

2009 Conference Schedule

Creating Kin: Forever Families Through Adoption

8:00 a.m. Registration & Coffee

8:45 a.m. Welcome & Morning Keynote

Rita Sorenen, Executive Director, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

Forever Families for Kids

9:45 a.m. Workshop Session #1

11:00 a.m. Workshop Session #2

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Luncheon Keynote

Leslie Pate Mackinnon, LCSW

Where Do Babies Come From: The Real Truth About Today's Families

2:00 p.m. Workshop Session #3

3:15 p.m. General Session & Closing

Special Feature: This year's conference will also provide an opportunity for families to meet youth who are freed for adoption and in need of a forever family. The youth will assist with conference registration, book sales, and lunch monitoring, as well as share their stories on a panel facilitated by Rita Sorenen.

Session #1–9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

1-A. Gaining Another Perspective

Leslie Pate MacKinnon, LCSW

An expert on the complex issues encountered by modern families, Leslie's perspective is based upon placing her two sons in "closed adoptions" during her late adolescence. She will share her personal experience and its impact on her efforts on adoption education and reform. Leslie is writing a book on families created by alternative means, comparing what has been learned in adoption to 3rd party reproduction.

1-B. Lying, Cheating, Stealing and Other Joys of Parenting

John Sobraske, Adoption Psychotherapist

Many adopted children, particularly those who have experienced neglect and abuse, find it challenging to tell the truth and not take what they want. This workshop will empathetically explore the reasons why while also coming up with smart and simple strategies to manage these difficult behaviors.

1-C. Advocacy 101

Josh Kroll, Project Coordinator, NACAC

The presenter will help you to obtain strategies and tools useful in advocating for your child and for all children, from problem identification, to the laws, rules and regulations governing various situations, and finally, identifying solutions. Those concepts will be expanded to class advocacy, advocating for all New York's children.

1-D. Allegations Happen

Susie Collins, New York State Citizen's Coalition for Children

Foster and adoptive parents are vulnerable to allegations of maltreatment. Learn some tips to preventing and surviving this stressful experience.

1-E. Search for Birthfamily

Ted LeRoy

The presenter, former facilitator of Adoption Resource Network at Hillside's Search & Support group and an adopted person who conducted a successful search for his birth family, will provide a "how-to" guide for adoptees, birth families, and adoptive parents using methods that do not require opening records or identifying information and by strictly legal and ethical means. He will share his story of discovery and reunion and provide tips to help others in their search.

1-F. Adopting Domestically in Less Than 1 Year

Joan Hebert, Adoptive Mom, Trainer

Learn what adoptive parents need to know to network, create profiles, privately adopt, improve agency success, and how to get safe legal and medical advice. We connected with 6 newborns in 14 months! You can, too!

1-G. Teen Panel

Rita Soronen, Executive Director, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

A panel of youth who are seeking adoptive families will tell you about themselves and let you know what teens want from adoption. They will field thoughtful and respectful questions and give you the opportunity to get to know them.

1-H. Second Time Around – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Sue Badeau, Director, Cross Systems Integration, Casey Family Programs

Rather than enjoying the "empty nest," many grandparents are unexpectedly caring for their grandchildren. Finding that many of their "old" parenting techniques no longer fit with the culture of today's children and faced with a multitude of challenging situations and multiple systems, the second time around may not be as simple as the first! Learn some tips for navigating systems, providing discipline and structure, and getting satisfaction from the second time around.

Session #2–11:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon

2-A. Options in Adoption

Jacque Morrison & Linda Harris, Adoption Social Workers, Hillside Children's Center

Adoption can take place in many ways and from many countries around the world, and each one seems to have its own set of rules, regulations and requirements. The presenters will help you make sense of the often confusing and misleading information, outline the homestudy process and Hague regulations, offer options, and generally help you navigate the crazy maze of choices in adoption.

2-B. Multiculturalism

Renee Hettrich, Adoption Social Worker, Family Connections

This workshop will provide an exploration of four major factors that influence an interracially adopted child's development of a healthy, positive, and integrated racial and cultural identity.

2-C. LGBT Adoption and Parenting

Panel Presentation

If you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender couple or individual setting out to have a family, doing it the old-fashioned way is probably not an option for you. More

likely than not, you will need to face many more decisions than your parents, friends and family ever did. This workshop will address issues specific to LGBT couples and singles seeking to adopt, including avenues available, guidance through the decision-making process, developing support systems, and general parenting issues often faced by non-traditional families.

2-D. Special Needs Adoption: Subsidy and Post-Adoption Support

Josh Kroll, Project Coordinator, NACAC

In this session, you will learn the basics of Title IV-E adoption assistance and other supplemental services available for children with special needs, including eligibility, benefits, administrative hearings, tax credits and more. Participants will receive concrete information and strategies to better advocate for their foster and adopted children.

