



VERMONT CONSORTIUM

for **ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP**

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2018



In this issue....

- **Talking with your Child**
- **Hear from Families**
- **Book reviews**
- **Natural Haircare help for families**
- **This year's VFAPA Conference**
- **Camp For Me Dates**
- **And so much more!**

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship please consider joining us for the March meeting from 1:00-4:00 in Waterbury

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

*I sustain myself with the
love of Family. Maya Angelou*

Take time to play together as a family—it will help chase the winter blues away!



Welcome to the Vermont Consortium's Spring 2018 Newsletter

I know the weather hasn't changed yet but we are getting closer to Spring every day! This is a wonderful time to spend connected time as a family—inside or outside. One of my favorite memories with my children is a day we carved out of our busy schedules where we went sledding, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing (yes, all of these over the course of the afternoon) with a pot of hot chocolate and popcorn to warm us up as the sun was setting! We laughed and played together and strengthened our foundation as a family. Right now is also a time to speed spring up a bit by cutting a branch of an early flowering bush or tree (forsythia, plum, magnolia, etc) bring it inside and place it in water. The buds will start swelling and pretty soon you will have a beautiful flowering branch reminding you that spring is around the corner.

I encourage you to create pockets of celebration of your family as we move—slowly—towards Spring!

Catherine Harris



We are looking for pictures of families formed through adoption or guardianship working, playing, and celebrating together!



Please consider submitting pictures of your family to be used in future Consortium Newsletters – they can be forwarded electronically to:

vtadoption@vermont.gov

Thanks!!

Our Thanks to Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS) for their Many Years of Service!

After being a founding provider of post permanency services in Vermont, NKHS made the decision at the end of 2017 to step away from providing these services directly. NKHS has been a strong committed partner over the past 20+ years providing expertise and support to families, post permanency programming, and to the Consortium. Our deepest thanks for all of this and best of luck as they keep moving the system of care forward in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont—working to understand and meet the mental health needs of families formed through adoption and guardianship.

Help wanted in Hartford—Part-time Flexible Hours

Seeking creative, passionate individual to support Foster Parent recruitment and retention efforts in the Hartford District. The ideal candidate will have great interpersonal skills, a deep appreciation of the role foster parenting plays in the health & wellness of DCF -FSD involved youth in VT and recruitment experience. Share your skills or be willing to learn new ones.

To learn more, contact the District Director or Resource Coordinator in Hartford at - 802-295-8840



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Talking to Your Child about Adoption.....Getting Comfortable

Last November 3rd during the lunchtime panel at the Consortium Conference, an audience member asked when they should tell their child they were adopted. The unanimous response was that they should know from day one, all four panelists had no memory of being told, they just always knew, and they all said that this was a very positive thing their parents did for them.

It can be hard to talk about adoption with your child—you might feel awkward or stumble over your words—but putting these talks off doesn't make it any easier. And every child wants to know their story from their parent—not find out accidentally and have it come as a surprise. When this happens it can damage a child's relationship with their parent—they may feel betrayed or that their parent isn't trustworthy. If you aren't already talking about adoption with your child—don't delay any longer—it just takes practice for you to become more relaxed and comfortable so start now!



Things to remember—no matter your child's age or when they joined your family *forever*:

- ◆ Talking openly allows your children to get their feelings about being adopted on the table, it increases their comfort and confidence.
- ◆ Always “frame” the conversation from the child's perspective.
- ◆ Kids are curious, and their curiosity isn't a sign that they aren't attached to you or that they're disloyal—it's a normal part of child development to want to know “their story”.
- ◆ Kids know without your saying anything that there is something different about them and their place in your family—no matter what you may worry about, it can be a relief for them to learn that all that's different is that they were adopted.
- ◆ Kids deserve to hear the truth from you, in clear, honest, direct communications, adoption shouldn't be a secret, it's just another way to form a family.
- ◆ When you talk with your child about adoption you are building trust and security between you—they learn that they can come to you with their questions, concerns, and feelings—and that's a very good thing.

