



FALL NEWSLETTER 2018



In this issue....

- **Back to School Supports**
- **Hear from Families like yours**
- **Book Reviews**
- **This year's VKAP Conference**
- **And so much more!**

***It's Time to:
Keep Calm
And
Head
Back to School***

If you are interested in becoming active in the Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship please consider joining us for the October 2nd meeting from 10:00-3:00 in Burlington.

For more information contact Catherine Harris at (802) 241-0901 or catherine.harris@vermont.gov

Please join us at the Vermont Kin as Parents Conference September 11th in Burlington



Welcome to the Vermont Consortium's Fall 2018 Newsletter!

While many of us love the change in seasons and the beauty of the Fall not all of us embrace our children heading back to school. All too frequently this is an area of challenge and struggle for children who have experienced tough things happening in their earlier life. For some of these children the structure and expectations of school can be triggering, as can be some of the assignments (nothing like being asked to bring in a baby picture when you don't have one). In this issue we have gathered some resources to support you in working with your schools—things you can bring in to teachers and guidance counselors to assist them in understanding your child—and strategies you can employ to help you support your children.

And to balance the structure of school and our busy routines remember that Fall opens up new opportunities to be out in nature—explore, hike, collect leaves and make a collage, watch the geese flying south. And you can slip in some mindfulness by just laying back and looking around—note whatever strikes you and your child—breathe and enjoy some quiet time together.



I wish you all a wonderful Fall!

Catherine Harris

Please consider sharing some pictures of your family with the greater community of Vermont families formed through adoption or guardianship!

We want to join you in celebrating your wonderful family—playing and working together, as well as those special occasions you celebrate.



Your family pictures would add a lot to future Consortium Newsletters and to the website.

Please forward them electronically to:

vtadoption@vermont.gov

And feel free to add a few words or provide a story to accompany the pictures.

Thanks!!

Please join us at the Vermont Kin as Parents Conference September 11th in Burlington

With a new school year just around the corner, we wanted to remind you of this great school resource from the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship Support and Preservation.

ASK ABOUT ADOPTION

WHAT TEACHERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

ADOPTION



WHY IT IS IMPORTANT FOR TEACHERS TO KNOW ABOUT ADOPTION

Adoption can be a wonderful outcome for children who are not able to live with their birth parents. However, when adopted children join their new family, they bring life experiences that might include maltreatment and/or trauma. As a result, during the time leading into adoption and after the adoption is finalized, these children might exhibit some unique behaviors in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for educators to understand the reasons underlying the behaviors versus solely focusing on the behaviors. Common emotions and issues among children who have been adopted include the following:

- grappling with issues related to identity, belonging, or attachment;
- managing complex and/or non-traditional relationships and roles with their birth family;
- experiencing loss and grief; and
- figuring out how to be in a family of a different culture or ethnic group.

Outside of the family network, teachers and other school personnel play the largest role in children's development. Because children spend a great deal of their daily lives in school settings, it is important for teachers to be aware of adoption and the behaviors that some children — both pre- and post-adoption — might exhibit in the classroom. Many teachers have found it extremely beneficial to develop a relationship with the adoptive parents and work with them to determine a classroom routine that works well for their child.

?

DID YOU KNOW

- Children & youth are adopted at all ages; median age of children adopted through the public child welfare system is 5 years old.
- The U.S. has more than 1.5 million adoptees younger than 18 years.
- In 2014, 116,360 children were adopted in the U.S., of whom 75,337 were adopted by non-relatives.
- Adoption can occur in a variety of ways: 1) private domestic adoptions; 2) public adoptions (from foster care); 3) intercountry adoptions; and 4) stepparent or family member adoption that does not involve a private agency.
- In 2015, about 440,000 children received Title IV-E adoption subsidies, which means they were most likely adopted from the public child welfare system.

