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# Zero Kids Waiting

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## Welcome!

**Zero Kids Waiting** is the monthly eNewsletter of Minnesota Adoption Resource Network, a 32-year old organization that creates and supports lifelong nurturing families for children needing permanency. As an email subscriber to Zero Kids Waiting, you will receive a monthly update about what our organization and others are doing to promote adoption of Minnesota children and teens.

To opt out of receiving **Zero Kids Waiting** and other announcements from Minnesota Adoption Resource Network including MN ADOPT training emails for parents and professionals, please click [SafeUnsubscribe](#) at the bottom of this newsletter.

Your email is solely used for the distribution of MARN newsletters, trainings and other news and will not be shared or broadcast.

To learn more about Minnesota's waiting children and our goal to reach Zero Kids Waiting visit [State Adoption Exchange](#)

## Waiting Youth

**Rachel, 16, Dreams of Justin Bieber**



Like many of her peers, Rachel, age 16, has a crush on teen idol Justin Bieber. She loves to sing and listen to pop and country music and nurtures a dream of performing on stage one day with dancing or singing lessons. With her engaging, spitfire personality, she thrives on her close relationship with the adults in her life. Rachel is truly dedicated to the important people in her life, like her sisters and foster family. She is committed to her schoolwork and animals and would enjoy a family who would be open to a pet dog or horse.

Rachel often expresses her yearning to be adopted and knows exactly what she needs and wants. Rachel would like to be the only child because and says, "It would be fantastic to have close, devoted attention from parents." Her dream of a family would be to have both a mom and dad who like going to church, shopping and camping. Most importantly, Rachel is adamant that she needs to stay in touch with her sisters who have been adopted. She loves talking about her future family and imagines what they will be like.

For more information about Rachel, please contact Meghan E. Berg, Permanency Specialist with Amerpsand Families at [meghan@ampersandfamilies.org](mailto:meghan@ampersandfamilies.org) or 612-205-6572.

## World / National News

### Israeli Court Rules Adoptee Can Know Birth Mother

A Tel Aviv Family court will allow a 41-year-old man adopted as a baby to learn the identity of his biological mother. The case stemmed from the adopted person who appealed the right of his biological parents to withhold their identities from him. Although by law Israel cannot disclose the birth mother's identity, Judge Esther Zitnitski Rakover who ruled in the case will order her to be contacted in order

to clarify "her moral obligation" to meet with and help the adopted man close this chapter in his life.

[For more information](#)

### **Twins Separated at Birth Reunite**

Non-identical twins Emilie Falk and Lin Backman were separated nearly 29 years ago in an orphanage in Indonesia. There were both adopted by parents in Sweden and there was never any mention of a sibling in the adoption papers. However, Backman's parents recall as they were leaving the orphanage, the taxi driver turned around and asked them "What about the other one, the sister?" and they quickly jotted down the girls' Indonesian names. Backman's parents later tracked down the parents of Emilie Falk and compared notes, but there were not enough similarities to assume they were related. "The adoption papers did not add up...and there were no DNA tests back then," Falk said.

Years later when Emilie Falk got married she started thinking about family and adoption and decided to seek out Lin Backman only to find out they had a lot in common. The sisters lived 20 miles apart and are both teachers who happened to marry on the same day only one year apart. DNA test results confirmed they were indeed twins. Today the sisters talk about going to Indonesia to search for their biological parents.

[For more information](#)

### **U.S. Suspends Adoptions from Vietnam**

The United States Department of State has announced as of February 1, 2012, that it will not resume adoptions from Vietnam due to the country not being compliant with the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption standards. The State Department is cautioning adoption service providers and prospective adoptive parents to not initiate or continue adoption programs in Vietnam until they receive notice that will be posted on [www.adoption.state.gov](http://www.adoption.state.gov)

[For more information](#)

### **Former Fostered Individuals Win Class Action Suit in Oklahoma**

Litigation against the Oklahoma Department of Human Services over the treatment of foster children in its care will result in an overhaul of the system. Launched by an advocacy group called Children's Rights and the law firm of Frederic Dorwart, the suit alleged that the state's welfare system operated without standards or accountability. The court has ruled that specific actions must be completed including increasing the number of available foster homes, decreasing moves for children and the number of cases on a worker's caseload, and increasing visitation and monitoring of children.