And don't forget:

- ◆ Be age and developmentally appropriate when you are talking—their understanding of adoption is going to be a reflection of where they are.
- ◆ Use positive adoption language and be respectful of their birth parents when talking about them.
- ◆ This isn't going to be a one-time conversation but rather one that comes up frequently—for some children this can even be daily—and remember just because they aren't bringing it up, doesn't mean they aren't thinking about it—so make sure you bring it up if they don't.
- ◆ Make sure they feel comfortable talking with you, there should be lots of questions and you want to be the one answering them, so whenever they want to talk, do what you can to make room for listening.
- ◆ And if you need help—and most parents do need some support from time to time—you can reach out to your local Post Permanency Program (see page 16), check out the resources on the Consortium website vtadoption.org, or browse the Consortium Library (see page 14).

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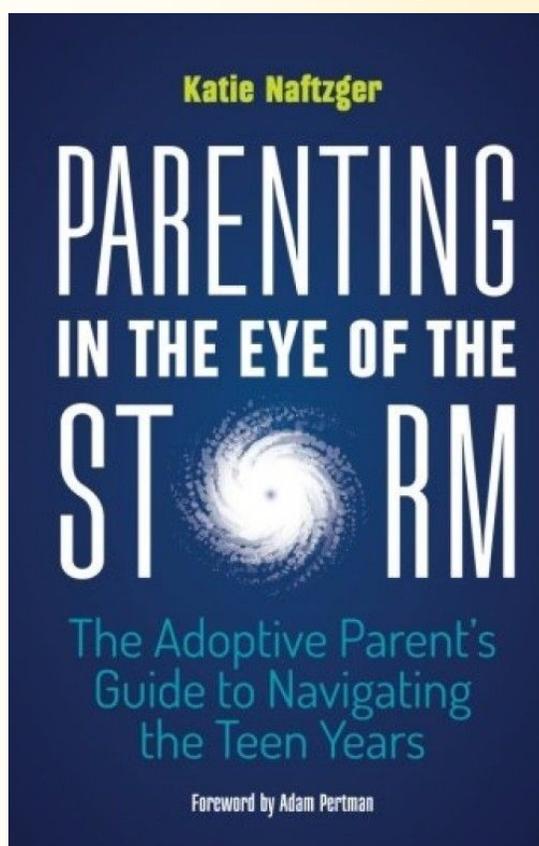
BOOK REVIEWS:

Parenting in the Eye of the Storm by Katie Naftzger

Reviewed by Kathy Yanulavich,

University of Vermont MSW student and Lund Post Permanency Support Program intern

As an experienced adoption/family therapist and adoptee, Katie Naftzger understands issues non-adopted caregivers need to know. In her new book, *Parenting in the Eye of the Storm: The Adoptive Parent's Guide to Navigating the Teen Years*, Katie uses her professional insight and firsthand experience to guide caregivers through the choppy waters of this developmental period. Through anecdotes and personal accounts she goes into depth describing the four skill sets needed by caregivers to help prepare their



teens who were adopted for the future: un-rescuing, setting adoption-sensitive limits, having connected conversations, and helping teens envision their future. She examines the difficulties many adoptees have forging a path into adulthood and how they must wrestle with their identities –acknowledging who they are now so that they can imagine who they can be later.

With sensitivity and skill, Katie also discusses race and mental health issues in detail, and explores a different take on white privilege, suggesting that privilege isn't all about race. She also reflects on the challenge of being a minority with needs that are often missed and how, over time, that can lead minorities to feel unseen, unattended to and misunderstood. She delves into the complexity of and ways to talk about racism and how parents can support their child's racial identity. The book begins with an illuminating chapter on layers of loss for adoptees and ends with a chapter on self-care for parents.

Packed with practical examples and tips on what to say and what not to say to teens, this book is about parenting differently, with insights and strategies that will serve you well. My copy is dog-eared and underlined throughout. It's a must-read for adoptive caregivers!

Don't Forget you can take these books out from the Consortium's Library—for more information on the library see page 14 of this newsletter or go directly to the website at <https://www.vtadoption.org/lending-library.html>

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WONDER by R. J. Palacio

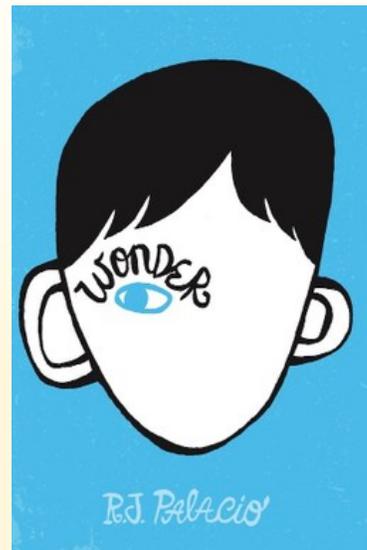
Reviewed by Ann Clark, LICSW, Adoption Advocates

