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### NJ•ARCH Features:

- Chat Rooms
- Lending Library
- Warm Line
- Resource Directory
- Buddy Mentors
- Support Group Advocacy
- Upcoming Events



CHILDREN'S AID  
AND FAMILY SERVICES, INC.

[www.cafsnj.org](http://www.cafsnj.org)

## ADOPTEES' "RIGHT TO KNOW" BILL

A bill to allow NJ-born adopted adults access to a copy of their original birth certificate ("obc") was introduced by Senator Joe Vitale (D-Middlesex) in Trenton this month.

The bill, S1093, would also allow the adult descendant of a deceased adopted person, or the adoptive parent of a minor adopted person, access to the original birth certificate.

Birth parents would have the opportunity to receive a contact preference form from the Registrar of Vital Statistics and to indicate whether or not they wish contact with the adopted person, and if so, whether they prefer it be direct or through an intermediary. Birth parents requesting a contact preference form

will also be given a medical and social history form on which to record updated information, and will be asked to return that form with the document indicating their preference regarding contact. These forms will be available by mail, at the office of the Registrar of Vital Statistics in Trenton, or on the Internet, and will be sent to the authorized person requesting a copy of the birth certificate along with that obc.

The State's web page (<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>) now has a bill-tracking service on its home page (click "SUBSCRIBE" and enter the bill number). You will be kept informed of its progress on e-mail by the Office of Legislative Services.

If you would like to be involved in facilitating the bill's passage, please send a note to Pam Hasegawa ([pamgawa@optonline.net](mailto:pamgawa@optonline.net)) saying that you'd like to be added to the Jersey Advocates e-mail list.

Further references: [www.nj-care.org](http://www.nj-care.org), [www.americanadoptioncongress.org](http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org)



PAM HASEGAWA  
NJ ADOPTION ADVOCATE

## FREE POST ADOPTION COUNSELING SERVICES AVAILABLE

Post Adoption Counseling Services (PACS) are available free to any family that has an adopted child younger than 18 years of age. Post services are designed to provide service to adoptive parents and adoptees who may have post adoption issues, concerns or problems. Services include individual and family therapy/counseling, supportive and

group services and educational meetings. This program is funded through the Department of Human Services-IVB funds "Promoting Safe and Stable Families".

PACS specializes in the clinical concerns of adoption including: identity issues; loss and separation; curiosity about origins; and feelings about differences. Referrals for service in Es-

sex, Bergen, Passaic and Morris Counties are handled by Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc., PACS program director, Kathy Russo who can be reached at 973.763.2041

Services vary in other parts of the state. Check the PACS listing on the NJ ARCH web site services page to find a program near you.

## BOOK REVIEW: DEAR BIRTHMOTHER

BY KATHLEEN SILBER AND PHYLIS SPEEDLIN

Hello again, Readers! Welcome to Natalie's Book Corner.

This month, I want to talk about a book entitled, Dear Birthmother, by Kathleen Silber and Phylis Speedlin. Something that struck me when I first looked at the book was that both authors were born in the 1940's as was I. We shared an era of social awareness.

Secondly, I noticed that Dear Birthmother was first copyrighted in 1982 and again in 1991. A third edition was copyrighted in 1997. That spoke to the fact that a new raising of consciousness concerning adoption was occurring. "This is truly the decade of open adoption." That quotation was the last sentence in the Acknowledgements.

I was born in 1943. My son was born in 1966 and my daughter in 1969. The three of us were adopted under the closed system where "secrecy" was of prime importance. For birthparents and adoptees that "secrecy" had a life long emotional price.

Part I: The first four chapters of Dear Birthmother reviews four standard myths of adoption.

Myth No. 1: "The birthmother obviously doesn't care about her child or she wouldn't have given him away."

Myth No. 2: "Secrecy in every phase of the adoption process is necessary to protect all parties."

Myth No. 3: "Both the birthmother and birthfather will forget about their unwanted child."

Myth No. 4: "If the adoptee really loved his adoptive family, he would not have to search for his birthparents."

The awesome influence of the myths is explored through letters from all sides of the adoption triangle.

Part II: The second section of Dear Birthmother goes beyond the myths in an effort to educate all parties about adoption.

Chapter 5 discusses the vulnerability of adoptive parents, their struggle to accept infertility, the decision to adopt, the realities of adoptive parenthood.

Chapter 6 addresses the preparation of new parents, counseling and home study.

Chapter 7 deals with preparing the birthparents by taking them through three phases of counseling. The time before the baby is born, the birth experience and living with the adoption decision are areas included in counseling.

Chapter 8 makes the reader acutely aware that for every adoptee there

are two sets of parents. Years ago the role of the birthparents was marginalized. That changed over time.

Chapter 9 explains that with the advent of open adoption came the opportunity to share love along with names, letters and pictures, face-to-face meetings and ongoing visitation.

I gleaned much valuable information from reading Dear Birthmother. Dispelling the long-held old myths of adoption was an important part of the healing process for me as an adoptee and as an adoptive mother.

