/ Trauma-Sensitive Yoga Instructor. After reuniting at age 43, Cathy reluctantly uncovered her own adoption wounds and found herself on an unplanned healing journey involving traditional and non-traditional therapies. This included YOGA, through which Cathy found SIGNIFICANT HEALING, TRANSFORMATION and a NEW CAREER PATH (Yoga)

**Kramer, Wendy (B.A.)** - is Co-Founder and Director of the Donor Sibling Registry (DSR). The DSR was founded in 2000 by Wendy and her son Ryan to assist individuals conceived as a result of sperm, egg or embryo donation that are seeking to make mutually desired contact with others with whom they share genetic ties. With more than 47,000 members, the DSR has helped to connect more than 12,350 of those with their half siblings and/or sperm or egg donors. (405)

**Lopez, Julie (LICSW, Ph.D )** - is the owner and founder of The Viva Center located in the heart of Washington DC. The Viva Center is a 25 practitioner healing center offering advanced mind therapies for custom tailored and results oriented therapy. Dr. Lopez specializes in trauma and addictions with a deep interest in healing adoption trauma. (501)

**Lowinger, Phyllis (MS, LCSW)** - has been in private practice for over 30 years. Her specialty is infertility, adoption & third party reproduction. She has been a support group leader for RESOLVE for groups for individuals and couples exploring alternative family building options, women over 40, males with fertility issues. In addition to private practice she has worked in an orphanage counseling teen age girls, and latency age boys, worked for several adoption agencies. She has presented workshops at the 92nd St Y, ARC Provincetown program, AAC and has been an assistant with Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao's postgraduate adoption for mental health professionals in New York city. (103)

**Madsen, Shayne (J.D.)** - is the Leader of the Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs Practice Group for Jackson Kelly, P.C. She has represented clients before the Colorado legislature for over 20 years, and has connected with members of her birth family. (304)

**Manolakis, Natalie** - Searched for her birth parents unassisted for more than 20 years. After researching DNA testing and opening a Spokeo account, she reunited with her loved ones. Inspired by this success, she co-founded a Utah adoptees search and reunion group in December 2014 that now has over 350 members. (205)

**McClintock, Reshma** - was abandoned in Calcutta in 1980 and adopted to the US at 3 months old. She's passionate about sharing the heart of an adoptee with the world. Reshma is currently writing her memoir in hopes of providing a better understanding of the struggles international adoptees face. (201)

**McDermott, Caroline (BA)** - is the birthmother of Abby, whom she made an open adoption plan for four years ago. She understands the needs of birthmothers who have recently placed a child and the challenges of openness. Caroline is a swim coach and teacher who enjoys helping others learn and grow. (106)

**Miller-Primus, Tina** - Assistant Manager at Casey's General Stores in Columbus, NE. Mother of four, including Kevin John (currently age 19), who was adopted by the Falcos at birth in a fully open adoption. **(503)**

**Murray, Betsy Clark** - is a registered lobbyist in Colorado and an adoptive mom of three adult sons. She has proudly represented Adoptees in Search for the past decade, and has been well respected at the State Capital as a passionate advocate for clients for over 25 years. **(304)**

**Nielsen, Kathleen (MSW, Ph.D Candidate)** - has a personal connection to adoption as a first/birth mother in a transracial adoption. **(303, Keynote Panel)**

**Nydam, Ron (B.A., M.Div, D.Min., Ph.D)** - has served professionally as a pastor, a pastoral psychotherapist, and a professor of pastoral care and all along has maintained an interest in the dynamics of relinquishment and adoption. He is the author of adoptees come of age: living within two families, a book that presents the challenges that adoptees face as they engage their stories of relinquishment. **(606)**

**O'Brien, Marienne** - Is both an adoptee and a birth mother. She's been in a stalled reunion with her son for 7 years. Making art around adoption themes is usually how she finds her voice. **(706)**