Two years ago for my birthday I received the book Wonder in the mail from my 12 year old grandson who lives in Wyoming. Along with the book, there was a card which read, “Grammie, this is my favorite all time book so I bought a copy for you for your birthday. P.S. I bought it with my own money.” Love, Nevin

My grandson does not exactly have a love affair with books. He is much happier being outdoors boating, hunting, and fishing so I was very intrigued and read the book immediately. Wonder is the story of fifth grader Auggie Pullman who you will surely fall in love with instantly. Auggie was born with a severe facial deformity and just wants to be a normal kid. He has had a multitude of surgeries and is about to enter grade 5 in public school, which he has never attended previously.

This book is filled with heart and hope as Auggie and his classmates cope with helping him be “normal.” It is also the story of the courage that it sometimes takes to be a friend. Auggie is the primary narrator in the book. However, his adolescent sister, her boyfriend and some of Auggie’s classmates take turns being narrators. Thus, this is a book that will also appeal to adolescents because of Auggie’s sister and her romantic struggles. The book is a wonderful example of struggling with empathy, compassion and acceptance, qualities that many of our children who are adopted clearly need. This book is not an adoption book but it ultimately deals with the issues of differences and the need to feel accepted and the importance of self-esteem for all children.

To date, this little gem of a book has been read by over 6 million readers and is a wonderful, major motion picture starring Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson, and Jacob Tremblay. If you have not read Wonder or seen the movie, treat yourself and your middle school and adolescent children to it on a cold winter’s night. It is a gem and will spark many conversations about differences, acceptance, and friendship. The book is readily available at all local libraries—and the Consortium Library!



RPC+ A Trauma-Intensive Workshop for Caregivers

A **Resource Parent Curriculum** that educates caregivers about the impact of trauma on the development, attachment, emotions and behaviors of the children in their care; **plus** guides parents in improving their relationship with their children and their ability to manage ongoing and daily challenges.

A Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership
Advanced Trauma Training for
Foster, Kin and Adoptive Parents
Part of Vermont’s Placement Stability Project

For more information, contact:
Amy Bielawski-Branch, MS, LCMHC
1-802-578-0426
amy.bielawski-branch@uvm.edu



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It's been about 12 years

It's been almost 12 years since I sat in a cold ski lodge while my son was out on the mountain—he couldn't manage his anxiety driving to and from the mountain with his school mates but once I got him there he was able to join in and enjoy himself. It was also about 12 years ago that we celebrated his adoption and while I would love to say that these 12 years had no bumps in the road (or pot holes) and further I would like to say that it is now only easy sailing 🚤 with no hard times. But what I have found is that my son does every phase “a bit harder” than most.

That said, the good times outnumber the bad and we are a true “family “ regardless of how it looks to others.

I'm glad I didn't listen to professionals who advised me not to adopt. However I should have listened more carefully when they were talking about his history because his trauma, abuse and neglect were more profound than I could imagine.

My son is chronologically an adult now. I was told that I could expect for him to be institutionalized by age 13 if he was alive because of severe suicidal ideologies. And, yes, we did have serious dissociative PTSD episodes but luckily none for the last 5 years. He has gone through several times of suicidal behavior but we were lucky. I hope he knows how to cope as he may always face demons. We had major battles with schools as I had to forcefully demand appropriate servicing.

All that said:

- ◇ He graduated from High School
- ◇ He did an extra year at a tech program
- ◇ He was an apprentice for the Union for a year and then switched to residential
- ◇ He is now a third year Apprentice and although the state courses are hard, he does well even without modifications.
- ◇ He is scheduled to complete Year 4 next winter and plans to go right into the “Masters” program.
- ◇ He has friends. He has a very special girlfriend.
- ◇ He is well set to have a very good adult life.
- ◇ He is kind and compassionate. He met his birth mother a few weeks ago and let go of a lot of guilt.
- ◇ He's just like kids who were not adopted. Actually, he's doing tremendously better.