2-E. You CAN do it alone, BUT...

Veronica Black, Children Awaiting Parents

This workshop will explore the realities of being a single foster or adoptive parent, including gaining acceptance and support of family and friends, recognizing when you really need help, how to successfully advocate for yourself and the needs of your child, building or enhancing your child's connection to birth family, and this missing partner (mom or dad) and the effect on the child.

2-F. Creative Communication – Using Fairy Tales to Talk with Kids about Adoption

John Sobraske, Adoption Psychotherapist

Have you ever noticed that many heroes and heroines of comic books and movies are adopted? These colorful tales provide a wonderful means to explore both the challenges and joys of the adoption experience and serve as great tools to open sensitive conversations. The presenter will guide you in using fairy tales and super heroes' adventures to effectively communicate adoption lessons with your children.

2-G. What's the Difference?

Greg Franklin, Esq. & Mike Finn, Permanency Specialist, Hillside Children's Center

Prospective adoptive parents have to make a crucial choice at the beginning of the process: should they pursue a private adoption, agency adoption, or adopt a child through the foster care system? The presenters will help discuss the differences between private and child welfare system adoptions, and offer some tips on navigating the system.

2-H. Open Adoption through the Eyes of a Child

Carly & Karen Rabish

After decades of secrecy, open adoption is finally becoming the norm. Adoptive parents and women making the decision to place a baby are making choices about degrees of openness and amount of contact. How does this openness impact the child as she grows? Hear how open adoption is working for this young lady and her extended family.

Session #3–2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

3-A. Managing the Foster to Adoption Process – Legal Issues and Practical Advice

Greg Franklin, Esq.

Topics will include the finalization process, terminations of parental rights, permanency planning, subsidy, criminal liability for the acts of foster and adoptive children, and post adoption contact in open adoptions.

3-B. The Homestudy Can Be Fun!

Jacque Morrison and Linda Harris, Adoption Social Workers, Hillside Children's Center

The Homestudy is often one of the most anxiety-producing aspects of the adoption process. Actually a wonderful opportunity to do a self-assessment and some soul searching, this workshop will provide an overview of the process and provide guidelines to help you calm your fears and approach the homestudy with candor and confidence.

3-C. There Are Babies to Adopt

Sue Kolok, Adoption S.T.A.R.

This workshop will explore domestic infant adoption including separating myth from fact, the evolution of birth parent involvement in placement decisions and the concept of open adoption. Participants will gain an understanding of how infants are placed for adoption, meeting birth parents, the potential risks or special needs of some infants placed for adoption and the differences in adopting an infant from a public or private agency versus a private attorney.

3-D. Negotiating and Managing Relationships

Sue Badeau, Director, Cross Systems Integration, Casey Family Programs

Relationships are a part of our lives and include connections with friends, family, peers and colleagues. Although sometimes complicated and delicate to negotiate, this workshop will discuss the benefits of helping children maintain connections that are important to them, as they move across systems, across families, or across the world.

3-E. What Birthparents Wish Adoptive Parents Understood

Karen Rabish, Adoption Social Worker

Do you wonder what birthparents are thinking and feeling before, during and after the placement of their child? Each birthparent is different but there are common themes. Learn what they are and how to best support your child's birthparents. Learn about the unique birthparent role, how it feels and evolves from birthparents who are living it.

3-F. Creating Kin, Fostering Attachment

John Sobraske, Adoption Psychotherapist

Adoption is a beautiful way to form a family, to bridge differences and create loving closeness. Sometimes, however, a child may stress about opening a wounded heart to new people while at the same time parents can also struggle with feelings of hurt and rejection. This workshop examines ways to patiently, realistically, effectively mend hearts and make lasting connections.

3-G. "For the Life of Me..."

Jeff Hancock, Facilitator, Adoption Resource Network at Hillside Search Support

"For the Life of Me," a documentary by Jean Strauss follows Dave as he tries to find his origins. Heart warming and heart wrenching, his journey leads to an unexpected and deeply moving epiphany. There will be time to share feelings and thoughts following the movie.

3-H. Becoming a Service Detective

Susie Collins, New York State Citizen's Coalition for Children

This workshop is designed to assist parents who have children with developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, and/or behavioral issues in identifying and

accessing community resources. Participants will learn how to become good advocates for themselves and for the children they are parenting.

Cost: \$65 per person

Late registration (after 10.30.09): \$79 per person

Register 2 people together and save! \$110

Scholarships and Fee Waivers available upon request – 585.350.2501

Make checks payable to Adoption Resource Network at Hillside Children's Center

Also accepting MasterCard and Visa

100 Metro Park, Rochester, NY 14623

Exhibit space still available.

Questions? Call Cecelia at 585.350.2501 or email cspinell@hillside.com