This 4-page fact sheet is designed to help teachers and other school staff understand the unique needs of children who have been adopted, and to provide concrete tips on how school staff can effectively work with these children. Sharing this fact sheet with your child's school team is a way to initiate conversations about adoption including how to best support your child. The fact sheet, along with a 10-minute video where Heather Forbes, LCSW shares strategies that educators can employ to create a classroom culture that promotes a physically and psychologically safe environment that helps all children achieve academic success, can be found at: <https://qic-ag.org/>.

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Our Family Adoption Story

By: Marie and Walt Daly



David with his parents
at University of Connecticut

Adoption was the beginning of a great adventure for us. We were in our 40's and married for 20 years when we decided to bring a child into our family through adoption. We were open to many possibilities. We felt that we would benefit from a connection between birth and adoptive family.

The Friends In Adoption agency (FIA) in Poultney, Vermont joined us on our quest to adopt. We selected them to be our agency because of their caring approach in matching families. FIA values a joint focus on the welfare of the child, diversity and inclusion, and provides lifelong support to both adoptive and birth families.

In November 1995 FIA received a response to their ad in Rolling Stone magazine from a pregnant woman and they sent her our profile. Around Thanksgiving we spoke to Ketty for the first time. She was 36, recently divorced, with 2 children and finishing her college degree in education to support her family. We felt an instant connection and were ready to move forward.

Two things were very important to her and asked of us:

1. That we maintain ongoing direct communication with her
2. That we provide a college education for her child.



David with his parents on graduation day

During January 1996, we were selected to be the baby's parents and invited to come to Texas for our baby's birth in March. We were honored to be the delivery coaches for our son. Over the next several days, while waiting for the baby's arrival, we laughed and cried together as we created a circle of love and trust. On March 14 David James Tri was born. Ketty gave us the biggest gift of our lives. As promised, over the years we shared pictures, letters, phone calls and visits to our home with Ketty and David's brothers and sister. We even enjoyed family vacations a couple of times. Ketty celebrated David's high school graduation with us in 2014. In December of 2017, the three of us made our first trip back to Texas since 1996. We celebrated Christmas with 3 generations of David's birth family. What a special event that was for all of us. As we left Texas, David commented, " You thought you were adopting a baby, but a whole family adopted all of us." Our circle of love has become so much larger since that Christmas trip to Texas.



David with his birthmother

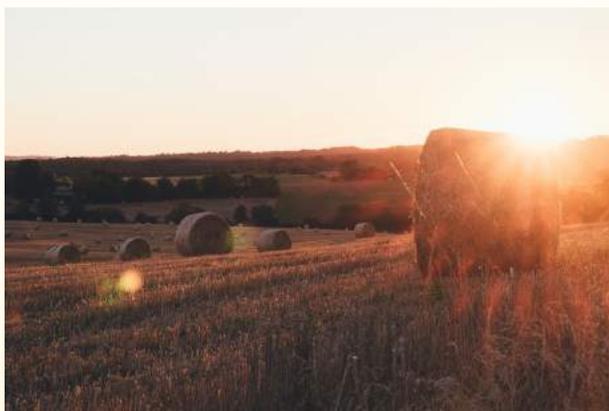
This April, we went back to Texas to see Ketty receive her Master's Degree in Education. Just a week later, David graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor's Degree. David's birth Mother, Ketty, and his birth sister, Huyen, were sitting with us at his graduation. We had lived up to our promises of ongoing communication and providing David with a college education.

Our journey through parenthood has been the biggest accomplishment of our lives. Twenty-two years is only the beginning. Watching our son from birth to his college graduation has brought us so much joy. David's life has just begun and we look forward to the next chapter of his life. Special thanks to Dawn at Friends In Adoption for making this happen.