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! While you are welcome to join any of our standing committees we are currently seeking members for our Outreach and Library Committees—please consider assisting in revitalizing the Consortium Library to ensure that it continues to be a valuable resource to adoptive and guardianship

families and those that support them or join us to plan and support the Consortium's outreach efforts:

Please join one of our Committees:

- ◆ Conference Planning and Training
- ◆ Outreach
- ◆ Diversity
- ◆ Library

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

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Adoption Ain't Nothing Like the Movies

Her whole life, Emma thought adoption was something that happened to babies in movies - only in the movies - and that they would find out when they were 18. She thought they would be angry at their adoptive parents and go looking for "happily ever after" with their biological families. Then, when Emma was 9 or 10, she saw a movie where a girl went looking for her "real" mom, but it turned out she wanted to have an abortion. When she met her bio mom, she had a family and wanted nothing to do with the girl. That made Emma question what she thought about adoptive families vs biological families.

Emma never thought that she would be adopted.

Emma's family dealt with poverty and abuse for her whole life. At age eleven, after three and a half years of DCF intervening with her family, Emma was placed into foster care. After a 24 hour emergency placement, she went to live with Christina, her seventh grade English teacher. Christina, who was married and had no children, agreed to take in Emma and her sister Hannah for a short term placement. That placement grew from 36 hours to two weeks to two months to through the Christmas holidays and, eventually, it became a conversation about permanency.

Talking about permanency doesn't necessarily mean talking about adoption. Here are Emma's and Christina's perspectives about what it was like to adopt and be adopted.

Emma:

I thought that I was going home to my biological mother as soon as possible; let's just say as soon as possible isn't that soon at all. I never really thought about what the case workers were doing while asking my sister and I how we liked living with Ms. Robison (which I still called her for at least the first nine months). Eventually, ten months after we moved in, my little brother Colin moved in with us, our case worker asked us what we thought about living with Christina and her husband David as a family until we grow up. I laughed, I thought my caseworker was trying to tell us we were going "home" soon. The funny thing was that I referred to Christina's house as my home to my friends. That was something I never thought about, I called that house my home as if I already knew, deep inside, it was and always will be my forever home.

When the termination of my biological parents rights came around I finally realized I wasn't going "home". My biological Grandmother, "Granny", passed right before the TPR and that is how I really knew I was not going "home". Granny was a main part of what kept us living with my bio mom for so long. She is the most amazing woman in the universe. Without her I would probably not be here writing this today.

Court was always scary to me and my siblings, it always meant our step dad did something wrong and one of us accidentally said something. That was never good. Court changed for me on our adoption day. When we went to court to get adopted even though I was still sad I could not wait, I knew the universe made things happen for a reason. The reason for all of the pain I went through was to be able to have an even bigger, crazier, and more amazing family than I had before. I was destined to be apart of my new parents family, and them apart of mine. Besides its better for them, they didn't even have to change the diapers! (They still got the temper tantrums, though).

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Adoption Ain't Nothing Like the Movies (continued from previous page)

Christina:

I think a big difference between how Emma and I saw adoption was that Emma saw herself as someone's daughter, while I had never seen myself as someone's mother. As someone for whom biological children was an unlikely option, I had reconciled myself to "mothering" as a teacher. I generally tried to go above and beyond for students in my class, particularly those who I saw as having a particular need. I had known Emma's biological family for years before she walked into my classroom in the fall of 2013. I thought I knew what I was dealing with, or at least had a rough idea of it, when I picked her and her sister up from her emergency placement on that sunny October afternoon.

I had no idea.

It's enough of a shock for anyone to think of oneself as a mother; as a relatively young woman, to suddenly be a mother and yet not a mother to these two girls took some hard emotional and psychological work. As much as Emma denied it by calling me "Mrs. Robison," I put off the idea that our situation



might be permanent. I thought I knew how things worked. For one thing, I knew the state prioritizes reunification. For another, my husband and I live in a really tiny house. And then suddenly, I knew. The moment Emma's brothers were brought back into care, I knew this was forever. The moment we got a call saying one of her brothers needed a placement, I knew these were my children. I felt it - the love, the pain, the protectiveness. It took a year. It took the feeling of desperation I knew Emma's brother must be feeling, the fear, the abandonment. The next time our case worker asked about permanency classes, we signed right up - we knew that, however things turned out with their biological families, these kids had found a home in our hearts.

