

DRAFT ONLY

**The 36th Annual
American Adoption Congress
International Conference**

**Cambridge, Massachusetts
March 25 - 29, 2015**



**EDUCATE, ADVOCATE,
LEGISLATE!**

Hyatt Regency, Cambridge

**Wednesday March 25 – Sunday March 29, 2015
At the
Hyatt Regency Cambridge, Overlooking Boston**

Wednesday ~ March 25

12:00 – 6:00 PM ~ Registration Open

4:00 – 5:30 PM ~ Dinner on your own

5:30 – 7:00 PM ~ **AAC: Welcome!** Join the adventure awaiting us!
(Charles View Ballroom)

Come and get acquainted with other newcomers as well as AAC
Board members and AAC State
Representatives.

7:30 – 10:00 PM ~ **FILM – LOGGERHEADS** (Thomas Paine A &
B)

Join us in watching this 2005 film about three overlapping stories of
estranged families in three regions of North Carolina, then join in the
discussion with Diana Ricketts the birthmother this movie was created
after, and Tim Kirkman, the director who had the vision to see the story!

Thursday ~ March 26

6:30 – 9:00 AM ~ Registration Open

9:00 – 9:15 AM ~ Introductions & Announcements

9:15 – 10:30 AM ~ **Keynote: Bennett Greenspan**
(Presidents Ballroom D)

Genetic Genealogy Finding Your Past, Finding Your Future

10:30 AM – 11:00AM ~ BREAK

10:45 AM– 1:45 PM ~ Registration Open

11:00 AM – 12:15P

100 WORKSHOP SERIES

101 A Family Systems Approach to Working with Adoptive Families

Presenter - Joyce Maguire Pavao (Ballroom A)

All members of the adoption triad experience losses, and adoption does not “fix” these problems. The adoptee develops with these losses as the very foundation of his/her life. This workshop will present models for treatment, looking at these concerns as normal developmental crises, needing psycho-education and strategies for strength

102 We Pushed the On Button

Presenter - Nicole Burton (Ballroom B)

After filmmaker Jean Strauss encouraged us at the San Francisco AAC conference to turn our stories into captivating 1-3 minute videos, we did it. We'll screen a selection of self-created short adoption videos and share our experience and enthusiasm for storytelling and adoption reform through video.

103 Common Worries of Adoptive Parents

Presenter Jeannine Zoppi (Ballroom D)

This workshop will address worries typical of adoptive parents. Through discussion, adoptive parents will have opportunity to develop better ways to cope with feelings about adoption and experience more enriching relationships with their children. Adoption professionals will be provided with strategies to help adoptive parents develop increased self-understanding and self-confidence.

104 Transforming Trauma in Art

Presenters Zara Phillips, Sarah Greer (Crispus Attucks)

We will share our experience about how writing and performing has helped us heal our trauma. Through exercises, conversation and questions we will guide our participants through our shared experience, and give them tools to 'right' their lives.

105 Fatherhood: The Laws that Bind

Presenter Kathleen Nielsen (Lobby-William Dawes A)

Despite having been in effect in most states for decades, putative father laws remain a mystery to the population at large. An overview of historical and contemporary aspects of these laws will give way to a discussion about Kathleen's research and its impact on ethical social work practice.

106 How to Internet Search for Family Connections

Presenter Marilyn Waugh (Lobby-William Dawes B)

Searching for family members on the Internet can be difficult if you don't know sites that can be helpful. Learn how to search with free websites and low cost resources. Several handouts, with search examples, will be provided to participants. A question/answer discussion period will follow the presentation.

107 Promising the World: First Mothers Perspective on Modern Day Adoption

Presenters Lynette Leming, Meg Wright (Lobby-Thomas Paine A)

Families often struggle with the concept of openness in their adoption experience. Many states have incorporated post-adoption contracts into adoption plans. Signing an agreement and being able to navigate this relationship are two separate matters. Viewing this dynamic in relationship terms will empower individuals to experience this relationship successfully.

12:15PM – 1:45 ~ **Lunch with your Region**

1:45PM – 3:00PM

200 WORKSHOP SERIES

201 What My White Parents Didn't Know & Why I Turned Out OK Anyway

Presenter April Dinwoodie (Lobby – Ballroom A)

Transracially adopted presenter offers first-hand experience and practical ideas to address inevitable race and diversity challenges within adoption and foster care. Attendees can look forward to an overview of research combined with personal narrative presentation, as well as open and dynamic discussion about race, class and culture.

202 When the Bloom goes Off the Rose: Rejuvenating Your Faltering Reconnection

Presenters Michael Grand, Monica Byrne

When the excitement begins to fade following a reunion, many express disappointment that their reconnections to kin have not met their expectations. This workshop will focus on strategies to continue to develop positive connections between reunited kin.