[For more information](#)

### **Mainstay Adoption Center Closes in Massachusetts**

The Center for Family Connection (CFFC), a Boston-area leading provider of support services in adoption, is closing. The announcement from Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao, founder and CEO, follows 17 years of serving foster, guardianship, kinship care and adoptive families. Annual CFFC summer conferences in Provincetown featured authors and experts in adoption as speakers. While localized in the Boston area, CFFC work was respected both nationally and internationally. Dr. Pavao will continue to work in the adoption field through consulting and coaching.

### **Who Do You Think You Are Resumes**

Lisa Kudrow's television series that explores the ancestry of celebrities has captured the attention of the adoption community. Filled with search methodology and the importance of exploring genetics, the new season of *Who Do You Think You Are* began February 3 on NBC. The third season debut profiled Martin Sheen whose ancestors, much like him, were social activists. Also featured will be Reba McEntire, Rob Lowe, Helen Hunt, Jason Sudeikis and Paula Deen.

[For more information](#)

### **Early Puberty, Delayed Adulthood Suggest "Readjusting Adolescence"**

In a January 28, 2012 *Wall Street Journal* article, "What's Wrong with the Teenage Mind?" Alison Gopnik explores societal changes that explain how development into adulthood for teens has radically changed over time. Citing research by developmental psychologists and neuroscientists, Gopnik says that much of risky behavior in adolescents can be attributed to them overestimating rewards rather than underestimating risks. Today, as puberty has an earlier onset and youth lack apprenticeships that help them practice skills needed as adults, youth according to developmental psychologist Ronald Dahl of the University of California, Berkley, "develop an accelerator a long time before they can steer and brake." The article suggests that developmental patterns in teen brains can be changed and shaped by providing youth with more opportunities in having real-life experiences.

[For more information](#)

## **Local News**

### **Formerly Fostered Youth Is Taking Control of His Future**

Last summer Daryn and Michon Spies of Waseca, Minnesota, returned home from vacation and decided to attend a meet-and-greet with the Minnesota Waiting Children program, initially looking to adopt a younger child. However, when they met Yves they saw a boy at 18 still wanted a family, wanted out of Minneapolis and wanted to better himself. Since being adopted Yves' future goals are just one of the many things that have changed. Today Yves is a senior and participates in sports and made the B honor roll for the first time last fall. Yves recently signed on to play football for Rochester Community College and says he now carries with him the 'mantra' of writing his own story of how he wants it to be. "The past is what makes you stronger," Yves said. "There are two ways you can go, negative...or where I am right now."

[For more information](#)

### **Anoka Hosts Welcoming Independence Conference**

Youth with mental health challenges have a difficult time transitioning into adulthood. To address these challenges for families, Anoka County with the Anoka County children and Family Council is hosting a Welcoming Independence and Growth with Support Conference on Saturday, February 25, at the Anoka Ramsey Community College in Coon Rapids from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Free to families with lunch provided, the conference will feature Marsha VanDenburgh, adoptive and foster parent, as the keynote speaker with workshops throughout the day that address bullying, healthy dating, housing and homeless prevention as well as a resource fair.

For more information, please contact Gena Rademacher at [Gena.Rademacher@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:Gena.Rademacher@co.anoka.mn.us)

## **Inside MARN**

### **HELP is on the way for Adoptive Families**

The MN ADOPT HELP program that provides short-term therapeutic services to adoptive families is being called "user friendly," and "life-saving" by participating therapists and families. A call to 612-746-5137 (Monday-Friday, 9AM to 5PM) reaches one of two adoption specialists who can direct or make a referral to one out of a group of adoption-competent therapists. Families without insurance may be eligible for financial assistance that goes directly to the therapist, thus averting time delays. Therapist Deena McMahon says, "There is almost no time lag from the first call for HELP to the time a family can be seen. I am using it for any number of services, usually with a family in some sort of crisis or decision point. Converting to insurance is seamless. The specialists at MN ADOPT do the paper work and then send on referral information. It is so easy to use."