This is not to say the next year went smoothly; quite the opposite. We would talk about adoption with the kids and their therapists. It seemed, as Emma said, to not seem real. While the idea of permanency was appealing - no more monthly visits with the social worker, no more weekly visits and the uncertainty that accompanied them, no more red tape around travel or permission slips, the idea of accepting my husband and I as parents seemed outside the realm of comprehension. They tested us, in ways large and small, behaviorally, linguistically, emotionally - it was a challenge, to say the least.

I had a vision in my head, like Emma's movie baby that grows up and grows angry, except mine was based in stories like "Anne of Green Gables," and "The Rescuers," where older children dreamed of being adopted. My understanding of adoption turned out to be just as naive as Emma's, just in the opposite way. There were no long, heartfelt talks about how we would love them and take care of them forever, no Hallmark movie moments where the barriers fell away and

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Adoption Ain't Nothing Like the Movies (continued from previous page)

we saw each other, unconditionally, as a family. Until suddenly, we were faced with the conversation about finalization, and our case was approved, and when I told the kids they ran over and hugged me, and we all cried - not because we were living our movie moment, but because a long and difficult struggle, full of uncertainty and disappointment, was finally over.

In retrospect, there was no way for my husband and I as parents to make adoption any “realer” than we did - the kids had to feel it for themselves. What we did have to do was create opportunities for them to attach, to each other and to us, to our extended family and close family friends, to our stories and traditions, to our “weird” food and ancestral cultures - and to demonstrate our willingness to participate with their biological family, by attending family events, by showing up for important dates with their big and little brothers, by including them in conversation about the Post Adoption Contact Agreement. By not being a barrier to their biological family, our children learned to trust us in a way that paved the pathway to permanency. And once we had a sense of permanency, we had an avenue to adoption.

Her whole life, Christina had never dreamed of adopting children. And then, suddenly, there they were, complicated, delightful, challenging, emotional, naive, mature, sheltered, worldly - and they were her and her husband's children. Adoption carries stigma and connotation, the giving away of children, the idea of being abandoned or not belonging. For Emma, who felt deeply connected to her biological family, attaching to an adoptive family felt like betraying her loved ones. For Christina, who was perplexed by the complexity of the emotional world foster parenting and adoption drew her into, Emma's ambivalence was confusing. When talking to children about adoption, recognize that their adoption movie story might be different from yours - and that no adoption goes like it does in the movies.



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. The Heart Gallery is a traveling photo exhibit of Vermont youth waiting for their forever homes. 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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Building Bridges of Hope, A Coloring Book for Adults Caring for Children who Have Experienced Trauma by Sue Badeau

Sue Badeau and her husband Hector are the lifetime parents of 22 children, two by birth and 20 adopted. Sue is a nationally known speaker and has visited Vermont many times. Her hope in this coloring book is to provide opportunities to learn about the short and long-term effects of trauma on children and what you can do to make a difference, while coloring the whimsical and calming images. It is Sue's daughter Chelsea Badeau who has created a unified collection of healing images that fill this wonderful coloring book. They have generously provided an excerpt from their book along with a page for you to color!

Catching Dreams

“No one ever asks kids in foster care what they want to be when they grow up,” a young lady in care once announced to me. Leaning in, she whispered the rest of her thought, *“I guess it’s because they don’t think we’ll live to grow up.”*

I’ve never heard a foster parent, social worker or other professional in the field express their belief that children in care won’t live to grow up, and yet this youngster’s fear was both real and profound. It demonstrates one of the most painful ways that early life trauma scars children and teens: it robs them of the ability to hope, dream or imagine a future for themselves.

When caring for children who have experienced trauma, one of the most valuable gifts we can give them is to nurture their ability to dream. Encourage imagination and expose children to many ideas and options for their futures. In the meantime, help your child set bite-size goals. For example, “What is one thing you hope to accomplish this morning?”

Make plans together for the upcoming weekend, summer vacation, or a secret surprise for a sibling’s birthday. Keep the timeframes short, gradually expanding them until the child can begin to think past next week or even next year and begin to see future possibilities unfold.

Talk to the child about your own dreams, dreams you have accomplished and those you are still pursuing. Expose them to others who set goals, dreamed dreams and succeeded, even though experiencing setbacks and challenges. Read biographies together of individuals the child admires. Engage them in activities such as music, arts, theatre or athletics where they can learn to set goals and work towards achieving them.

Each time a goal is accomplished, no matter how small, a wound from earlier trauma heals.