203 One Shoe Does Not Fit All

Presenter Pekitta Tynes (Lobby-Ballroom D)

A professional comedienne, an adoptee, a foster child, and a foundling uses humor to tell stories about being adopted and the continued search for her biological parents through DNA Testing. Share some laughs and find inspiration knowing “One shoe does not fit all!” This workshop will open for Q&A.

204 Male Adoptee Workshop

Presenter Rich Uhrlaub (Lobby-Crispus Attucks)

Male adoptees face some unique, though manageable, challenges when it comes to navigating our identity, relationships, career and emotions(like it or not, we have them too). First-timers and regulars welcome! NOTE: Workshop is only open to male adoptees. Others are welcome to attend the Friday evening MA support group.

205 Open Adoption – A Parent's Journey

Presenter Thomas Rector (Lobby-William Dawes A)

This workshop explains a father's journey developing a methodology based upon current neuro-scientific research and practical application of the Biosocial Cognition Model to open adoption. The model connects a child's behavior and environmental influences affecting the child, and hones a parents' ability to assess the child's needs.

1:45PM – 3:00PM

200 WORKSHOP SERIES (Continued)

206 Search and Reunion: Ask an Angel

Presenter Vanessa Waite

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!

207 Reforming Disclosure Laws in Ontario –

A Legislator’s Hands-on Experience

Presenter Marilyn Churley (Lobby-Thomas Paine A)

As a legislator I worked with adoption disclosure advocates, my colleagues on both sides of the legislature and the media to build support to reform disclosure laws. This workshop is about the importance of having a coalition of the adoption triangle working together and supporting each other to achieve success.

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM ~ Break

3:00 PM– 6:00 PM ~ Registration Open

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM ~ Open Mic Reading (**Ballroom A**)

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM ~ Support Groups - (**See Page 12**)

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM ~ **Art Room** – (**Aquarium**)

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM ~ **Triad Voices a Support Group Experience**

Presenter - Anne Coleman (**Cambridge A**)

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM ~ Dinner on Your Own

7:45 PM – 10:00 PM ~ **PLAY – BIO-HAZARD: a relative comedy**
w/ Sarah Elizabeth Greer (Ballroom C/D)

Raised in a conservative PA Dutch community, Sarah Elizabeth Greer sees her world turned upside down when her quirky, over-the-top Greek biological mother crashes into her life, sending her on a hilarious, moving and occasionally pathological extreme journey to come to terms with the definitions of her existence and overall purpose in the world

9:30 PM – 11:30 PM ~ Getting to Know You

Friday ~ March 27

6:30 – 9:00 AM ~ Registration Open

9:00 – 9:15 AM ~ Introductions & Announcements

9:15 – 10:30 AM ~ **Keynote: David Smolin**
(Presidents Ballroom D)

*Legislating What We Know,
Against the Rising Tide of the Demand for Children*

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM ~ Break

10:45 AM– 12:00 PM ~ Registration Open

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

300 WORKSHOP SERIES

301 'Birth' Records as Lies & Legal Fiction in the Era of Assisted Reproduction

Presenters David Smolin, Desiree Smolin(Lobby-Ballroom A)

Adoption opened the door to the legal fiction of adoptive parents as "birth" parents with the issuing of a new "birth" certificate, Assisted Reproductive Technologies are opening the door to an era when even original birth certificates are based on "intended parenthood" rather than childbirth or genetics.

302 Why Traditional Talk Therapy is Not Enough ... Adoption Trauma Resolution

Presenter Julie Lopez (Lobby- Ballroom B)

This professional workshop outlines the clinical tasks required for successful trauma resolution as specifically applied to the adult adoptee and their unique experience/symptom presentation. Specific mind/body advanced interventions will be discussed with clear

handouts to guide the lay person in selecting a treatment method effective for them.

303 Genetic Sexual Attraction

Presenter Eileen Skahill (Lobby-Crispus Attucks)

This primary goal of this workshop is for safe, open and honest discussion of a subject matter very common in adoption reunion but rarely discussed due to misunderstanding and an unfounded connection with the taboo of incest. All members of the adoption constellation are deeply affected by this issue.

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

300 WORKSHOP SERIES (Continued)

304 How Our Parent Experience Led Us from Empathy to Adoption-Attuned Solutions

Presenter Lynn Cooper, Joann DiStefano (Lobby-William Dawes A)

Our experience as adoptive parents of children with challenging behaviors led us to become professional coaches. Using coaching strategies and solutions, we assist families experiencing adoption challenges, including trauma and attachment issues. Our narrative and activities will enlighten participants to the power of coaching and its positive influence on families.