For more information on HELP, call 612-746-5137 or 1-855-670-HELP, Monday-Friday, 9AM to 5PM or visit

<http://www.mnadopt.org/HELP.html>

### **MPR Airs Documentary on Birthfathers**

A program profiling birthfathers and the impact of adoption and the long term impact on them long after an adoption takes place was broadcast on February 9, 2012 on The Current from Minnesota Public Radio. The documentary included an interview with MARN Executive Director, Mary Martin Mason, who spoke about the need for inclusion of birthfathers who represent one-half of a child's genetic, family and health history.

[For more information](#)

### **What You Need to Know About Sexually Abused Children in Adoption & Foster Care**

Parents and caregivers of children need to understand what distinguishes problematic sexual behavior in children from sexual behavior that is natural and healthy part of development. Adoptive and foster parents who care for children who have experienced trauma from sexual abuse can benefit from adequate preparation to provide a healthy and stable home for the child. Deena McMahon, licensed social worker and family therapist who has expertise on child sexual abuse, discusses the impact sexual abuse has on adopted and foster children. In a training slated for Tuesday, February 21, 2012 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Lutheran Social Service at 2400 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404. Preregistration is encouraged.

**Fee:** \$15 per person; \$20 per parenting couple

CEUs are available for an additional \$30 per person. Certificates of Attendance will be given at the end of the presentation.

To register, [click here](#) or view the events calendar at <http://www.mnadopt.org/calendar.php>

### **How to Improve Social Skills for Children with Neurological Differences**

On Monday, February 27, 2012 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Lutheran Social Services in Minneapolis, Nicole Ross, President of the Minnesota Association for Play Therapy will provide an interactive workshop that offers creative techniques to assist in the development of social skills for children with neurological differences (eg. Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, etc). Each technique can easily be implemented into a child's daily living across a variety of situations. Nicole Ross is the owner and director of The Creative Play Therapy in Elk River, Minnesota which specializes in play therapy services for children and teens who have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect and attachment.

**Fee:** \$20 per person; \$35 per parenting couple

CEUs are available for an additional \$30 per person. Certificates of Attendance will be given at the end of the presentation.

To register, [click here](#) or visit the events calendar at <http://www.mnadopt.org/calendar.php>

## Local Offering

### Century College Training: *Deflating the Frustration/Resistance Cycle* with Paul Buckley

(Course #12017)

Friday, February 24, 2012 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm  
Century College - East Room 2561, White Bear Lake, MN  
Course Price: \$62; take \$32 off and attend the class for only \$30 by mentioning the "\$30 Heart Rate" discount when you register

To register, [click here](#)

## \*400 Will Move to ZERO in MN if...

- Each Metro house of worship pledged to find a family for a waiting child or sibling group.
- Corporations promoted adoption "in-house" through bulletin boards, kiosks and newsletters.
- Populations who have been identified as potential parents -- older career women, empty-nesters, communities of color -- were better targeted in recruitment.
- Barriers to adopting were reduced. Call us at 612-861-7115 if you are encountering any obstacles.

\* The number of Minnesota children waiting for families has decreased from 650 to less than 400. While this shows progress our target is ZERO waiting children.

## Zero Kids Waiting

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Please visit our ZKW website at [www.zerokidswaiting.org](http://www.zerokidswaiting.org). The site features highlights and photos from recent MARN events, adoption news, past eNewsletters and profiles of Minnesota Waiting youth.



[Watch Here](#)



## Donate Today



The Zero Kids Waiting eNewsletter reaches parents willing to adopt children that are not reached by general recruitment measures. Please consider donation as much as you are able so that we may reach ZERO - Zero Kids Waiting.

To make a secure tax deductible online donation, click [Donate](#).

### Minnesota Adoption Resource Network

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