

Zero Kids Waiting

Minnesota Adoption Resource Network

September 2009 - Volume 2, Issue 16

In This Issue

[Welcome](#)

[Baja Sol Benefit](#)

[Pledge Today](#)

[Waiting Child](#)

[World / National News](#)

[Inside News](#)

[Research](#)

[Special Thanks](#)

[Zero Kids Waiting](#)

[Donate Today](#)

Quick Links

[MN ADOPT
Web site](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Find Location Near You



www.baja-sol.com

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.

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

Baja Sol Gala Spotlights Zero Kids Waiting

August 31, 2009



(L. to R.) Laronda, Heather, Jessica

"Sometimes I worry that I won't be adopted before I'm 18 since so many families seem to want young kids." -Laronda, 15

Over 100 attended a benefit, hosted by Baja Sol Restaurant owners

Mike Wigley, Tony and Bridget Sutton and Bill Cooper that raised \$10,000 to benefit Minnesota Adoption Resource Network's Zero Kids Waiting children. Rod Simons of KARE-11's *Sports Final* served as emcee, evoking the need to reduce the number of Minnesota children who await adoption from 650 to ZERO. Shawn Stuckey, former NFL Minnesota Viking and New England Patriot, shared his life story of hope and overcoming adversity. Jeremy Smith and Sam Cook of the band, *See the World*, entertained with their new single, *By A String*.

Laronda (15), Jessica (14) and Heather (18) from the Hennepin County Girls' Adoption Group let guests know that teens never outgrow the need for a family. Jessica said, "The need for a family goes beyond age 18. When I go to college, and come home for a visit, I need someone to talk to about the courses I'm taking and what's happening with me."

For more information about adopting Laronda, Jessica or Heather contact Carly Cantu, Hennepin County Adoption Worker at 612-543-0052.

MARN Encourages Faith Communities to Pledge to ZERO

Adoption advocacy has entered through church and synagogue doors with advocates recruiting families for orphans or in the case of the national initiative, One Church One Child, to adopt African-American children. This November, MARN will ask local faith communities to pledge to reduce the number of Minnesota children waiting for families. Pledge ZERO cards will be distributed, eliciting congregations to partner with MARN to learn about adoption through regular 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

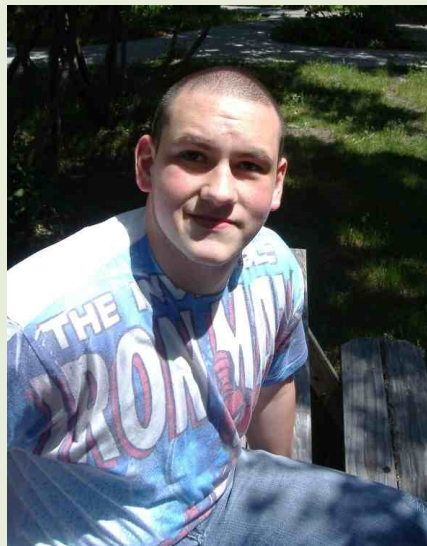
Waiting Teens



Patience, Commitment and Mutual Love are Musts for Bryan, 17

At 17, Bryan characterizes himself as a "polite, intelligent, and social young man who considers himself to be a true athlete. I like to keep busy after school through involvement in many after school activities. In the fall I play on the school soccer team, in the winter I play on the basketball team, and in the spring I am on the track team. After high school I plan on attending college and dream of becoming a therapist because I love to help people."

"I am looking for an active family that spends time together and enjoys doing a variety of activities in their free time. It's important that they devote some one-on-one with me on a regular basis. I love pets and would really enjoy a home with pets. I would like a family who is flexible, able to set good boundaries, and is willing to negotiate when setting up rules and expectations. I have two younger siblings whom I would like to stay in contact with. I'm open to many families; two moms, a mom and a dad, or just one mom. Patience, unconditional commitment and a mutual love of athletics is vital to making this work."



Joe, 17 Seeks Dad Who "Tinkers in the Garage"

Seventeen-year-old Joe says, "I'm looking for a family that can give me the support and encouragement that my life is lacking right now. I can take care of myself, but I would rather have a future with loving parents who can give me their time and love and help me overcome all the difficulty of my early life."

"One of my strengths is that I like to work and keep busy. My ideal adoptive dad would love to tinker in the garage. I also need a parent who can help me with my school work which can be a big struggle for me, particularly reading. I am also interested in earning spending money by doing chores at home until I am able to work at a job. I am very open to different kinds of families and I hope you would be open to older kids like me who need and want a family."