305 Open Adoption: Lessons from Research

Presenter Deborah Siegel (Lobby-William Dawes B)

The research literature on open adoption, including one 22 year study of 22 families living with open adoption, indicates lessons for first/birth parents, adoptive parents and professionals involved in the open adoption experience. This workshop delineates guidelines for practice that enhance the likelihood of successful open adoption relationships.

306 Reunion After Twenty Plus Years

Presenter Fran Gus-Levin, (CO-PRESENTER?) (Lobby-Thomas Paine A)

There has been much discussion about new reunions. But what happens when the reunion is no longer new? Presenters will discuss the history of their reunions, problems encountered and solved, and what they see in their futures. Audience members will be encouraged to share and ask questions as well.

307 The Poetry of International Adoption

Presenter Mi Ok Bruining (Lobby Thomas Paine B)

I will be reading my published poetry on issues of international adoption, Korean American identity development, ethnic pride, searching, cultural displacement, psychic homelessness, race, and dual heritage. I will be exploring creative expression using poetry, spoken word and written narrative as we explore international adoptee issues.

12:15 – 1:45 PM ~ **Awards Luncheon (Ballroom D)**

1:45 – 3:00 PM ~ **Keynote: Rhonda Roorda (Ballroom D)**

*Beyond the Controversy and Scholarship of Transracial Adoption:
The Lessons Learned in Real Time from a Black American Transracial
Adoptee*

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM ~ **ART ROOM/ART SHOW (Aquarium)**

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM ~ Support Groups

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM ~ Dinner on Your Own / Downtime

7:00 PM – 9:30 PM

FILM – Film maker Chris Wilson (Ballroom C & D)

‘He Has Your Eyes’

Chris Wilson’s documentary film *You Have His Eyes* is a gripping film. Christopher, a transracial adoptee, documents his search for his father. Chris has already found his birthmother, but is curious about his father’s identity and whereabouts. When he begins his search, all Chris has is a grainy passport picture of his father, a few stories from his birth mother, and a determination to find the man who shares his features

9:30 PM – 11:30 PM ~ Getting to Know You

Saturday ~ March 28

6:30 – 9:00 AM ~ Registration Open

7:45 – 9:00 AM – Legislative Panel

9:15 AM– 10:30 AM

400 WORKSHOP SERIES

401 PUSH the ‘ON’ BUTTON: The Importance of Documenting Our Life Stories

Presenter Jean Strauss (Lobby-Ballroom A)

The new literature of the 21st century is film. This workshop is presented in two parts: an examination of how films impact legislative reform, and a mini-class on how to get started in documenting your own life stories. Topics include venues for outreach and impact, as well as equipment.

402 How to Roar: Internet & Blogging Best Practices for the Adoption Community

Presenter Claudia D’Arcy (Lobby Ballroom B)

While the internet has been an amazing tool to bring the adoption community together, there are basic best practices to utilize to really amplify our voices and reach a wider audience. Whether blogging, sharing or tweeting, knowing what Google wants and how to use SEO can benefit us all.

403 Establishing and Maintaining Healthy Relationships in Open Adoptions

Presenter Karen Cheyney (Lobby-Ballroom D)

During this interactive workshop, attendees will learn about the building blocks of healthy relationships, the range of possible relationships, the challenges/benefits of open adoptions, how to keep contact safe and positive, how to reduce negative feelings/conflicts, and the many ways to maintain contact in today's online world

404 It DOES Take a Village: Supporting Adoptive Families

Presenter Etta Lapen Davis (Lobby-William Dawes A)

Many families underestimate support needed for children with complex histories or challenging behaviors/medical issues. They may feel isolated and unable to ask for help. Presenter offers templates for pro-active support plans for prospective adopters, and tools/strategies for building support networks that can help to prevent disruption and dissolution.

9:15 AM– 10:30 AM

400 WORKSHOP SERIES (Continued)

405 Recognition, Understanding and Help for the Adoptive Parent Experience

Presenter Nancy Verrier (Lobby-William Dawes B)

This workshop will provide information that will help adoptive parents better understand their children, as well as bring empathy to their own experience. As an adoptive parent, an adoption therapist for 30 years, and the author to two books on adoption, I bring a unique perspective to the subject.

406 The Adoption Roundtable

Presenter Rhonda Roorda, Krista Woods, Susan Harris O'Connor, Chris Wilson, (Lobby-Molly Pitcher)

The plates and the silverware are out, the adoption "food" is being set on the table and the guest list has already been made. Too many times, an important adoption voice is never invited to be part of the planning or even invited to the table. Come hear....

407 The Adoption Closet: When The Unmentionables Become Unmanageable

Presenter Leanne Parsons (Thomas Paine A)

Opening the door into the sacred closet of adoption will reveal how grief and loss, gratefulness and forgiveness, fear and insecurities, connection and rejection fill the spaces, rest on the hangers and sit on the shelves behind closed doors. This is an interactive workshop created to impact, challenge and inspire.