**O'Connor, Susan Harris (MSW)** - is an AAC Board Member, Vice President of Quality Assurance and Director of Adoption Services at Children's Services of Roxbury. She was the recipient of the 2014 Outstanding Practitioner in Adoption Award from St. John's University. Susan is an author and national solo performance artist of The Harris Narratives: An Introspective Study of a Transracial Adoptee. She has performed her works over 100 times at places such as the NAACP, Starbucks Coffee, Smith College, Harvard Medical and Yale Law. **(402)**

**Parsons, LeAnne (Certified Professional Life Coach, Energy Leadership Master Practitioner )** - is a Certified Professional Leadership & Wellbeing Coach serving the adoption community. As a reunited adoptee, speaker, radio host, and advocate she empowers others to connect, collaborate, and commit to revealing the myths, and realities of adoption. LeAnne life purpose is devoted to working with families and individuals as they navigate the complexities of their adoption journey. **(504)**

**Pavao, Joyce Maguire (Ed.D., LCSW, LMFT )** - Dr Joyce Maguire Pavao, Founder of PACT, Pavao Consulting, and CFFC., is a Lecturer in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and author and adopted person. Lifetime member and past Regional Director of AAC, several awards and the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Award for Angels in Adoption 2000. **(Keynote, 403)**

**Pena, Rosemaria (MA, Ph.D. Candidate)** - is an adoptee and the president of the Black German Heritage and Research Association and a Ph.D. candidate in Childhood Studies at Rutgers-University. Rosemarie has authored book chapters and presented internationally on Post WWII U.S. adoptions of Black Germans. **(101)**

**Perkins, Katy (LMSW-AP)** - has provided training and educational sessions about domestic violence, sexual assault, and adoption for fifteen years. She has served as a member of the Board of Directors of AAC and TXCARE, and is an active member of STAR. In private practice at Kingsman Consulting, Katy connects people separated from their families of origin with community resources and provides support to individuals considering adopting. Katy is committed to bridging social justice movements and advocating for marginalized groups. **(104)**

**Probasco, Kris (LCSW, LSCSW)** - is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker practicing in the field of infertility, reproduction and adoption. Kris operates Adoption and Fertility Resources, a licensed child placing agency in Missouri and Kansas. Kris has provided adoption and fertility services and counseling for birth, genetic-donor and adoptive families since 1972. **(204)**

**Richesson, Lisa** - is the birthmother of a bi-racial child. She gave up her child to adoption. It was 1970 and being an unwed white mother of a black man's child was a dark and unforgivable stigma - to family, friends and society. She has written a memoir of her experience in both relinquishing her child and subsequently meeting him 18 years later. **(602)**

**Roessle, Denise** - At age 19, Denise Roessle surrendered her son to adoption. Later marrying at age 31, she never had more children. She was reunited 19 years ago through ISRR. Their reunion experience is chronicled in her memoir, *Second-Chance Mother*. Active in the post-adoption community since 1998, she facilitated a PACER triad support group, has been widely published on adoption topics, and speaks frequently on adoption reunion. **(401)**

**Saine, Lori Hon.** - Colorado State Representative Lori Saine is proud to have been a primary sponsor of five bills passed by the Colorado Legislature and signed by the Governor in the past two years. She and her husband and daughter live in Denver, CO. **(304)**

**Scheer, Debbie (BA)** - is a comedian/emcee an adult adoptee and mom to two adopted boys. While she believes that adoption needs to be taken very seriously she also strives to show parents and prospective parents that finding humor throughout the emotional adoption journey is key to "surviving" the adoption process. **(702)**

**Scobee, Lori (BA, LSW)** - is a birthmother who made an adoption plan for her daughter in 1989. The adoption is closed and she is not in reunion with her daughter. Lori has been a social worker for 23 years and currently works as a Birth Parent Counselor at Caring for Kids. **(106)**

**Stallard, Dana (LMSW)** - is currently the Adoptee Services Coordinator in the Modern Family Center at Spence-Chapin, coordinating a youth mentor-ship program as well as ongoing events for the adoption community. She also manages all requests from adoptees and birth/first parents who are seeking adoption information and family history. Dana is a Korean adoptee in reunion with her birth family. **(603)**