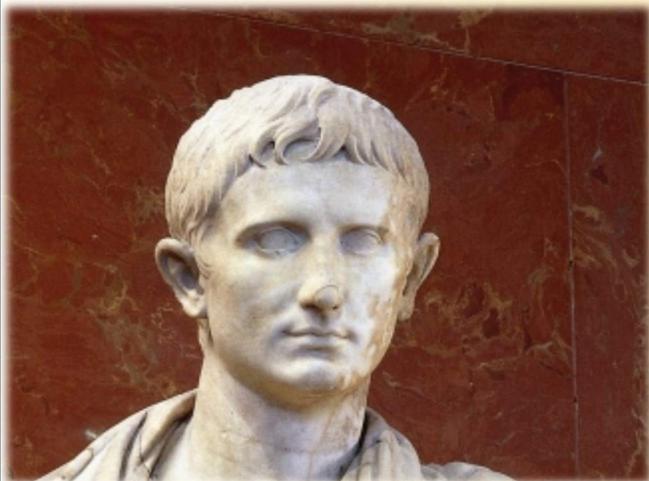
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What's So Special About August?

I was driving along this morning thinking about what to submit for the newsletter. Stumped in my creativity and pressured by a deadline, I decided to think about the month of August and how I might conjure a topic that is relevant to this newsletter. So I set out to find out about what is so special about August.



I found out that the month of August was given its name by a man named Augustus Caesar. Augustus Caesar was the first emperor of Rome. In his position he was credited for laying the framework that resulted in 200 years of Roman Peace and built a successful empire that lasted, in various forms, for nearly 1,500 years. That is a pretty amazing accomplishment that few people ever experience; even more so when you learn that Augustus Caesar was adopted after the death of his parents [he was in kinship care with his grandparents first and then adopted by his uncle]. Talk about resilience! Upon learning about this significant piece of history it seems appropriate to



think about celebrating permanence in its many forms during the month of August, and taking a moment to truly embrace our gratitude for one another. I am particularly grateful and awe struck by the idea that one person, in one moment, can be responsible for changing the course of another's life. Would Augustus Caesar have had the opportunity to build an empire had he not been adopted by his Uncle Julius Caesar?

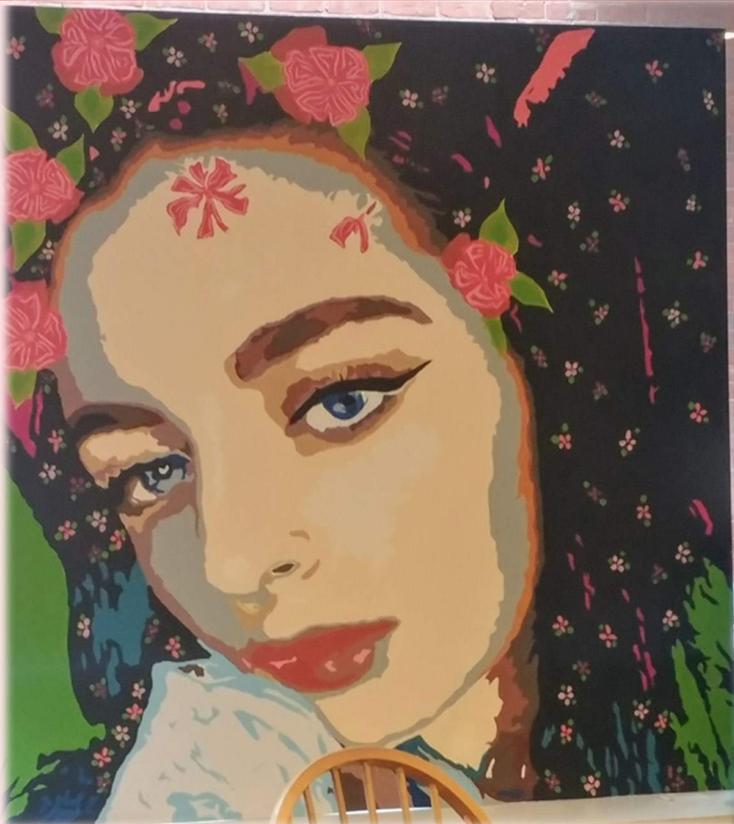
For those struggling through the difficult experience of parenting a child who has endured trauma, I want you to know that you are making a difference. Much like Augustus Caesar, you are laying a foundation, that may well last for 1,500 years in various forms.

Thank you for all of your hard work!

Pam Montgomery, Post Permanency Support Provider, easterseals

Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/emperor-augustus>

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From the Kahn family

Here is a photo of our daughter Kali posing with a self-portrait she painted that was on exhibit at the Statehouse in March.