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM – BREAK

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM

500 WORKSHOP SERIES

501 Practical Applications of Genetic Genealogy

Presenter Bennett Greenspan (Lobby-Ballroom A)

DNA testing can help to fill in blanks left by incomplete, inaccurate or non-existent traditional paper trails. This presentation explains how to interpret the results of genetic tests to enhance your research, using examples of the types of information that can be gleaned from mtDNA, yDNA and autosomal DNA tests.

502 Work In and With the Positive: Ethics & Strength-Based Approaches in Adoption Clinical Practice

Presenter Krista Woods (Lobby-Ballroom B)

Participants will learn various clinical approaches for all age groups of clients impacted by adoption/foster care. Discussions will focus on using the strength-based approach in helping clients achieve the most out of therapy. We will also discuss common clinical challenges and themes.

503 Lost Daughters: Diverse Narratives Within the Collective Adoptee Voice

Presenter Karen Pickell, Jennifer Anastasi, Rosita Gonzalez, Rebecca Hawkes, Lara Trace Hentz, Cathy Heslin, Amanda H.L. Transue-Woolston, Angela Tucker (Lobby-Ballroom D)

A panel of diverse adopted women from the blog Lost Daughters discuss the challenge of amplifying the collective adoptee voice while respecting individuals' stories. We will explore places where our narratives intersect or diverge and examine how adoptees can build supportive, compassionate communities despite our differing journeys and viewpoints.

504 Reunion in 3D: Taking a Look at Reunion Through a Different Set of Glasses

Presenter Bonnie Burnell (Lobby-Crispus Attucks)

We easily see search and reunion as two dimensional; it can be helpful to view in 3D. How do we cope when we find ourselves grieving and celebrating simultaneously? We often consider reunion a destination when we may find comfort and understanding in finding our place(s) along a continuum.

505 Mortality Awareness: Integrating Difficult Medical Information

Presenter Denise Hoffman (Lobby-William Dawes A)

Sudden death is always a shock. In reunion and/or post-reunion, it can feel even more destabilizing. In this seminar, we will explore how receiving such information can impact one's identity, navigating an often turbulent health care system, and ultimately becoming more empowered by the experience.

506 Birthfathers: The Questions You Always Wanted Answered

Presenters James McGuigan, Paul Schibbelhute (Lobby-William Dawes B)

Jim and Paul will provide a discussion regarding their experiences as birth fathers. How the experience has impacted their lives and that of their families. Involve the audience in taking questions and asking what would ask your birth father. Provide an open forum for the audiences.

507 The Transcultural Nature of All Adoptions

Presenter Joyce Maguire Pavao (Lobby-Thomas Paine A)

A look at how all families are transcultural, even if not transracial, etc., and how to recognize culture and the ways it is integrated or disintegrated when people come together in marriage or adoption. This is for anyone interested in the world of adoption and will leave time for discussion.

12:00 PM – 1:30 ~ Lunch – On Your Own

1:45 – 3:00 PM ~ **Keynote: Rev. Dr. Nicholas Cooper Lewter (Ballroom D)**

Wretched No More: Healing Holes in the Soul

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM ~ Break

3:00 PM – 7:00 PM -

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

600 WORKSHOP SERIES

601 What Does 'Race' Mean for Adoption? Old Ideas and New Challenges

Presenters Fern Johnson, Marlene Fine (Lobby-Ballroom A)

The focus is on the ways in which adoption reveals frozen ideas about race and racial hierarchies. The growth of the multiracial population in the U.S. and elsewhere demands that the adoption discourse change. Both adoption demographics and cultural ideas will be discussed in a dialogue format.

602 Wretched No More: Healing Holes in the Soul (Continued)

Presenters Dr. Nicholas Cooper-Lewter, Dr. Stephanie Cooper-Lewter (Lobby-Ballroom B)

This workshop, *Wretched No More: Identifying and Healing Holes in the Bio-Psycho-Socio-Spiritual Health and Performance Package*, will examine key definitions and examples of adoptees with 'holes in their souls.' Presenters will identify strategies and offer successful techniques for healing adoptee 'holes in their souls.'

603 Divorce and the Adult Adoptee: A Double Whammy of Loss and Abandonment

Presenter Cheryl Tano (Lobby-Crispus Attucks)

The goal of the workshop is to find healing from the sharing of our tales of the often unbearable agony and reliving of trauma that comes when an Adult Adoptee undergoes divorce.

604 PTSD: The Flashbacks You Never Wanted to Have

Presenters Kathy Aderhold, Cynthia McGuigan (Lobby-William Dawes A)

This workshop will explore the signs, symptoms, and effects of PTSD as it relates to the surrendering mother. The presenters will share results of a questionnaire from 123 mothers about their experience of PTSD following the loss of their child. Discussion will include suggestions for dealing with PTSD over the lifetime.

