

[DONATE NOW](#)



Spring 2018



**mnADOPT**  
**Insider**

Welcome to **MN ADOPT Insider**, a quarterly newsletter that gives updates about current events and happenings at MN ADOPT, as well as providing in-depth information about our programming and ways that you can help support our mission of promoting permanency for Minnesota children and supporting adoptive, foster and kinship families.

**mnADOPT**

**News**

**Welcome to our new staff....**



Karol Jensen-Schneider



Gail Swenson



Allie Schmidt

We're thrilled to welcome three amazing and experienced professionals to our growing MN ADOPT team!

Karol Jensen-Schneider has been with MN ADOPT since January 31 and is overseeing our new Fostering Network program. Karol is a great resource for both families and professionals regarding foster care information and referral, and will be working with community partners to identify and implement creative ways to recruit foster families for Minnesota kids. Prior to joining the MN ADOPT team, Karol was a regional Director at Kindred Family Focus, overseeing foster care and adoption. Karol also brings extensive experience at the county level in many areas of child welfare.

Gail Swenson has been with MN ADOPT since March 12, joining our growing team of HELP Specialists. To learn more about Gail's role and the rich experience she brings to her role, read the HELP section further in this newsletter.

Allie Schmidt joined MN ADOPT on March 20th in the role of Post Adoption Search Specialist, and will work collaboratively with state and tribal agencies, county agencies and private placing agencies to provide information and referral to those seeking birth records or search services. Allie brings many years experiences in support and adoption related work, most notably through her work as a Pregnancy Counselor for over 14 years at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota and HOPE Adoption & Family Services.

---

## And Our Newest Board Member!

A finance professional, Ryan Miles joined the MN ADOPT Board of Directors in 2018. The last 4 years, Ryan and his wife have been foster parents for numerous children with various MN counties and private agencies. They recently adopted two girls from Minnesota's foster care system and have five children.



---

## MN ADOPT Has Moved

With our expanding staff and services, we have once again had to search for a new office space to accommodate our growing team. We were fortunate



to find something right across the street so we can stay close to so many of our colleagues and partners!!

Our new address is:  
MN ADOPT  
2446 University Avenue W., Suite 104  
St. Paul, MN 55114.

*Left: Phoebe supervising unpacking efforts at MN ADOPT!*

We Get It



## Gail Swenson Joins HELP Program

The MN ADOPT HELP Program is excited to introduce our newest member of the team, Gail Swenson!

Gail joins the HELP Program with years of experience working directly within the adoption community, most recently as a Permanency Specialist with Ampersand Families. With both her long history of child advocacy, and her work in the field of older youth adoption, she is dedicated to providing support to families who are dealing with the complex issues of childhood trauma, grief, and disrupted attachment. Below you will find additional information on Gail.

### **Gail Swenson, MA (HELP Specialist):**

Gail earned both her B.A. in English Literature and her M.A. in Teaching English at Bethel University. She has used her training and experience as an educator within the adoption community both as a parent educator and co-leading workshops on adoption-related issues. Gail has continued her education through extensive ongoing training in attachment, trauma and adoption.

Gail joined the HELP Program in March of 2018 with a long history of advocating for children and childhood. She has a number of direct professional experiences with those touched by adoption and out-of-home placement which contribute to her tapestry of skills, most recently as a long-time employee at Ampersand Families as a Permanency Specialist. From 2000 to 2014 she was a court appointed Guardian ad Litem for Ramsey County and she spent years as a member of the administrative team of Southside Family Nurturing Center, a

family-centered program for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Her advocacy work has focused on: the prevention of child abuse and neglect, seeking family-focused solutions, older youth adoption, and providing education and support to parents around the issues of childhood trauma, grief, and attachment.

“I am motivated by my belief that childhood is a treasure; a foundational birthright to our human experience. My hope in providing skilled support to families is that childhood can be claimed and reclaimed for children and teens whose lives have been impacted by trauma, grief, and loss.”