**Sweetser, Pam (BS)** - is the founder and Executive Director of Heritage Camps for Adoptive Families, an organization that provides authentic, identity building experiences for children and adults adopted from around the world, including the U.S. Pam is the adoptive mom of two adult children, a daughter born in Korea and a son born in India. **(105)**

**Tash, Andrew (JD, MA, MA)** - Birth Father, Late Discovery adoptee, teaches and produces Media to raise awareness about the perspective many adoptees carry into their everyday lives. **(301)**

**Teller, Delores (BS,MSW, LCSW)** - is a reunited birth/first mother, psychotherapist, and social activist. She was recently featured in Jean Strauss's Documentary '*Four Birthmothers, For Mothers.*' She was featured in Rolling Stone Magazine for her social activism. **(Keynote Panel, 705)**

**Thomas, Kevin** - I'm a musician, an artist, a single dad, an adoptee....I also work as a Multimedia Specialist (primarily video production) for Penn State University Main Campus (State College, PA) in the Family Health department of the Biobehavioral College. I've been searching for over 20 years and have had recent success after DNA tests with 23andme, FTDNA and Ancestry.com. **(701)**

**Togman, Jeffery M. (Ph.D)** - Jeffrey Togman (Ph.D.) is associate professor of political science at film at Seton Hall University. He has produced and directed two feature-length documentaries, *We're Not Blood and Home*. Togman is the author of the book *The Ramparts of Nations*, a study of immigration politics in France and the United States. **(FILM)**

**Uhrlaub, Rich (M.Ed)** - has been active in Colorado legislative reform for over 20 years and served on the AAC Legislative Committee for 15 of those years. **(304, 404)**

**Varon, Lee (M.Ed., LICSW)** - is a clinical social worker in private practice in the Boston area. She has worked in the field of adoption for over 25 years. In 1984 she co-founded The Adoption Network -- a counseling and consulting agency. She has written two book about adoption: *Adopting On Your Own*, *The Complete Guide to Adoption as a Single Parent*, and *Single Adoptive Parents: Our Stories*. **(406)**

**Varon, Jose** - Jose was adopted from El Salvador in 1984 when he was 8 months old. **(406)**

**Verrier, Nancy (LMFT)** - is a therapist specializing in adoption issues. She is an advocate for children and the author of *The Primal Wound*, a book adoptees call their "bible," as well as *Coming Home to Self*. As a recognized authority on the effects of relinquishment and adoption, she is requested to be an international speaker on the subject. She is the recipient of the Book of the Year Award from CERA in 1993 and the Emma May Vilardi Humanitarian Award from AAC in 2003. **(506)**

**Waite, Vanessa** - is the Director of Public Relations for Spokeo, a people search engine focused on helping individuals reunite. She oversees and executes all public outreach programs including community programs like the Spokeo Search Angels initiative which honors the volunteers who help adoptees and their families search for one another. **(205)**

**Watson, Daryn** - is a reunited adoptee of 20 years. He is contributing author to two adoption books "The Adoptee Support Guide" and "Flip the Script." He writes in his blog "AdoptionReunion-Realities.wordpress.com. Daryn began his journey of recovery in 1994 and has been sober for over 22 years. He currently lives in Austin, TX with his wife Christine. **(601)**

**Waugh, Marilyn Mendenhall (MA)** - is a reunited birth/first mother, Director of Adoption Concerns Triangle of Topeka, a search and support group serving those in Northeastern Kansas, past president of the American Adoption Congress and currently the AAC state representative for Kansas. For over 20 years Marilyn has worked in the Post Adoption Division of Kansas Children and Family Services processing and completing approximately 500 record and search requests per year. **(PANEL, 704)**

**Wilson, Mary** - is a first mother who has dedicated passion in helping families reconnect. She is one of the Texas State Representatives for the American Adoption Congress and recently helped lobby for OBC Access in Texas. She is a search and support group leader in her local area and works well with agency professionals and legislative contacts. **(502)**