605 A Tale of Two Moms – Straight Talk for Gay Families in Adoption

Presenter Amy Ford, (Lobby-William Dawes B)

This workshop will examine the dynamics of families created through adoption when 2 men or 2 women decide to build a family. From the legal barriers to the intrusive questions of pre-schoolers, we will explore it all with humor and respect.

606 Tell the Tale: Playwriting in the Adoption Constellation

Presenter Sarah Tomek (Lobby-Thomas Paine A)

Don't think you can write a play? Think again! Learn the process of non-fiction playwriting based on interviews conducted with your "characters". Aspects of staging and performance will be explored. Everyone involved in the adoption constellation has a tale to tell. Make sure yours has an audience!

5:00 PM – 8:00 PM ~ Dinner on Your Own / Down Time

8:00 PM – Midnight ~ **Reception and Dance**

Sunday ~ March 29

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM ~ **Town Hall Meeting**

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Aderhold, Kathy – (RN, B.S.N. & M.S.N. , CNM) Mother of Adoption Loss. Kathy lost her daughter to adoption in 1972 at a Booth maternity home. As a nurse-midwife, Kathy was director for a clinic for pregnant teens in Denver, Colorado. She has been reunited with her daughter for 16 years. Kathy has been on the AAC Board of Directors since 2012. (604)

Anastasi, Jennifer - was born and domestically adopted in the late '80s as an infant in Massachusetts. She searched for and found her first family in 2010 with no access to her original birth certificate and has been traveling the rocky road that is reunion ever since. (503)

Bruining, Mi Ok (LCSW) – Born in S. Korea 1960. Adopted to the U.S. in 1966. Accomplished artists, award-winning poet, published writer. Mi Ok is a practicing clinical social worker. She is also an International Adoptions Reform Activist & Korean Adoptee agitator. (307)

Burnell, Bonnie (Masters / Education) - Bonnie is a college administrator from Northern California. She was a founding member of CARE, is a member of PACER and the AAC, and has worked to support adoption reform nationwide, including the creation of websites for advocacy groups and films. The mom of a cool kid, she enjoys photography, writing, hiking, traveling and the outdoors. She is a reunited adoptee who searched for over 20 years. (504)

Burton, Nicole -Nicole is a playwright and reunited adopted person from England. She is the author of *Swimming Up the Sun: A Memoir of Adoption*, which she has adapted for the stage. (102)

Byrne, Monica - Monica Byrne is National Director of Parent Finders of Canada. Nearly three decades experience and more than 1800 re-connections give her a good perspective on the process of reunion. She has been involved with Ontario political action, is a past AAC Board member and a happily reunited birth mother for 28 years. She was awarded the AAC Vilardi Humanitarian Award in 2005. (202)

Cheyney, Karen – (JD, LSWA) Karen is an adoptive mom to two transracially adopted teenagers with adoptions that have been open since birth. An advocate of ethical, open adoption practice, Karen has extensive experience discussing race and adoption with families of all backgrounds and supporting first/birth/original and adoptive families as they maintain connections for the benefit of their children. (403)

Churley, Marilyn - I am a reunited natural mother and former Member of Provincial Parliament and Deputy Speaker of the Ontario Legislature. I worked with natural mothers, adoptees and adoptive parents for 10 years to reform Ontario's adoption disclosure laws and succeeded in 2005. I wrote a memoir about my personal and political experience with adoption, to be published in March, 2015 by Between the Lines Publishing. (207)

Coleman, Anne – (Ph.D., LMHC) Anne is a psychotherapist and educator with over 20 years' experience as a clinician. Her expertise includes adoption issues across the lifespan and working with clients dealing with infertility as they consider family building options. She brings a unique perspective and sensitivity to working with her clients in her private practice as an adopted person and as an adoptive parent.

Cooper, Lynn – (CPC, CFC, BS (Biology)) A Performance/Family Coach as well as an adoptive and foster mom of 3 children with challenges, Lynn's own experience with her family's trauma and attachment deepens her understanding of what adoptive families might face. Lynn emphasizes building a sound family foundation using solid coaching strategies and practices.

D'Arcy, Claudia - Claudia has been writing about life as a birthmother, Adoptee Rights & the unethical adoption industry since 2005 on her blog, *Musings of the Lame*. A former Director of social media and trained professionally in SEO; she believes that by sharing her knowledge of best practices for blogging and promotion, the community can better reach the public to educate and amplify our voices.