[Learn more about all of the HELP Program team members!](#)

## Making Connections



### MN ADOPT Aids Foster Parent Recruitment Effort

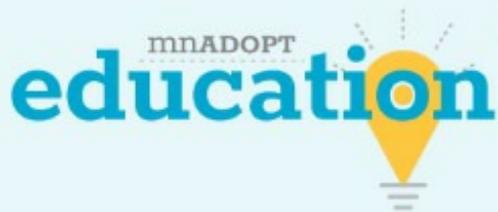


We're excited to announce the launch of Fostering Network as part of our Zero Kids Waiting program. This program is designed to provide information and referral for the Minnesota foster care community. In 2017, 9,900 kids were in foster care in Minnesota on any given day. With the shortage of foster homes, many are spending weeks or months waiting in shelter care.

Studies show potential foster families consider and research information about becoming a foster parent 5-7 times before contacting an agency about becoming licensed. MN ADOPT is hoping to decrease this number through our information and referral service, which includes a fillable inquiry form embedded in the Fostering Network tab on our website. Individuals can complete the form and it is

sent directly to child foster care licensing agencies the families select.

MN ADOPT was been working with counties, tribal communities, and private agencies to enter information about their licensing process and contact information, families asking questions about foster and kinship care, and community members about supporting foster children. During the first quarter of 2018, MN ADOPT staff have had over 300 contacts regarding foster care and the number continues to grow. In the coming months, the Fostering Network Coordinator will reach out to stakeholders in various communities across the State to ask for help in the recruitment of multicultural foster families.



Know More

## Opportunities for Families and Professionals

In honor of National Foster Care Month, MN ADOPT offered five free workshops and webinars during the month of May. We were happy to have the ability to bring great workshops to foster parents, adoptive parents, and professionals, free of charge. Through this offering we were able to provide free educational opportunities to 246 people!

Attendees greatly enjoyed the workshops and below is just a sampling of the great feedback we received:

*"Good depth of information without being overwhelming, great resources for further information, excellent presenter and super important topic."*

*"Presenter was fantastic and the information was extremely useful."*

*"Very informative, applicable, empowering, and encouraging."*

*"The content was excellent, lots of great things to take away and skills to try."*

*"I have been a foster and adoptive parent for 25 years thus I have been through many hours of trainings, this was hands down the most helpful and informative training I have ever experienced."*

Please visit our website [www.mnadopt.org/education](http://www.mnadopt.org/education) to view the summer schedule! We also have a library of previously recorded webinars available for download and on-demand viewing [here](#)

Support



The important work we do is made possible through the contributions of people like you who have a deep commitment to ensuring that all Minnesota children have safe, nurturing home in which to thrive. The following are ways that you can have an impact on our mission to promote and support successful adoptions for Minnesota children and families. Together we can make a difference!

---

### Make a Donation Today

The contributions we receive, no matter the size, have an immediate and important impact on our ability to help children find homes as well as support families created through adoption. You can make an online or recurring donation by clicking on the "donate" graphic to the right or by clicking [HERE](#)

You can also mail your donation to us at MN ADOPT, 777 Raymond Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55114.

---



### Volunteer Your Talents

Do you have a talent you think would benefit our work? MN ADOPT has a need for volunteers and board members with the following skills, background and experiences: Office/data entry, research, grant writing, human resources, legal fundraising, social media and graphic design.

[Learn more](#) about opportunities to use your skills and talents to support our work.

---



### Advocate for Children in Foster Care

Minnesota children in foster care need all of us to work together to ensure they can each have a safe and nurturing family to call their own. The following are ways that you can help make this a reality:

- Learn about the possibility of becoming a foster, adoptive or respite family to a child in foster care
- Encourage those in your community to consider becoming a resource for a child
- Spread the word about children in need of a family! Follow MN ADOPT through social media and share our posts that highlight children in need of a family



[Visit our website](#)