**Wind, Garnet (Ed.D.)** - Dr. Wind, hosted "*The Stolen Generation*" event at UW-Platteville. Her poems are featured in *Poems and Prose in America's 570th Language* (2009), the *Stolen Generation DVD* (2008), and *Pen On Writers' Guild Anthology 2008*. Dr. Wind has presented poetry workshops at the University of Wisconsin and Bacone College. Dr. Wind was an original committee member on the First Nation's Orphan Association pow wow (2001). **(102)**

**Woods, Krista (LCSW)** - has been a conference presenter and trainer on issues of foster care, adoption, child abuse and neglect since 1994. She is also a presenter on crisis intervention, chronic mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. She served as the past AAC Professional Liaison and is the AAC Illinois State Representative. She is the founder of Integrity Clinical Consulting & Training which provides therapy and clinical services, case consultation, and training across the country. **(104)**

**Woolston, Amanda Transue (MSS, LSW)** - is a social worker, author, and speaker serving the adoption community through individual and family clinical work, groups, writing and teaching, and policy advocacy. She has participated in more than a dozen publishing projects, including authoring, *The Declassified Adoptee: Essays of an Adoption Activist*. Amanda is the founder of Lost Daughters, a collaborative writing project featuring more than 30 adopted women, and the founder of Pennsylvania Adoptee Rights, a grassroots policy advocacy movement. Amanda was featured as an activist by Yahoo!Voices in 2009, and is listed in Adoptive Families Magazine's Top 20 Adoption Blogs. **(Keynote, 302)**

**Zoppi, Jeannine (Ph.D., MA, BS)** - is a Clinical Psychologist with a private practice in New Jersey. She specializes in the treatment of adoption issues, trauma and PTSD and has presented on the topic of adoption at many conferences. Dr. Zoppi was selected as New Jersey Psychological Association's Psychologist of the Year for 2014. **(305)**

Please take a few moments and jot down your thoughts so when you go home and fill out our on line survey you will remember what you thought about each.

## **Wednesday**

**Keynote:** Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao

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## **Thursday**

**Keynote:** Amanda Transue-Woolston

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100 Workshop Series Attended Workshop #

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200 Workshop Series Attended Workshop #

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## **Friday**

**Keynote:** Dr. Amanda Baden

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300 Workshop Series Attended Workshop #

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400 Workshop Series Attended Workshop #

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## Saturday

**Keynote Panel:** Marilyn Mendenhall Waugh, Delores Teller, Kathleen Nielsen

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500 Workshop Series Attended Workshop #

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600 Workshop Series Attended Workshop #

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700 Workshop Series Attended Workshop #

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**Keynote:** Mark Hagland

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# *A Special Thank You*

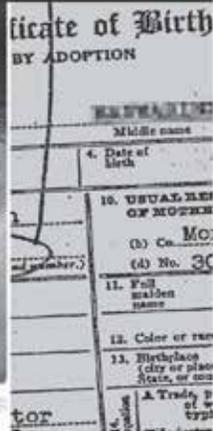


SPOKEO -Spokeo is a people search engine focused on helping people research and reconnect with one another. Spokeo has hosted the Search Angel Awards since 2012 honoring the giving volunteers that dedicate themselves to helping families seeking to reconnect post-adoption. For more information about search angels and the Spokeo Search Angel award winners, please visit [www.spokeoangels.com](http://www.spokeoangels.com)





**SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 9-11, 2016**



The St. John's University—Montclair State University Adoption Initiative Presents:

**THE NINTH BIENNIAL ADOPTION INITIATIVE CONFERENCE**

## Myth and Reality in Adoption: Transforming Practice Through Lessons Learned

**ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:** We will explore how adoption is portrayed on multiple levels: personally, interpersonally, socially, and politically. The conference will address the connections and dissonances between adoption's history, mythology, and lived reality, and which propose active guidelines for future practice.

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND:** The expanded adoption realm including researchers, social workers, clinicians, community and family members, adoption professionals, etc.

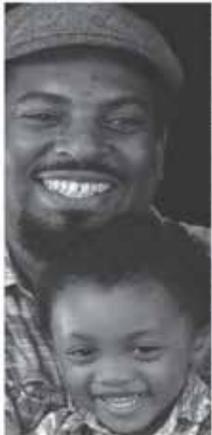


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