Davis, Etta Lappen – (MA.Ed) Principal of Etsky Consulting, Etta is a dedicated advocate for strong regulations and ethical practice in adoption and foster care. She assists agencies to achieve licensing/accreditation, is a CWLA contract consultant, a court-appointed expert, a sought-after workshop presenter/trainer, a 2009 Angel in Adoption, and an extended family member.

Dinwoodie, April - Trans-racially adopted from foster care, April is a fierce advocate for children and families. April serves as the Chief Executive of the Donaldson Adoption Institute. She also created a specialized mentoring program called "Adoptment" (adopted adults mentoring youth in care) and is a co-founder of Fostering Change for Children.

DiStefano, Joann – (BA, JD, MLS, CPC, MPNLP) - Joann has over 30 years of experience in the family area primarily in abuse and neglect. A lawyer, certified coach, neuro-linguistic practitioner, and adoptive parent, she assists families in trauma and attachment issues. Her own family experience brought her to focus on unconscious patterns that shape family dynamics.

Fine, Marlene – (Ph.D) - Marlene is co-author of *The Interracial Adoption Option: Creating a Family Across Race*, and author of *Building Successful Multicultural Organizations* plus many articles on gender, race, and culture in organizations. She is a facilitator for the YW Boston “City-Wide Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity” and a volunteer with the Boston Busing Desegregation Project.

Ford, Amy - Amy lives in Austin, TX with her life partner of 15 years and their three daughters, who were adopted through the foster system of Texas. Ms. Ford is the author of *Brown Babies Pink Parents* and a regular speaker for both public and private agencies across the South on topics of race, adoption, and diversity. In addition, Ms. Ford is a licensed insurance professional with New York Life, Ambassador for the Austin Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, PTA Board Member, and former Board Member for the Texas Council on Adoptable Children.

Franklin, Peter – an Army Reservist, Iraq War veteran. Founder of AWOL AdopteesWithOutLiberty.com which gives voice to those in the military who recognize secrecy in adoption does not comply with military values of honor and integrity. “Trusted to defend our country, adoptees should be trusted with their own birth certificates!”

Gonzalez, Rosita – (MS Communication Research) Adopted in 1968, Rosita is a Korean adoptee who blogs on race, gender, and parenthood. With the help of G.O.A.’L., Rosita returned to Korea in August 2014 to solidify her identity. Her story can be found on her blog, *mothermade* and on *Lost Daughters*. (503)

Grand, Michael – (PhD, C.Psych) Michael is Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Guelph, former co-director of the National Adoption Study of Canada, therapist in adoption, and co-founder of the Coalition for Open Adoption Records. He is the author of *The Adoption Constellation: New ways of thinking about and practicing adoption*. (202)

Greer, Elizabeth, Sarah: Sarah's multi-media play, *BIO-HAZARD: A Relative Comedy*, just finished a successful run at the International United Solo Festival on Theatre Row in NYC, where it won Best Comedy of the festival, as well as Best Comedy in 2012 and Best Multi-Media in 2013. She holds a B.A. in Theater from Mount Holyoke College. (104 & Film)

Gross-Levin, Fran – Fran is a first mother who has been reunited with her daughter since 1990. She has done both school and community counseling in the field of adoption and has taught courses, given workshops and done presentations in the field of adoption and reunion to all triad members.

Hasegawa, Pam – born Rolande Sygne Hampden, received her OBC in 1992. She tenaciously pursued a search for original family unaware of the challenge of finding people falsely named on her adoption decree and OBC. She began work with NJCARE in 1980 challenging existing sealed records statutes. In 2014 a mere 34 years later they experience victory.

Hawkes, Rebecca – (MA English) Rebecca was adopted as an infant and is an adoptive parent by way of older-child foster adoption. She has presented on adoption-related topics at various venues, and her writing has appeared at www.rebeccahawkes.com, www.the-thriving-child.com, www.thelostdaughters.com, Adoption Voices Magazine, BlogHer, the Huffington Post, and in several anthologies including *Lost Daughters*. (503)

Hentz, Trace Lara – Laura is the author of five books about being an adoptee and the genocidal adoption programs affecting American Indian families. She is also a mosaic artist, blogger and contributor to *Lost Daughters* and other adoption anthologies.

Heslin, Cathy – Cathy is a closed-era adoptee living in Portland, Oregon. She has been in reunion with her birthmother for 25 years and with her birthfather for 15, as well as with her extended families. She writes about adoption with a focus on long-term reunion at reunioneeyes.blogspot.com.

Hoffman, Denise - Denise holds both B.S. and M.S. degrees in Health and Wellness. She is the author of *Hiding No More: Unmasking Adoption and Reunion*, and *Uncovering's: Growing from Adoption and Reunion* (Rosedog books). In addition, she presents on energy-based healing.