For more information on Bryan or Joe, contact Azur Walters, Targeted Recruiter at Children's Home Society & Family Services 651-255-2249 or [awalters @chfs.org](mailto:awalters@chfs.org)

World / National News

Teen Adopted from China Finds Birth Parents

August 28, 2009

Christian Norris remembers little from his early childhood, but his adoptive mother, Julia Norris took notes. In 2000, a single woman of 33 traveled on a mission with an adoption agency to China, where she found herself captivated by a young boy available for adoption. So in the spring of 2001, Julia Norris decided to formally adopt him. Over the years Julia would jot down any memories Christian recalled of his Chinese childhood, and this past summer they were able to track down his biological parents. What she discovered were shocked relatives on the other side of the world. His birth parents say they never intended to let their son go. Instead they were tragically separated when his father lost him while traveling by bus. This summer, Christian was reunited with his birth parents in Beijing with his adoptive mom by his side.

Julia Norris also tells her story on her blog. In addition to Christian, Julia has a six-year old daughter she adopted from China.

[For more information](#)

"Perfect Parents" Need Not Apply

August 19, 2009

A six-year PSA campaign was recently highlighted in Advertising Age Magazine for recruiting over 13,000 families for more than 11,000 children. A collaboration backed by \$126 million in donated media paired Kirshenbaum Bond and Partners with the Ad Council, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Collaboration to AdoptUSKids. Based on research showing that the greatest fear of prospective adoptive parents is "Can we do this?" the campaign capitalizes on the theme: "You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent."

[For more information](#)

Katherine Heigal Adopts From Korea

September 9, 2009

"Grey's Anatomy" star, Katherine Heigal who grew up with a Korean-born sister, said she and her husband, Josh Kelley discussed adoption before Josh put a ring on her finger. After a significant amount of paperwork and scrutiny, Heigal and her husband are adopting a baby girl from Korea. Despite starting the process only six months ago, Heigal explained that one reason the adoption process has happened so fast is because their daughter has disabilities.

[For more information](#)

National Registry to Curb Child Abuse Considered

2009

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently reported to Congress on the feasibility of establishing a national child abuse and neglect registry. The database would consist of information on individuals with a history of committing child abuse or neglect. Currently, 40 to 45 states maintain their own registries used for background checks. In the report, author Laura Radel describes key issues and concludes that implementation is not possible under the statutory limitations of the authorizing legislation. Of debate is whether child safety would improve substantially if a national database were implemented.

[For more information](#)

Maine Uses Casey Data to Transform Child Protective System

The state of Maine is using data released in the national *Kids Count Data Book* published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to transform its child protective system. The Maine Children's Alliance has been working in partnership with the Casey Foundation for 15 years, examining Casey's county-by-county survey of the well-being of children in Maine.

The partnership formed when Maine discovered it had the highest number per capita of children under state custody. The state began to investigate alternatives such as kinship care that many feel reduces trauma for children who must be removed from their homes. Some credit program changes to the Casey Foundation data that convinced policymakers to institute systemic changes to benefit children.

[For more information](#)

Senate Considers Adoption-Related Funding

July 29, 2009

The Senate version of a Labor-Health and Human Services Education appropriations bill is moving forward, the House having passed its version as HR 3293. The bill funds the adoption assistance program at \$2.46 billion, adoption awareness at \$12.9 million, adoption

opportunities at \$26.3 million, adoption incentive payments at \$39.5 million and kinship guardianship at \$49 million. Both the House and Senate bills include a presidential request for program grants to reduce long-term foster care placements.

To read the bill and report, click here [To view bill](#) and search by bill number HR3293; to see a comparison of the bill's appropriations and FY09 appropriations, see CWLA's budget chart at: [CWLA's budget chart](#)

Economy Impacts Adoption

August 31, 2009

A recent FindLaw survey reported that 6 percent of Americans have delayed adopting infants because of the recession with the national average cost being \$25,000. While some agencies are reporting more women are relinquishing infants, citing financial concerns, no data suggests that there is a shortage of families wishing to adopt babies.

Adopting a child who is under state guardianship is the least expensive type of adoption, usually involving little or no cost. Adoptive parents may be eligible to adoption assistance through the Minnesota Department of Human Services in a reimbursement program based on the child's documented needs. This program is available to families who have adopted children who were under state guardianship. The assistance includes medical assistance, reimbursement for some expenses to address the children's special needs and some non-medical costs. In some cases day care assistance and monthly financial assistance may be available.