### My Hopes for the Future

Being armed with knowledge will allow families created by adoption to move in a forward direction with hope replacing fear and doubt.

Birthparents and the children for whom they made adoption plans will know each other and develop meaningful relationships.

The children of adoption will have access to both of their families and will have the support they need on their journeys to wholeness.

This is not an easy road, but it is filled with possibilities providing that people act as their own agents for change and acceptance.

NATALIE HAMILTON  
WARMLINE WORKER  
NJ•ARCH

IN THIS ISSUE, NATALIE'S  
BOOK CORNER REVIEWS  
**DEAR BIRTHMOTHER**



This book is one of many  
available through the  
NJ•ARCH Lending Library

*NJ•ARCH currently  
has over 500 books,  
videos and articles  
available for loan. Each  
month we will feature a  
review of a book that is  
of interest. Log onto our  
website to view all the  
resources available to  
you from our  
organization. You will  
be glad you did!*

## DYFS FEATURED CHILD: REBECCA

In each issue of *Under the ARCH*, we will feature a child available for adoption through New Jersey's Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). Here is our featured child:

Rebecca, 11, is an adorable, affectionate Hispanic girl with a friendly and talkative disposition. She is a very social child who loves to be the center of attention.

Her interests include playing with her dolls, swimming, riding her bike, dance class, and playing educational games on the computer.

For more information about adopting Rebecca or other children like her, please call the recruitment specialist at Children's Aid and Family Services, (201) 261-2800, ext. 247.



Rebecca, age 11; Our Featured Child

### DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 1.5 million adopted children in the U.S. (over 2% of all U.S. children).

Approximately 60% of Americans have a personal connection to adoption (knows someone who has been adopted, has an adopted child or has relinquished a child for adoption).

## BE A BUDDY MENTOR:

NEXT SCHEDULED TRAINING IS MARCH 20TH

Whether you have survived your adopted child's adolescence and lived to talk about it...or you finally brought your child home from another country and learned so much from the experience that you want to share your knowledge with others...or your adopted kids have finally moved out of the house, and you're beginning to feel that empty nest syndrome...why not become a Buddy to a less experienced adoptive family?

NJ•ARCH offers numerous

FREE Buddy Family Training sessions to those interested in "buddying up" with another family. What a great feeling you can have by sharing some of your experiences with a family that is just starting or in the midst of their adoption journey.

Being a buddy is simple: just attend a one-day Buddy training hosted by NJ•ARCH (held on a Saturday), and be willing to be "buddied" up with another family. Families with similar experiences or back-

grounds are matched together. Most buddy mentors communicate with their families through e-mail and /or phone. You might wish to meet your buddy family, but this is not a requirement.

Our next Buddy training is scheduled for Saturday, March 20th in Paramus. For more information on our Buddy Family Training, contact Barbara Rall, Assistant Director of NJ•ARCH. We hope to see you at one of our future Buddy Trainings!



**Do you have experience with adoptive parenting?**

**Do you like to help others?**

**Train to be a Buddy Mentor.**

**Help another family succeed in their adoption by being in regular contact by e-mail or telephone.**

**Saturday, March 20, 2004**

**Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc.**

**200 Robin Road, Paramus, NJ**

**10 AM—4 PM**

**Call or e-mail to R.S.V.P.  
973.763.2041  
brall@njarch.org**

## ASK OUR EXPERTS

E-MAIL US YOUR QUESTIONS AT [WARMLINE@NJARCH.ORG](mailto:WARMLINE@NJARCH.ORG)

*Have a question  
that needs  
expert advice?  
E-mail or  
call the warmline;  
we would be happy  
to assist you!  
Frequently asked  
questions  
and responses  
from the staff  
will be published  
in future newsletters.*



**Question:** My husband and I were recently told by our fertility specialist that no further medical intervention is warranted. We are devastated. Relatives are urging us to put it behind us and adopt a baby. We're not so sure. Can you give us some advice?

**Answer:** Many couples are urged to consider adoption after being diagnosed with infertility. Remember, this is a decision to be made by you and your partner, regardless of the desires of the extended family.

Since medical treatment to achieve pregnancy is often lengthy and fraught with emotional ups and downs, it is usually best to take some time to grieve for the longed-for biological child who will never exist. This can take some time. Often one partner may feel more ready to pursue adoption than the other. This can cause tension in the marriage. Participating in a support group such as Resolve is often helpful in working through feelings of anger, sadness and loss. Some couples may require professional counseling to resolve their feelings about the loss and to reach a mutual decision about family building. Only when these feelings can be resolved is it appropriate to move on. Some families may decide to remain child free. Others may wish to pursue additional fertility treatment. Many will embrace adoption because they feel parenting is their true goal, not just giving

birth.

**Question:** I know books and social workers say that adoption should be discussed frequently with children as they grow, but my seven year old son never brings up the topic. Should I wait until he shows an interest?

