

# Zero Kids Waiting

Minnesota Adoption Resource Network

October 2009 - Volume 2, Issue 17

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## Welcome!

**Zero Kids Waiting** is the monthly e-newsletter of Minnesota Adoption Resource Network, a 29-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** click [SafeUnsubscribe](#) at the bottom of this newsletter.

Your email will be used solely for the distribution of the newsletter 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](#)

## MARN Encourages Faith Communities "Pledge ZERO"

Children awaiting adoption may be invisible to congregants who sit by them in pews each Sunday. Worshipers may give offerings to orphans overseas without knowing there is a need for Minnesota children to find families. To address the need in "our own backyard," MARN is launching a Pledge to Zero campaign with communities of faith. Churches, synagogues and mosques are asked to reduce the number of Minnesota children waiting for families. Pledge ZERO cards will be distributed, asking congregants to partner with MARN to learn about adoption through frequent postings of profiles and photos of waiting children, sermons, information for bulletins, and other means of recruitment.

For more information, contact MARN Board member, Paula Graff at [paulagraff@aol.com](mailto:paulagraff@aol.com)

## Waiting Teen



### **Mike, 18, Prefers Small Towns to the Big City**

Eighteen-year-old Mike likes to be involved in a lot of sports and physical activities, saying, "My favorite sports are basketball and football. I also enjoy reading and doing crosswords in the newspaper. I am very creative. I like to make necklaces and bracelets out of hemp and beads. I also like to fix stuff and build stuff. I also enjoy reading books and learning new things. I am interested in furthering my education at a college or technical school. I don't like to sit down for long periods of time, I enjoy working and I like to keep myself busy." Mike has a wide variety of skills and interests and, like all teens, needs help and encouragement to focus his efforts.

"I am not quite sure what I want at this time in my life. I would like to have somebody who would be like family, support and assist me when I am in need. I would like someone who I could trust and be around for awhile. I do not want to live in a big city because I have grown up in small towns most of my life. I would like someone who is able to help me through my struggles and teach me the skills I need to succeed in life."

The parents who Mike is hoping to find will give him the time he needs to create a lasting, forever relationship that is built on trust. Clear consistent guidelines and rules work best along with direct honest communication. Mike is open to different family structures, but one that includes a positive male role model would be most helpful. Mike prefers to be the oldest child and wants to maintain contact with his birth dad.

For more information about Mike, please contact **Joe Wild Crea** at Ampersand Families at 612-670-6485 or [joe@ampersandfamilies.org](mailto:joe@ampersandfamilies.org); **Kali Christensen** at [kali.christensen@co.todd.mn.us](mailto:kali.christensen@co.todd.mn.us)

## **Headline News**

### ***Star Tribune* Raises Concerns About International Adoption**

October 2009

Despite new regulations imposed by The Hague Adoption Convention to prevent child-trafficking, there are growing concerns about adopting from abroad. A two-part story in the *StarTribune* reported that a local woman had lost thousands of dollars on a failed Guatemalan adoption through a baby broker and a local agency. The story revealed that efforts of the Hague Adoption Convention Treaty

to remove abuses such as baby selling and kidnapping have fallen short because the treaty lacks State Department enforcement.

Last year the number of adoptions from other countries by Americans fell 12%, reaching the lowest level since 1999 as a growing number of countries battled with allegations of adoption fraud. The *StarTribune* used 2008 census data to support a claim that Minnesota leads in foreign adoptions. That number is already greatly decreasing to reflect a national prediction that 2009 will see a sharp drop of 10,000 to 12,000 in international adoptions by Americans.

[For more information](#)

## World / National News

### **Korean Adoptee Discovers Truth About Birth Family**

September 20, 2009

Reporter, Jenny Hurwitz along with sister Becky journeyed to Seoul, South Korea to visit the orphanage where Jenny spent the first few months of her life. Growing up as a Korean-American adoptee in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Jenny always maintained a pragmatic view of her adoption, accepting and even appreciating the circumstances that allowed her to grow up in the United States. Jenny knew very little about her birth, only that she had been left at a police station in Seoul and later turned over to an orphanage. What she encountered at the orphanage 29 years later was unexpected.

Jenny learned her birth father worked as a general laborer and was 36 at the time of her birth and her mother was 27. There were indications the couple had very little money and hoped for a son. The most shocking news Jenny received was she was not the oldest child as she had always thought, but she was the youngest of four daughters. To read more about Jenny's story, click the link below.

[For more information](#)

### **16 Vietnamese Stand Trial for Falsifying Adoption Documents**

September 21, 2009

A court in Hanoi, Vietnam has put 16 people on trial for allegedly selling more than 250 babies for foreign adoption. The defendants are charged with "abuse of power and authority" and could face prison terms of five to 10 years. The head of two social welfare centers as well as several doctors and nurses are allegedly accused of soliciting infants from unwed mothers or those from desperately poor families, then falsifying documents claiming the babies had been abandoned and were available for adoption.