And another endearing photo of her in Ireland holding a lamb on Aran Isle. She went there with her Irish Humanities class.

She is an aspiring artist and we are hoping to be able to help her go to art college. She is currently attending the summer pre-college program at Montserrat College of Art. She will be applying for college this fall to major in art and graphic design. She is enrolled in the Digital Media Arts program at the Central Vermont Career Center for her upcoming senior year. Her beloved art teacher, Barb Austin-Hutchins who just retired after teaching for 38 years stated, "Life is short. Art is long."

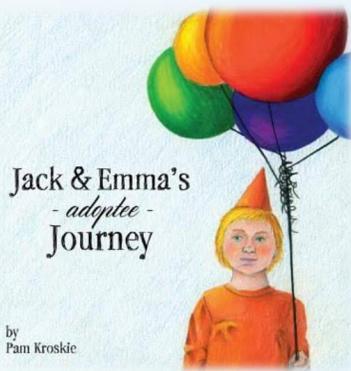


The Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship invites you to contribute to strengthening and building the adoption/guardianship communities of Vermont by joining a committee!

- ◆ Conference Planning and Training
- ◆ Diversity in Adoption
- ◆ Library

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Jack & Emma's – adoptee – Journey

by Pam Kroskie

Book review by Dawn Smith-Pliner

Are you the adoptive parent of a child who seems to day dream a lot or who asks lots of questions about his/her adoption? Do you struggle with how to engage your child in a conversation about the adoption? If so this might be the perfect book to purchase or take out from the Consortium Library. A review by Patti Hawn, an adoptee and the author of *Good Girls Don't* sums it up perfectly. “This is a small book that goes right to the heart of the feelings of a young adoptee. It is written in a language that is sure to open communication between the parents and children and provide safety about the sensitive issues often inherent in an adopted child.” A page from the book reads, “Sometimes at school, Emma gets nervous and worried that her parents won't be there to pick her up.” The parent/s guide reads, “This is a valid fear of an adoptee. Abandonment and rejection are often on their mind. It is necessary to reassure your child that you will be there.” This is an excellent resource for adoptive families with children from age 5 – adult. (Note that single and LGBTQ+ families will have to adjust the language as the book consistently refers to Mom and Dad.)

Pam Kroskie is an adoptee in reunion and the mother of three grown boys. She serves on the Spokeo Search Angel committee and is on the Adoptee Rights Coalition board. Her passion is Adoptee Rights Issues in her state of Indiana. She currently is the President of HEAR- Hoosiers for Equal Access to Records and the sister non- profit—Indiana Adoption Network.

VERMONT CONSORTIUM for ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP LIBRARY

The Vermont Consortium maintains an extensive library focused on providing resources for families who adopt or provide guardianship, and their children.

Topics include:

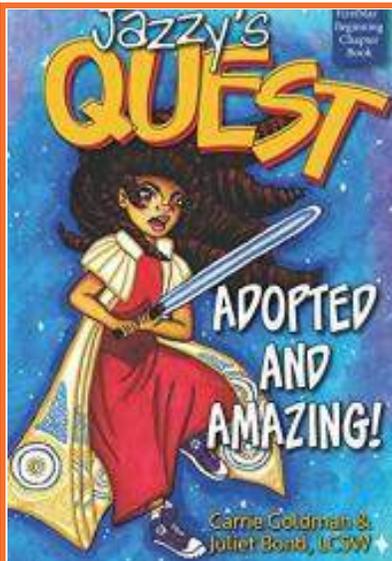
- private adoption,
- adopting through child welfare,
- kinship,
- talking with your children about adoption,
- transracial/transcultural adoptions,
- developmental trauma,
- resilience.....
- and then there are picture books for children as well as books for youth!



The library is available to Vermont parents, children, youth, and the professionals who serve them. The library is physically located in the Vermont easterseals office, 641 Comstock Road, Berlin, VT— please call before stopping by: 802-223-4744. The library is also accessible on line at <https://vac.myturn.com> - open up your account, reserve the books you are interested in, and they will be sent to your home with a self addressed stamped envelope for you to return them to the library when they are due back.