**Answer:** Studies done with young adult adoptees and their parents reveal that the parents never thought adoption was much of an issue and that it rarely came up while their child was growing. The young adults on the other hand stated there wasn't a day in their lives that they didn't think about adoption. Many said they thought their adoptive parents were uncomfortable with the topic.

Experts recommend discussing adoption at least every six months if the child does not bring it up on his/her own. One parent recently mentioned that on her son's sixth birthday she casually said she thought his birth-mother was probably thinking about him that day. He expressed surprise, wondering whether she was still alive and why she would be thinking of him. His mother gently explained that his birthday would be a day his birth-mother would always remember. He didn't pursue the subject further, but the seed was planted. It's okay to talk about sensitive subjects in this family.

Often adoptive parents feel awkward and/or uncomfortable talking about birth-parents and adoption issues. Sometimes we feel threatened or competitive and of course, at one time or another we will experience the "You're not my real mother, you can't tell me what to do" statement from our kids. Adoptive parents need to know they are the "real" day to day parents and that failure to follow family rules using that particular threat is not acceptable. Nor, is that moment the time to discuss adoption issues.

Opportunities will arise and should be made use of. Sometimes we have to make our own opportunities. Some examples include when a friend's mother is pregnant, on a birthday or an "adoption/airplane" or "gotcha" day. Conversations in the car are good because there is no need to make eye contact. Including adoption story books at bedtime will help open conversations.

If you can create an atmosphere where it is okay to talk about the most sensitive topics at home, you will be doing your child a tremendous service.



Barbara A. Rall, LCSW

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT: CONNECTED HEARTS ADOPTION TRIAD SUPPORT

In this issue, we are spotlighting Connected Hearts Adoption Triad Support (CHATS). Located in North Plainfield, NJ, CHATS began in 1997 as an outgrowth of an adult education series held at the Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church.

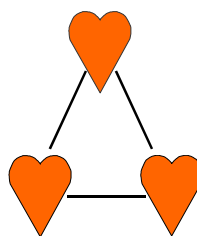
CHATS is a non-denominational organization that seeks to involve and serve all members of the adoption triad as well as others interested in and impacted by adoption. Monthly meetings consist

of a program, a social and refreshment break, and a time for sharing.

Over the years CHATS has offered a variety of programs as well as support in all aspects of adoption. The group has helped prospective parents learn about adoption, celebrated the adoption of children, encouraged adult adoptees in their search for biological roots, celebrated completed reunions, hosted presentations by adoption professionals and well known authors

and encouraged all members of the triad to increase their understanding of each other and the ties that connect them.

CHATS meets the last Monday of the month all year long except December. For further information, contact [Alycemi@aol.com](mailto:Alycemi@aol.com).



## DID YOU KNOW?

Between 1971 and 2001, U.S. citizens adopted 265,677 children from other countries.

Almost 90% of internationally adopted children were less than 5 years old.

## COME CHAT WITH US

Ever had the urge to speak to someone about adoption-related issues or ideas and not sure where to start or who to call? NJ•ARCH's chat room may be a perfect place to start....

NJ ARCH hosts numerous on-line, live chats; simply

log onto [www.njarch.org](http://www.njarch.org) and select "Chat Room" on the left column; select "agree" at the bottom of the "Rules of the Chat Room" screen, and join our chat! It's that easy. NJ ARCH moderates various topics including general adoption, birth parent,

search and reunion, young teen, and older teen chats.

Check our schedule below and join us; it's a great place to ask questions and chat with someone who may have the same concerns or ideas you have. You will be glad you did!



### General Adoption Chat:

Tuesdays 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

### Young Teen Chat:

Wednesdays 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

### Birth Parent Chat:

1st and 3rd Wednesday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

### Search and Reunion Chat:

2nd and 4th Wednesday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

### Teen Chat:

Wednesdays 9:00 pm-10:00 pm

### General Adoption Chat:

Saturdays 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

If you have any questions, please contact NJ•ARCH.

*Comments or Questions  
about NJ•ARCH  
or this newsletter?  
Contact us at  
[warmline@njarch.org](mailto:warmline@njarch.org)  
or call us at  
973-763-2041*

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# NEW JERSEY ADOPTION RESOURCE CLEARING HOUSE

76 SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE  
SOUTH ORANGE, NJ 07079

VISIT US AT [WWW.NJARCH.ORG](http://WWW.NJARCH.ORG)

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*The one-stop  
resource  
for those  
touched  
by adoption.*

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## ON-LINE ADOPTION EDUCATION

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Check out our website and log onto our E-Learning section. There, you will be linked to the "Adoption Learning Partners" website. Take some great interactive e-learning courses and learn more about topics such as:



- *Journey of Attachment*
- *With Eyes Wide Open: A Preparation Guide to International Adoption*
- *Let's Talk Adoption: A Lifetime of Family Conversations*
- *Understanding the Adoption Tax Credit*
- *Conspicuous Families*

Courses take from 45 minutes to 2.5 hours to complete. **These adoption-related courses are free for a limited time.** Give us your feedback! Let us know how these courses have helped you.