[For more information](#)

MS Sufferer Searches for Daughter on eBay

September 2, 2009

Ray Sabbatini, a man stricken with Multiple Sclerosis, is searching for his biological daughter with the help of eBay. Sabbatini is both a birth father and an adopted person who will be auctioning pictures of himself and the biological mother to comply with eBay rules, using the proceeds from the auction to fund his search. Sabbatini was reunited with his old girlfriend who is the birthmother of his daughter through Facebook. She is also adopted.

[For more information](#)

Nation Observes Children's Sabbath

Faith communities will gather in synagogues, churches, temples and mosques on the third weekend of October to celebrate the annual Children's Sabbath. Minnesota has the highest number of congregations participating in services reminding people of faith how children, as our neediest and most vulnerable citizens, must be treated with compassion and justice. Congregants will be encouraged to practice political advocacy on behalf of children.

The Children's Sabbath was begun by the Children's Defence Fund in 1992 as a way during worship to educate about the urgent needs of children, to celebrate the gift of the presence of children in our lives

and to encourage long-term commitment for advocacy and justice.

To order the National Observance of Children's Sabbath Manual:

[Order here](#)

To learn how local congregations have rallied on the Children's Sabbath, click here:

[For more information](#)

Inside News

Circus of the Heart Launches National Adoption Awareness Month

The month of Thanksgiving is designated as 30 days of commemoration and advocacy for adoption. This year Circus of the Heart begins the festivities, marking its twelfth year as a celebration with a cause. Families who have grown through adoption and families waiting to adopt children under state guardianship gather for games and prizes, clowns, mascots, refreshments, pony rides, a petting zoo, face painting, and special entertainment.

Held at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center on Sunday, November 1, 1 PM - 4 PM, the free 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 or to receive an invitation with a map, contact Britt Drake at brittadrake@comcast.net

Anticipating National Adoption Day - November 21, 2009

National Adoption Day is a collective effort to raise awareness of the 129,000 children in foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. Since 2000, the goal of National Adoption Day has been that every community in the U.S. will have an annual, institutionalized, self-driven celebration of National Adoption Day on or near the Saturday before Thanksgiving, which can include finalizing adoptions or celebrating all adoptions. In total, more than 25,000 children have been adopted from foster care on National Adoption Day. This year National Adoption Day will be held on November 21, 2009.

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

MKCA Offers Stipend to Caregivers for Court Fees

August 1, 2009

Court fees may prohibit or delay establishing custody, guardianship or adoption for relatives in child placements proceedings. To ease the burden of court costs, the Minnesota Kinship Caregiver Association (MKCA) is providing a \$200 Caregiver Court Fee Stipend to qualified

applicants.

Applicants must be 55 years or older, reside in Minnesota, and apply the stipend to court expenses related to a child placement proceeding in which the caregiver is a party, such as custody or adoption. The parent of the child cannot live in the home of the caregiver.

[Caregiver Court Fee Stipend](#)

[Minnesota Kinship Caregivers Association](#)

Research

Researchers Investigate Open Adoption

September 2009

Researchers Leslie Leve and Jenae Neiderhiser studied 360 sets of linked birth parents and adoptive parents participating in open adoptions. Funded by the National Institutes of Health, the study in its initial stage is investigating open adoption from both adoptive and birth family perspectives. Already they have uncovered some surprising demographics; contrary to assumptions that birth parents tend to be teenagers, a majority of birthparents at the time of relinquishment are between the ages of 22 and 30, with one in five being older than 30. In domestic infant adoption as with all other adoptions, economic disadvantage is the leading reason that children became available for adoption.

Findings parallel other research on open adoption with high comfort levels among participants with maintaining contact. While some participants wished for more openness in their adoptions, almost no one wanted less. Both birth and adoptive parents equate satisfaction and their post adoption adjustment to openness Leve says, "You can add openness to the list of things you don't have to worry about. It almost always works out."

[For more information](#)

Best Practices of Adoption Agencies

August 19, 2009

Lori Holden, with her daughter's birth mom, teaches classes and consults about how to build a child-centered open adoption. Holden recently posted an article on Minneapolis examiner.com outlining some best practices for adoption agencies to follow when dealing with open adoptions. Here are some markers of an ethical adoption professional:

- Carefully use terminology to differentiate between expectant parents and birth parents.
- Adoption professionals should set adopting parents up for success by providing counseling.
- Agencies and professionals should support access for adult adoptees seeking their original birth certificate.

To read Lori Holden's entire article, click here: [Open Adoption 101](#)

Special Thanks

Thank you to Mike Wigley, Tony & Bridget Sutton and Bill Cooper for hosting the Baja Sol Gala on August 31, 2009 in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

The Edward & Leslye Phillips Family Foundation for their donation of \$1,000 in connection with the benefit.

Ward and Kris Brehm Fund for their generous donation of \$500.

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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