[For more information](#)

### **Quebec Recognizes "Dual Parentage" for Older Children**

October 7, 2009

Quebec is considering a way to facilitate adoptions of older youth by changing laws so that some adopted children could remain legally bonded to their biological parents post-adoption if both the biological and adoptive parents agree. The adoptive family would retain legal authority over the child even if the ties remained connected between the child and biological family. Birth documents would contain the name of the adoptive and birth parents for the adopted child. This model worked successfully in France, easing the adjustment for older children who often feel conflicted about severing ties with their biological families in order to be adopted.

[For more information](#)

### **Inmate Pressed to Give Up Child for Adoption**

September 2, 2009

Missouri Supreme Court recently granted Guatemalan mother and former inmate the right to appeal a decision that terminated her parental rights. Efforts to reunite the mother, accused of identity-theft, and her child are based on transcripts of jailhouse conversations with a parent educator, Laura Davenport, from a local "Parents as Teachers" program. Characterized as a 'hard sell attempt' to get the mother to give up her child, Davenport is recorded as saying the child would some day thank the mother "for giving me these opportunities" such as a college education.

[For more information](#)

### **Native American Flutist Nominated for Music Award**

October 7, 2009

Native American flute player, Mary Youngblood recently received two nominations for the 2009 Native American Music Awards, or Nammys. Youngblood already has two Grammys and one Nammy. Her song, "Aleut Wind" is a combination of two intertwined personal stories for Youngblood, one being a search for an understanding of her roots and identity, and the other reaching out for her future as a musician.

As the only child with brown skin, Youngblood grew up noticeably different from most children in her school. Sometimes her peers would be cruel to her about racial differences. Youngblood was adopted shortly after her birth by Caucasian, non-Indian parents, whom provided for her classical training in music, particularly flute.

[For more information](#)

### ***Bitter Sweet* Documentary Explores Birth Mother Experience**

October, 2009

A documentary film by Steve Garret investigates one of the most difficult decisions a woman can ever make. Garret's documentary was filmed over two years and features the stories of five women who share their sorrow, strength and hope as they proceed through the steps of considering and finally choosing adoption for their

children. *Bitter Sweet* provides a rare look into the adoption process. Carmi Alotnik, Senior VP of Programming for HBO Los Angeles, writes, "Garret's work is entertaining, honest and moving. The film has the power to change lives."

[For more information](#)

### **Co-workers and Brothers Reunite**

September 17, 2009

When Gary Nisbet and Randy Joubert started working at Dow Furniture in Waldoboro, Maine, people said they looked alike. Both brothers are in their mid-thirties and were adopted by different families. Maine recently enacted legislation to allow adopted adults to get birth information, providing Joubert with the names of his birth parents and that he had an unnamed brother.

Joubert started asking his coworker Nisbet questions leading to the discovery that they are full-blood brothers. The reunion was even more amazing when they realized the two grew up in the same county, went to rival high schools and lived just a few miles apart.

[For more information](#)

## **November is National Adoption Awareness Month**

### **Inside News**

#### **National Adoption Awareness Month**

The 2009 theme for November as National Adoption Month, is "You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent." Local and national organizations are scheduling activities to promote awareness of adoption, particularly the need for families for older youth and for children of color who are over-represented and awaiting permanency.

Minnesota Adoption Awareness Month begins on Sunday, November 1, 2009 with the FREE 12th annual Circus of the Heart event. Last year over 800 gathered at the Earle Brown Center in Brooklyn Center from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for games and prizes, clowns, mascots, refreshments, pony rides, a petting zoo, face painting, and special entertainment. This year a record crowd is expected of families who have grown through adoption and those waiting to adopt children under state guardianship. The event is sponsored by Minnesota Adoption Resource Network/MN ADOPT and a collaboration of state, county and private agencies. Circus of the Heart is funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

For more information, click here [Circus of the Heart](#)

#### **Hennepin County Slates Adoption Day -**

November 21, 2009

Hennepin County's annual Adoption Day in Court is scheduled to finalize a number of adoptions of children under state guardianship takes place Saturday, November 21, 2009. Typically, a number of Juvenile Court judges preside over the adoptions which are collaborative efforts supported by Hennepin County Board, Hennepin County social workers, and volunteers from the community sponsored by the Target Corporation. The celebration will include crafts for the children, a photographer taking family portraits, refreshments and other activities.

Last year presiding Juvenile Court Judge Kathryn Quaintance said of the event, "Adoption Day is a very special celebration, a happy ending for families and children who have probably experienced tremendous stress. Adoption is the promise of a permanent, safe home with loving parents."

[To learn more about National Adoption Day](#)

### **Children's Theatre Celebrates Adoption Month**

October 2009

The Children's Theatre Company invites Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Families, social workers and support staff who work with children to enjoy a discounted performance of *Cinderella*. Families will receive a 25 percent discount on tickets to attend any performance during the entire month of November.