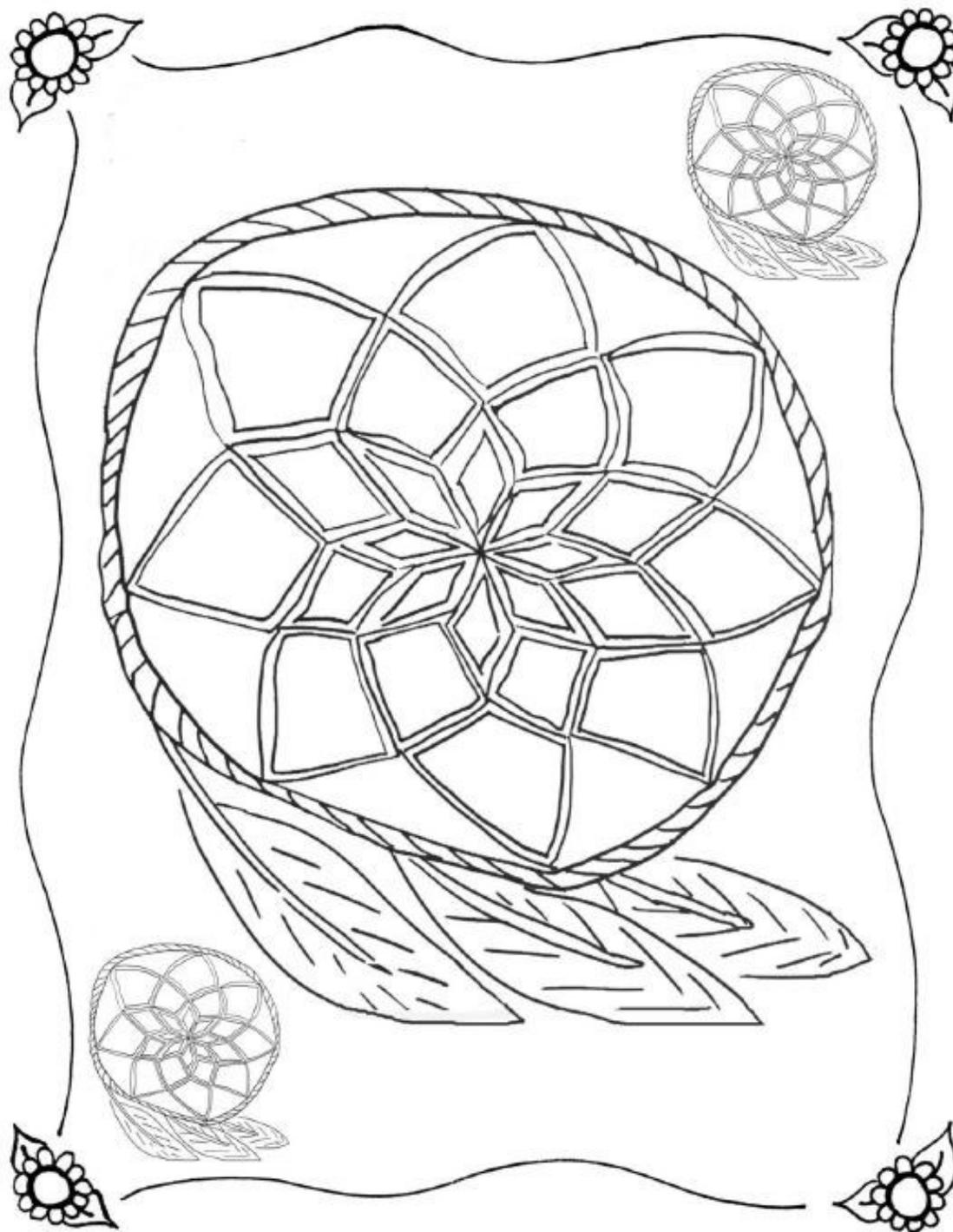
Each time a child musters up the courage to grab hold of a dream, bridges of healing in the brain, body and spirit are strengthened.

“Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.”

Langston Hughes

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CATCHING DREAMS



Excerpt from *"Building Bridges of Hope" A Coloring Book for Adults Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma* ©Sue and Chelsea Badeau 2016 – do not reproduce
For information or orders: www.suebadeau.com or sue@suebadeau.com

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Vermont Foster/Adoptive Family Association's
31st Annual Institute & Conference
APRIL 13-15, 2018

Hilton Burlington, 60 Battery St., Burlington, VT

Pieces of the Puzzle: How We Fit Together to Build Thriving Communities

Come celebrate, learn, problem solve, and network with your peers!