Don't miss out on this great support!

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Jazzy's Quest – Adopted and Amazing!

By Carrie Goldman & Juliet Bond, LCSW

Book review by Dawn Smith-Pliner

Finding books on adoption for tweens is not easy. Kudos to authors Carrie Goldman & Juliet Bond for filling in the gap with the Jazzy series written for the tweens – grade 3-6. Race, self-identity, forming friendships and being different and accepted are all kindly and appropriately addressed in this book.

I remember a day when my daughter started chatting – “you know Mom, I got brown eyes like yours and I have brown hair like yours too. My response was, “you’re right and you live in tutu’s and dance through the grocery store – you got your dancing gene from your birthmom who was belly dancing when she went into labor. Remember that story?” We laughed together and the day went on. Jazzy is faced with the same dilemma when thinking about what she would do in a school talent show. What talents did she get from her birthfamily? How was she like her adoptive family? How could she weave all the parts of herself together to become just Jazzy? Who was she and where did she fit in? Read this book together as a family and see what Jazzy comes up with!



How you can help from a day to a lifetime.

In Vermont at any given time there are over 80 youth needing forever families and even more who are needing foster homes, even within your community. As you read this you might say my house is full, I cannot possibly take one more person into my home—or we are just not ready to provide care for a child/youth. Well there are other ways to help and one of them is. . . **Recruitment!**

There are many ways for you to help recruit families for youth in foster care:

- ⇒ Word of Mouth. Tell everyone of the need—there isn’t one community that doesn’t need foster parents in Vermont. You can share this when talking with a neighbor in the grocery store, Farmer’s Market, attending a Community Event or going to the Library.
- ⇒ Host a Table Talk. What is a Table Talk you ask? We can find a date that will work for you to host a dinner, lunch, breakfast or coffee at your home. You get to invite friends, family and community members to talk about foster care. Size isn’t important—large or small will make a difference.
- ⇒ Provide an email blast regarding foster care and adoption to your family and friends and ask them to pass the word along to their email connections.



⇒ Host the Heart Gallery: <https://lundvt.org/the-heart-gallery> Do you have a business, community event, church, or other location that might be willing to host one or twenty photos?

If you are interested in any of these or would like to learn more, then please do not hesitate to reach out to Heather Simmons at heathers@lundvt.org or 802-324-0939.

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Support Groups for Adoptive and Guardianship Families in Vermont

By Donna Provin, Post Permanence Service Provider, Lund

Have you ever considered attending a support group for adoptive and guardianship parents and families but were intimidated by the idea of sitting in a circle sharing personal information with people you don't know? This is often the vision that pops into one's mind when you hear the words "support group." Some people absolutely love traditional support groups and attend with a high level of commitment. Other people prefer a more family-oriented approach. Some folks are looking for something in between. In Vermont there is a wide variety of support groups offered to adoptive and guardianship families from the traditional type to more family-oriented support groups. There is something for everyone!

In Addison County, I facilitate a family-based support group. The group meets once a month in a variety of locations. Each month features a different theme or activity, but the focus is always on family support and community building. Families provide input on which activities to do or themes to explore. Over the past several years, activities have included parents and caregivers working with the child or children on therapeutic activities such as creating family collages,



meditation bottles, dream catchers, and making gifts during the holiday (decoupage project.) The group has also enjoyed trying out fun body-based therapeutic activities like yoga and drumming. Some of the families that regularly attend our family support group enjoyed drumming so much that they have purchased their own drums! We have also have held potluck dinners, a movie party (which featured a movie with an adoption/guardianship theme), pizza parties, a pool party, a cookout, and explored local playgrounds. Recently, the group met at the Addison Central School where the playground was a big hit with the children, thanks to the merry go round! We have shared books and picture books about adoption and guardianship as well as worked on the children's WISE UP power books—picture books that can be colored or written in that help children (and adults) formulate their own responses to questions and comments they may hear about adoption. This spring, the group set aside about an hour to work on their WISE UP power books. The children shared their own connections to adoption and guardianship all while coloring. This activity started such a wonderful and rich discussion that the group ran a half hour late and no one minded at all!