This performance of *Cinderella* is jam-packed with a wacky, wondrous mix of dance, physical comedy, spectacular sets and outrageous costumes. *Cinderella* is the tale of a girl who rises from the ashes to take her rightful place alongside the prince and is deliciously performed in panto style, an enduringly popular form of English theatre. The Children's Theatre Company's holiday show promises to delight all ages with an exciting rendition of one of the great classic fairy tales.

For more information, click here [Children's Theatre Company- Cinderella](#)

### **Upcoming Film Festival Features Transracial Adoptees**

November 2009

The Minnesota Transraical Film Festival is the first festival in the Twin Cities to showcase transracial and transcultural voices from the adoption community. The festival is sponsored by AdopSource, a nonprofit organization committed to supporting the integration of culture, identity, and life experience for adopted individuals, their families and the community. In addition to six featured films, including *Adopted The Movie*, readings from local artists, Sun Yung Shin and Brian Thao Worra and musical performance by singer/songwriter Mayda Miller will be part of the celebration on Saturday, November 14, 2009 at the Oak Street Cinema.

For more information or to purchase tickets, click here [MN Transracial Film Festival](#)

### **Kari Fletcher Named Angel in Adoption**

September 15, 2009

For many years Kari Fletcher and her husband were foster parents, providing temporary relief for families who were unable to care for their own children. That changed when the Fetters decided to adopt Ben and several years later adopted Anna. Both children suffer from the effects of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) because their mothers chose to drink alcohol during their pregnancies.

Fletcher and her husband have become advocates for children born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and work to educate the public about the harm that comes from the use of alcohol while pregnant. Due to Fletcher's dedication and compassion, at the request of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, Fletcher will fly to Washington D.C. to receive the prestigious Angels of Adoption Award program. Klobuchar chose Fletcher "because of her experience with her own children and for her efforts to educate the public about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders."

To learn more about Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, visit [MOFAS](#)

### **Celebrate Alcohol-Free Pregnancies**

September 15, 2009

The Minnesota Organization of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS) held its fifth annual Pregnant Pause event on September 25, 2009 at the Verizon Wireless Center in Mankato, Minnesota. Nearly 200 pregnant women and their guests celebrated alcohol-free pregnancies. The event features a contest for bartenders to compete to make the best non-alcoholic drink and local artists who painted the bellies of six lucky women.

[For more information](#)

### **Child Poverty Increases in Minnesota**

October 2009

Poverty is a significant predictor for a child's future success in school and in life. The Census Bureau recently released statistics that reflect the status of Minnesota. According to this research, 140,000 children in Minnesota lived in poverty in 2008 - an increase of more than 20% from 2000. The numbers do not include additional families that may have fallen into poverty due to the current economic recession. The Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota estimates that an additional 44,000 to 56,000 children could now be classified as living in poverty.

[For more information](#)

## **Research**

### **PBS Analyzes Teenage Brain**

October 2009

PBS *Frontline* is exploring the mystery of the teenage brain through a scientific explanation of what is characterized as the most tumultuous time in human growth. The teen years include a period of dramatic growth in brain development at rapid pace. Viewers will learn why adolescents practice at-risk behavior through an overview of research by neuroscientists and psychologists on the teenage brain. New research is disbanding the myth of the first three years being the most important time in brain development in comparison to adolescence.

[For more information](#)

### **Trends in Child Protective Services (CPS) Examined**

A new report released this past summer by the office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) examines how the delivery of child protective services has changed in the recent years, ultimately resulting in more standardization. Researchers surveyed administrators of nationally representative samples of CPS agencies to collect information about local agencies' investigative practices.

Most changes appeared unrelated to maltreatment outcomes over this time period; however alternative responses were associated with lower maltreatment rates. In addition, agencies that always reviewed previous child abuse history records during investigations had higher rates of maltreatment on a number of measures. At the same time, the availability of services for families generally declined, although parenting training and substance abuse treatment became somewhat more available through CPS agencies.

The report was prepared by Westat, Inc. and is available of the ASPE website, click here [for more information](#)

### **Child's Well-being Identified**

2009

The importance of accuracy in collecting and reporting data on children and youth led to the 1974 formation of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. Their 2009 report, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well Being* reveals the promise and the difficulties confronting American youth. The report distills 40 keys as indicators of where children are today and what their futures hold, based on data collected from "millions of American citizens" that was summarized and analyzed.

To download the report, click here [Child Statistics](#)

## **Special MARN Thanks**

Thank you to Larry Forsland for his \$500 contribution to MARN.

MARN appreciates and values all donations.

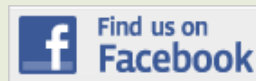


## Zero Kids Waiting



PSA Airs on You Tube

[Watch Here](#)



## Donate Today



Minnesota Adoption Resource Network is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that since 1980 has been dedicated to assuring every child has the right to a permanent, nurturing family. Your donation increases our outreach and helps us advocate for children.

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### Minnesota Adoption Resource Network

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