April 13th, 2018
 9:00am to 4:30pm
 Laura Porter

Collaboration: Family, Community & NEAR Science

Become part of the social movement that is strengthening the well-being of youth, family, and community in Vermont!

This day will provide an overview of “NEAR” Science: Neuro-science, Epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experience and Resilience, as well as offer Community Cafe discussions to generate solutions addressing your local concerns and dreams to grow vibrant communities.

Presented in collaboration with Promise Communities and Building Flourishing Communities initiatives.

About Laura Porter: Laura Porter is co-founder of ACE Interface, LLC (www.aceinterface.com) and the designer of Self-Healing Communities in Washington State. She is now sharing the information in Vermont as we are Building Flourishing Communities.

\$110/person • \$100/group of 5+ CEUs pending • REGISTER @ www.vfafaconference.org

SATURDAY KEYNOTE : Working the Puzzle

Michele Feiner will discuss the difficulties of trying to stay on top of the various issues that come with parenting children with attachment challenges and early trauma, and the importance of looking at the challenges with an eye towards solving a puzzle.



April 14th, 2018
 Michele Feiner

Michele is a Vermont foster/adoptive parent and the Coordinator of Disability Services at Johnson State College.

She is the author of *“Laugh Before You Cry: Creative Strategies for Raising Attachment Challenged Children.”*

SUNDAY CLOSING : Uplifting & Inspiring

Sue combines her experience as a foster/adoptive parent with her expertise as a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor, trainer and speaker. Susanne’s compelling and humorous presentations assist listeners to understand the power of stories to heal.

With a focus on working with participants, staff, and leadership teams, Sue teaches the science and art of storytelling and designs her presentations that raise awareness and celebrate community.

www.sueschmidtcomedy.com



April 15th, 2018
 Susanne Schmidt

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CAMP FOR ME

SINCE  1995

Summer 2018: Powerful

- July 9-13, 2018
- July 16-20, 2018

Camp will once again be held at Stowe High School—the perfect mix of wonderful outdoor space and comfortable inside space where campers can cool off or escape the rain!

For more information or to download the 2018 Camp application:
<https://www.camp4me.org/home>

Vermont Kin as Parents, a non-profit agency based in Williston, Vermont is seeking a Kinship Navigator for Franklin County.

The Kinship Navigator will:

- Educate kinship caregivers about resources and supports
- Refer kinship caregivers to resources and supports
- Advocate for kinship caregivers
- Provide follow up with kinship caregivers
- Collect data for evaluation and system improvement
- Establish and maintain relationships between kinships caregivers and the public and private providers
- Become a voice for kinship caregivers in Franklin County.

The ideal candidate will:

- Have an understanding of kinship care, the child welfare system, and/or guardianship
- Work well independently
- Have at least a high school diploma/GED
- Have a current driver's license and reliable transportation
- Be able to work as part of a team

Job Type: 30 Hours every two weeks
 Salary: \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00 /year

Please send resume to:

Evelyn Sawyer at evelynsawyer@yahoo.com or Heather Simmons at heathers@lundvt.org



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THE VERMONT CONSORTIUM LIBRARY

The Consortium's Lending Library contains an extensive collection covering a broad range of topics and authors all available for loan to parents and professionals in Vermont and New Hampshire. We also have a wonderful assortment of children's story books covering all kinds of subjects.

Checkout the collection online or in person!

Our *online library* can be found at <https://vac.myturn.com>

To check a book out by telephone: Call in your request to (802) 223-4744, please provide your name, address, and phone number – and please spell out your name and address to ensure proper delivery.

To check a book out by email: Email us at vtadoptionconsortium@eastersealsvt.org providing your name, address and phone number.

To browse through the collection in person come to the easterseals Berlin office: Choose your resource from the shelf – just call ahead to let us know when to expect you (802-223-4744).

We are located at 641 Comstock Rd, Suite 1, Berlin, VT 05602.

Books are checked out for 30 days. If you require further time you just contact the office at (802) 223-4744 or vtadoptionconsortium@eastersealsvt.org.