Johnson, Fern (Ph.D) - Fern is co-author of *The Interracial Adoption Option: Creating a Family Across Race*, and author of *Imaging in Advertising—Verbal and Visual Codes of Commerce* and *Speaking Culturally—Language Diversity in the United States*, plus many articles on language diversity, race, and culture.

Leming, Houle Lynette (MSW, LSW) – Lynette is a first mother. She has worked in adoption for sixteen years, providing placement/educational services. She has served as Director of Placement Services, Director of Social Work and acting Executive Director. She has presented for St. John's Biennial Adoption Conference, NACAC, APC and CPFA

McGuigan, Cindy - Cindy has served on the board of directors of AAC since 2007 and has held the position as Treasurer, Vice President and currently the President of AAC. With coursework in Psychology at Harvard University, she is working towards Master Degree of Psychology, Bachelor Degree in Business Management, Associate Degree in Accounting; Cindy has been a Financial Associate for Harvard University for 24 years, a mother of adoption loss and is married to her son's first father James.

McGuigan, James - James McGuigan is an adopted person and in 1983 surrendered a son to adoption. In 1990 he married the birthmother Cindy. Jim and his wife are raising 3 daughters.

Neal, Patricia - An Adoptee from Texas, Patricia faced several difficulties while completing her own search. The search angels she worked with to overcome the hurdles inspired her to follow in their footsteps and help others. Patricia has also become an avid advocate of adoptee rights and open access to birth records.

Nielsen, Kathleen – Kathleen holds a Master’s degree in social work and has worked in the adoption field. She is currently working toward a doctorate in social work with focus on adoption research. Additionally Kathleen has been living as a relinquishing mother in an open adoption for 13 years.

Norris, Betsie – Founder / Executive Director of Adoption Network Cleveland, a nonprofit meeting the needs of the adoption and foster care community in Ohio. Betsie, an adoptee worked on creating access to records for Ohio adoptees for 24 years. Betsie is the recipient of the 2004 Emma Mae Vilardi Humanitarian Award from AAC.

Lopez, Julie – Dr. Julie Lopez has been qualified as a trauma expert through the court system, SAMHSA, the media and her national licensing body. She is the founder and Executive Director of The Viva Center, a 20+ person integrative wellness center in Washington DC, where she specializes in trauma recovery of adopted persons.

O'Connor, Harris Susan (MSW) - Susan is a nationally known performance artist, narrative writer, and author of the book *The Harris Narratives: An Introspective Study of a Transracial Adoptee*. She is the Director of Quality Assurance and Adoption Services for the Children's Services of Roxbury.

Parsons, LeAnne – LeAnne is certified professional coach, speaker and radio host. As the CEO, creator of “The Tapestry of Adoption” and the Conscious Adoption Approach™, LeAnne's specialty is empowering the adoption community to connect and embrace their stories and improve their relationships as they walk into a Legacy Now Lived!

Pavao, Maguire Joyce – (Ed.D., LICSW, LMFT-Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao, Lecturer in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Founder of many clinics and programs, has provided consultation and trainings to agencies, schools, and the court system. She has worked with individuals and families touched by adoption, foster care, reproductive technology, and other complex blended family constructions. Her book, *The Family of Adoption*, has received high acclaim. She is an adopted person.

Phillips, Zara - Zara Phillips, Songwriter "I'M Legit". Author of *Mother me*; playwright /actor of *Beneath my Fathers Sky*.

Pickell, Karen – (M.A. - Professional Writing) and has published poems and personal stories about adoption in anthologies and literary magazines. She is a reunited Baby Scoop Era adoptee married to an adoptive father. Karen reviews books and blogs about adoption at *Lost Daughters*. (503)

Rector, Thomas – Thomas is a National Speaker, BioSocial Theorist, and CEO. Tom has three birth children, two adopted children and six grandchildren. His experience as a national presenter, businessman, Open Adoption panelist, Foster Kinship Trainer, CASA, and Dad provides him the dynamic ability and perspective to advocate for adoptive issues. His presentations draw upon this experience to provide a

unique mixture of anecdotal and scientific knowledge that is both informative and practical.

Schibbelhute, Paul – Paul is a birth father, past AAC president, vice president, New England regional director and legislative director. Currently he is serving as the New Hampshire State Representative. Paul has received the Angel in Adoption award and Vilardi Humanitarian Award. He has also been instrumental in legislative efforts in New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut and other states around the country.

Siegel, Deborah - Deborah is a professor in the School of Social Work at Rhode Island College, on the editorial board of the journal *Adoption Quarterly*, an adoption researcher, consultant, trainer, and an adoptive parent.

Skahill, Eileen - Eileen is an adoptee in reunion with her natural family for over a decade. She is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. She designed and taught the Sociology Department's first course in adoption and incorporates adoption-related issues in all her other courses at the University. She is also the AAC State Representative for the state of Colorado.