The children love getting together and enjoy being in a group of children who are all adopted or in guardianship. There are not many times in their day to day life when all the children they are with are adopted or in guardianship. The parents and caregivers enjoy the support and community they feel when surrounded by others who are experiencing similar joys and challenges. At any given meeting, you will find parents and guardians sharing resources, ideas, and stories. The Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship works to ensure that there are a variety of groups available across the state available to families. So check out a group near you!

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VERMONT SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILIES

*“The support group was my **LIFELINE** especially in the early years. My grandson and I were adjusting to a different life. I truly would never have been able to survive had it not been for the people in the support group.”*



The following Support Groups are provided by the Vermont Adoption Consortium in collaboration with Post permanence Services (From Lund, Easterseals, or NFI). Some groups are also co-sponsored by community partners or are community based support groups.

Addison County

Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Families held the 4th Tuesday of the month. 5:30-7:00 pm. Please contact Donna Provin for more information and for the location at (802) 343-0565 or email donnap@lundvt.org

Bennington County

3rd Thursday of the month from 7 - 9 pm at the Shaftsbury Methodist Church. For more information contact: Jill C. Bouton at (413) 884-5589

Brattleboro

Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Parents the second Monday of the month, 6:30-8:30 pm. Please contact Danna Bare, M Ed, for more information and for the current location (802) 258-0308

Chittenden County

Chittenden County Circle of Parents Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Families
This group is held the LAST Tuesday of every month from 5:00-6:30pm in South Burlington.
Pre-registration is required. For more information or to RSVP, contact Katherine Boise, BSW, M.Ed at Lund at (802) 864-7467.

Self-Care Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Caregivers: This group meets one Wednesday per month from 12-1:15pm at Lund (S.Burlington). It focuses on self-care activities and discussions. To get more information or to RSVP, please call Melissa Appleton at 864-7467 or email kathleeny@lundvt.org

Franklin County

1st Thursday of every month at the Senior Center, 75 Messenger Street, or the Church on the Rock, St.

Albans from 5:30-7:30 pm. Dinner and childcare provided at no cost. Please contact Nina Hill (802) 495-6187 or Monica Darrah (802) 495-6535 to RSVP or for more information.

Morrisville

Please contact Pam Montgomery, easterseals of Vermont, (802) 595-5046 for information

Springfield

Learning Circle for Foster and Adoptive Parents meets the third Wednesday of each month from 6 to 8 pm at the Springfield Family Center—conference room, 365 Summer St, Springfield, VT 05156. Please call Danna Bare for more information (802) 258-0308

St Johnsbury

The Northeast Kingdom Foster and Adoptive Community meets the second Thursday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm at the Union Baptist Church in Waterford. Please contact Barb Hash for more information (802) 473-6108

Upper Valley

Kinship Care Support Group meets the first Thursday of each month, 12:00-1:30 pm, 2458 Christian Street, Wilder, VT (next to Dothan Brook School on Route 5). For more information contact: Judith Bush, ACSW (802) 356-9393 x 2 or jbush@together.net

Transracial support Groups :

Burlington

A transracial playgroup was started up in the Burlington area in August. Please contact Jordy Baker for more information jordybaker@me.com

Montpelier

Families of Color, open to all families. Play, eat and discuss issues of adoption, race and multiculturalism. Bring snacks and games to share, and dress for the weather. Third Sundays, 3–5 p.m. Unitarian Church, 130 Main Street, Montpelier.

Alyson, 439-6096 or alyson.mahony@gmail.com

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POST PERMANENCY SERVICES FOR FAMILIES



Families formed by adoption or guardianship may need support and those needs usually change over time as children and families grow and change. Post Permanency Services address the normal issues adoptive and guardianship families face as well as more significant issues that can arise when raising a child who has experienced a traumatic start in life.