A Reminder for families receiving adoption/guardianship assistance (subsidies):

Many families who receive adoption/guardianship assistance may have noticed that the January payment came a little later than usual. I thought it might be helpful to take a moment to explain why and hope families can make a note. Adoption/guardianship assistance payments run in DCF's system about ten days into a month, for the previous month. This gives time for them to be adjusted and verified before leaving the DCF system. When they leave the DCF system they go into a statewide payment system, and then into the hands of the State's financial institution. The payments then are either brought as checks by the US Postal Service, or are processed through the parents' financial institution in the case of direct deposit. That's a lot of moving parts and opportunity for things to get hung up along the way! In January, because our system ran late in the week before a holiday weekend, payments were later than is typical. This is why, when parents adopt or assume guardianship, we provide information in our congratulations letter telling you to expect your payment during the third week of the month. We can't pinpoint a single day. As such, we discourage families from planning on payment coming on a certain day of the month, but if, for some reason, you don't receive payment by the 21st of a given month, you are welcome to call us at 802-241-0876 and we will look into it.

Thanks for bearing with us!

Gillie Hopkins, MSW

Permanency Planning Program Manager

Take time to play together as a family—it will help chase the winter blues away!

Help with those Curls!



Lund hosted a haircare workshop for families who have transracially adopted on December 16, 2017. The workshop was led by Saedee Perkins who is a transracial adoptee and has lived in Vermont a majority of her life. Saedee works in retail and at Camp 4 Me in the summer. She is also working on pursuing a career in cosmetology. At the workshop, Saedee shared many different types of hair products and styling tools she feels are helpful for working with curls and natural hair. Saedee also shared about her personal natural hair journey and the im-

portance of parents playing an active role with their child through their hair care journey throughout their lives. She reflected on how she and her mother would make it a weekly routine and would often spend an entire day working on her hair and trying products and styles to see what worked and what did not work. Saedee stressed the importance of how a black child's hair is an important part of their racial and cultural identity and is something that should be valued starting at an early stage in a child's life. She also shared products for not only hair but also skin care for families to use and emphasized the importance of keeping skin moisturized, especially with the many changing seasons in Vermont. She noted that different products will not always work for every hair type and so it is important to experiment and see what works best for your child's hair.

Below is a list of some of the resources that Saedee shared with families!

Products- Today us curly girls are fortunate enough to have a lot of resources at our fingertips. The curly hair network has grown significantly, even since I started my curly hair journey. There are lots of great and healthy products that are available on the market.

Natural Hair Products on the Market

- Ouidad
- Shea Moisture
- Carol's Daughter
- Aussie
- Moroccan Oil
- As I am
- Deva Curl
- Cantu
- Blueberry Bliss
- Camille Rose
- Eco
- Creme of Nature

Tools

- Defuser
- Denman brush
- Lots of clips
- Hair rubber bands
- Water bottle
- Blow dryer
- Rat tail comb
- Boar bristle brush
- Blow dryer cap

Extra support

Youtube- This has become my life saver! YouTube has everything you can think of for your hair needs. A few of my favorite natural hair bloggers

- Naptural85
- Natural Neiicey
- Jasmeeean
- Jewejewbee
- Luhsetty



Natural Skin Moisturizers /Products

- Coconut oil
- Olive oil
- Flaxseed oil
- Aloe
- Eggs
- Rose water
- Apple Cider Vinegar

- Goldenxo
- Leahallyeah
- Actually Ashley
- Sunkissalba
- Mini Marley

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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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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

3rd Thursday of the month from 7 - 9 pm at the Shaftsbury Methodist Church. For more information contact: Amy Prentiss-Rogers at (802) 343-6310 or Jill C. Bouton at (802) 223-4744

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.

Franklin County

1st Thursday of every month at the Senior Center, 75 Messenger Street, St. Albans from 5:30-7:30 pm. Dinner and childcare provided at no cost. Please contact Nina Kempf-Miller (802) 495-6187 or Monica Darrah (802) 495-6535 to RSVP or for more information.

Morrisville

2nd Thursday of the month, the Morrisville DCF office - 9:00—11:00 am. For information contact Karen Langdell, Easterseals of Vermont, (802) 730-6667

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

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

Other support groups of interest:

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

Milton

Grandparents as Parents Support Group meets the first Monday of the month from 6:30-8:00 pm at New Life Christian Church. Childcare is provided. For more information call (802) 893-3838.

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