Strauss, Jean – Jean is an author and filmmaker who has been documenting post adoption issues for over a quarter of a century. Her book, *Birthright: the Guide to Search and Reunion* has remained in print for over two decades and her two feature films, *ADOPTED: for the life of me*, and *A Simple Piece of Paper*, are both currently airing on PBS stations. Fifty of her short films are now available online, on her “The Adoption Experience” channel.

Tano, Cheryl – I am Cheryl Tano, a loyal and loving daughter, sister, aunt, niece, partner, neighbor, friend and teacher, who is also an avid scuba diver, textbook writer, world traveler and polyglot linguist, who happens to be an adoptee and an ex-wife, too.

Tash, Andrew – (MA, MA, JD) – Andrew is a birth-dad in an open adoption and father to five more children. Andrew discovered he was adopted at age 35. He’s currently in reunion with his mother and father and hoping to get a litter better day-by-day.

Tomek, Sarah - Sarah is an adoptee born in Nebraska; she has written an award winning one-act play based on her decision to search for her birthmother. Sarah graduated from Kansas State University in 2013 with her Master's Degree in Drama Therapy. She is the Director of Programs at Unified Theater, working and residing in the Hartford, CT area.

Tucker, Angela – Angela is a trans-racial adoptee, adopted from foster care. Her story is chronicled in the award winning documentary, *Closure*. Angela blogs at www.theadoptedlife.com and is a columnist for *Lost Daughters*. She has been featured in Psychology Today, Adoptive Families Magazine, Slate.com, and Huffington Post.

Tynes, Pekitta - Pekitta is a professional comedienne performing for audiences all across the country. As an adoptee, foster child and a founding, Pekitta uses humor to shed light on her life experiences to motivate and inspire audiences to never give-up searching for their biological parents in spite of life's many obstacles. She is one of the 100 Memorable Adoptees in the book *Finding Our Place* written by Nikki McCaslin with Richard Uhrlaub and Marilyn Grotzky. Pekitta holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.

Uhrlaub, Rich (M.Ed.) - Rich serves as the AAC Interim Legislative Committee Chair and Coordinator of AIS-CTC.

Verrier, Nancy (LMFT) - Adoptive parents need help understanding the feelings and behavior of their adopted children as well as empathy for their own pain connected with adoption. This workshop will combine my experience as an adoptive parent and as a professional in an attempt to bring more understanding and recognition to the adoptive parent experience.

Waite, Vanessa – A Spokeo Search Angel Award Winner, 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.

Waugh, Marilyn (MA) – Marilyn is a reunited birthmother, Director of Adoption Concerns Triangle and is a past president and current Kansas state representative of the American Adoption Congress. For over 20 years, Marilyn has worked in Post Adoption Services of the Kansas Division for Children and Families completing several hundred record and search requests yearly.

Witherspoon, Laura - After a failed reunion attempt through the state, Laura took control of her search. After 12 years, she discovered the SSI and reunited with her family within days. Upon realizing how simple it could be, Laura began helping others and has helped thousands of families come together in the last 15 years.

Woods, Krista (M.S.W., LCSW) – Krista is Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Illinois and 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 is on the AAC Board of Directors as Professional Liaison and is the Illinois AAC state representative. She served 2 terms on the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council, is the founder of Integrity Clinical Consulting & Training; providing therapy and clinical services, case consultation and training across the country.

Woolston-Transue, H.L. Amanda – (MSS, LSW BA & MA in social work). Amanda has served the adoption and foster care communities through individual and family clinical work, group work, writing and presenting, and working for positive policy change. Amanda is best known for her personal blog, *The Declassified Adoptee*. (503)

Wilson Chris - A South Florida native, Christopher is the founder and president of CTW Productions. He honed his film and writing skills while attending the private college, Hawaii Pacific University. His entrepreneurial skills led him to become the CEO of 7one, a social organization intent on spreading an empowering message, “Live Life. 7 days a week. One day at a time.”, and positive lifestyle to the collective global community. As a filmmaker, Christopher has a series of exciting projects lined up.

Zoppi, Jeannine – (Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist) Dr. Zoppi is licensed in New Jersey and New York. Dr. Zoppi received her doctorate from Seton Hall University. She has a private practice in Caldwell, NJ where she specializes in the treatment of adoption issues, adult survivors of childhood abuse and PTSD. Dr. Zoppi serves as 2015 President of the New Jersey Psychological Association and was selected as 2014 NJPA Psychologist of the Year. She is the recipient of the 2012 NJPA Member Recognition Award and is a member of the American Psychological Association's Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology Class of 2011. Dr. Zoppi is a member of the American Fertility Association's Adoption Advisory Council and has presented on the topics of adoption and bullying at various local and national conferences.