Supports offered include:

- ◆ In-home adjusted parent education, identifying strengths and challenges and developing plans that foster growth
- ◆ Consultation to treatment teams and advocacy, providing education supports within schools and collaborating with treatment teams
- ◆ Referrals to community resources
- ◆ General adoption/guardianship information
- ◆ Kinship placement support



These services are provided by a Post Permanency Service Provider meeting with the family and working with them to assess and determine what services are needed. Together a plan will be made and goals set for these services. To support the family in meeting their goals the Post Permanency provider

will be meeting with the family monthly in their home as well as attending any meetings that the family identifies—such as treatment team meetings and school meetings.

*“I would like to **thank** the Post Permanency Services staff they have been wonderful people to work with who are a wealth of knowledge and support. Whether just listening to me vent and bounce ideas off of, or to giving me advice on how to deal with difficult birth family members, or how to deal with school staff. They have given us awesome contacts to help with these struggles. Thank you all for that you do. I wouldn't know where I'd be today without you.”*

Post Permanency Services are available to families formed by adoptive and guardianship . For information regarding services in your area please contact:

**BARRE, BENNINGTON, HARTFORD,
MORRISVILLE, ST. JOHNSBURY &
RUTLAND AHS Districts**

EASTERSEALS

641 Comstock Road, Suite 1, Berlin, VT 05602
Lynn Bessette, Program Manager (802) 279-4241
lbessette@eastersealsvt.org

**BRATTLEBORO, BURLINGTON, MIDDLEBURY,
NEWPORT & SPRINGFIELD AHS Districts**

LUND

P.O. Box 4009, Burlington, VT 05401
Melissa Appleton, Supervisor (802) 864-7467 X2019 C:
782-3311 melissaa@lundvt.org

ST ALBANS AHS District

NFI, Northeast Family Institute

12 Fairfield Hill Road, St. Albans, VT 05478

Kriss Lococo, Regional Manager, (802) 524-1700 Kristenlococo@nafi.com

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The 14th Annual Kinship Conference
for Grandparents and Relatives
Raising Children and Those
Who Support Them

PARENTING REVISITED:

The Many Faces of Kinship Care



Keynote Speaker:
Susanne Schmidt



Embracing our Superpowers
Counselor and Master Storyteller

To view the brochure and get more
information you can go to the
Consortium website at

<https://www.vtadoption.org/vkap-september-2017-conference.html>

Vermont Kin As Parents

P.O. Box 415,

Williston, VT 05495;

(802) 871-5104

(802) 871-5109



2 EASY WAYS TO REGISTER

1. REGISTER ONLINE

<https://vermontkinasparents2018.eventbrite.com>

2. BY MAIL

Send registration form and a check to:

Vermont Kin As Parents

PO box 415

Williston, VT 05495

Make checks payable to:

VERMONT KIN AS PARENTS

*

For more information: 802-871-5104

Brendah.kin@comcast.net

www.vermontkinasparents.org

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21st Annual Forever Family Celebration

(formerly known as Lund's Annual Adoption Picnic)



HOPE • OPPORTUNITY • FAMILY

Sunday, September 23, 2018

11:00am to 3:00pm

Champlain Valley Expo

State Building

105 Pearl St,

Essex Junction, VT

Potluck: Please bring a main dish or an appetizer to share.

Example: (main dishes) pasta salad, mac and cheese, baked beans, meatballs, green salad

(appetizers) Dip, veggie platter, mini-pizzas/quiches, cheese cubes, chicken wings

Desserts and drinks will be provided. Thank you!

RSVP: toniy@lundvt.org
(802) 864-7467 ext. 2006
Tell Toni what you're bringing!

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Transracial/Transcultural Parenting Workshop

Saturday, September 29, 2018

Lund

50 Joy Drive, Burlington, Vermont

10:00 am – 3:00 pm



For More Information go to vtadoption.org

The Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship website

or

contact Catherine Harris for scholarship information

(802) 241-0901 or Vtadoption@vermont.gov

or go directly to registration at

<https://tr-tc-workshop.eventbrite.com>

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