



VERMONT CONSORTIUM

for **ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP**

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2019



In this issue....

- Getting out into the woods this summer
- The roller coaster of adolescence
- Families share their stories and pictures
- And so much more!

“At the end of the day, your feet should be dirty, your hair messy, and your eyes sparkling.”
- Shanti

Celebrate foster parents—they make a difference in so many children’s lives!

Welcome to the Vermont Consortium's Summer 2019 Newsletter!

Summer in Vermont is what many people think of as paradise—beautiful weather, natural pools to swim in, lakes for boating, mountains to climb, and woods to explore. It can be hard to be indoors when so much is pulling on us to go out and play. And our children feel the same—even on those rainy days of summer who can resist a walk—you just might see some frogs or salamanders sharing your trail.

Summer can also bring it's challenges as without the structure of the school calendar some children can struggle. And as parents we sometimes find ourselves trying to fill in sudden openings in our children's schedules—we need to go to work and they need to go somewhere!

I hope your summer leans towards the paradise side of things!

Catherine Harris



Please consider sharing 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!!



Celebrate foster parents—they make a difference in so many children's lives!

May is National Foster Parent Month....

In celebration of National Foster Parent Month, I would like to honor all of the dedicated, kind, nurturing foster parents who parent day in and day out, those children who cannot be with their birth families.



My daughter lived with her foster parents from the day she was born until we adopted her a year later. Without those consistent loving and encouraging foster parents, she would not be the solid, happy teen she is now for sure. They cuddled her, fed her, played with her, sang her to sleep, and showed her their world every day until she came to us.

We will forever hold them in our hearts for the loving care they gave to her. And they are not unique. The work that they did is the work that foster parents around the world do every minute of the day and night. The care and commitment they give to our most vulnerable children is so deserving of our wholehearted respect and thanks.

*From Karen Hack,
Executive Committee*

Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship



“National Foster Care Month 2019 Children's Bureau Message”

An increasing number of children are entering foster care every year due to a complex mix of factors that may include the parent's use of opioids, family financial hardship, mental health disorders, or domestic violence. Most of the time, it doesn't mean the children are unloved. It means their families need help. **Foster care plays a pivotal role in helping put families back together. It can never and should never replace families.**

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Exploring the Summer Woods in Vermont with Children

Living in Vermont provides us with many opportunities to be in nature with our children and spending time in nature can strengthen our bonds. If you want to travel beyond your backyard you can check out kid friendly hikes in Vermont. One website you can explore is the <https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/vermont/short-kid-friendly-hikes-vt/> that lists 8 kid-friendly hikes that are 1 mile and under. These hikes are found in Killington, Brattleboro, Colchester, Burton Island, South Burlington, Woodford, Stowe, and Manchester. You can also explore <https://backroadramblers.com/best-hikes-for-kids-in-northern-vermont/> for some easy day hiking ideas.



Hiking in Eden Forest

And don't forget our State Parks—the website <https://vtstateparks.com/family-fun.html#kidFriendlyHikes> offers you detailed information about hiking trails that are easy enough to complete with young children. It is organized by region so it is easy to check out what might be closest to your family.



Spring Beauty

When heading out it can be helpful to think about activities to keep children occupied while they are walking. In early summer you can get them watching for the spring ephemerals—these are plants that complete their entire life cycle before the trees are fully leaved out—and then the summer flowers that follow. Some common wildflowers are Spring



Trillium

Beauties, Bellwort, Hepatica, Trillium, Trout Lilies, Dutchmen's Breeches, Jack-in-the-Pulpits, and many more. To see pictures of these flowers check out <https://www.greenmountainclub.org/early-spring-wildflowers-of-vermont/>. Come the height of summer children can keep their eyes open for wild blueberries (often found in



Dutchmen's Breeches

open dry areas) or they can count how many different kinds of ferns they see. (for lots of information on ferns, their life cycles, and the varieties found in Vermont check out <https://vtstateparks.com/assets/pdf/ferns.pdf>).

(Continued on next page)

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Exploring the Summer Woods in Vermont with Children (Continued)

Another fun activity when walking in the woods is keeping your eyes out for muddy areas



where you just might find some animal tracks—the edge of streams can be particularly rich in tracks. White tail deer, fox, coyote, squirrels, mouse, and rabbit tracks are relatively common. A pocket guide to tracks is available from the Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront at <https://enjoyburlington.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2017/12/Animal-Tracks-Guide.pdf>.

The woods are full of trees and it's never too early to start



learning the varieties that make up Vermont forests—did you know that the sugar maple is the Vermont State tree? Can you find the 3 different birch trees that grow in Vermont forests—white, yellow, and silver? Can you spot a bear tree—



beechness trees have smooth grey bark and you can easily see the claw marks of the bear that climbed it. And then there are the many evergreens that can be found: hemlocks, white pines, tamaracks, balsam, and cedar are among the many varieties waiting to be identified. More information on trees can be found at <https://www.inaturalist.org/guides/313>.

And finally—don't forget to dress to prevent any tick bites:

- Wear long pants, long sleeves, and long socks
- Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and tuck shirts into pants to keep ticks on the outside of your clothing
- Light-colored clothing will help you spot ticks more easily.

and then, at the end of the day, check carefully for any ticks that may have hitched a ride on clothes or made it onto skin:

- Check your body and your child's body after being outdoors, and not just when you've been out in the woods—Look at all parts of your body (armpits, behind ears, groin, hairline, etc) and remove any ticks you find.
- Shower soon after spending time outside where there might be ticks.

For more information on ticks and keeping you and your children safe when outside check out <http://www.healthvermont.gov/disease-control/tickborne-diseases/prevent-tick-bites-tickborne-diseases>



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Mental Health Awareness - How We Can Help Break the Stigma

When parenting a child who experiences mental health challenges we can struggle with the shame or judgement that may come from others—about our child and sometimes about us as we work to meet our child's unique needs. Fighting back to break the stigma is one thing that we can all do to support the larger community of families formed through adoption and guardianship. Here are 9 steps that you can take:



1. **TALK** openly about mental health
2. **EDUCATE** yourself and others
3. **BE CONSCIOUS** of language
4. **ENCOURAGE EQUALITY** between physical and mental illness
5. **SHOW COMPASION** for those with mental illness
6. **CHOOSE EMPOWERMENT** over shame
7. **BE HONEST** about treatment
8. **LET THE MEDIA KNOW** when they're being stigmatizing
9. **DON'T HARBOR** self stigma

Excerpted from the Vermont DMH Mental Health Awareness Month Newsletter

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**
 - ◆ Contribute to the design and dissemination of our “Creating Adoption Sensitive Schools” and “Talking with your Children about Adoption” trainings
- ◆ **Diversity in Adoption**
 - ◆ Contribute to the design and dissemination of our transracial/transcultural trainings and help with creating additional trainings
- ◆ **Library**
 - ◆ Assist with the usability of the library and get the word out about this amazing resource

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

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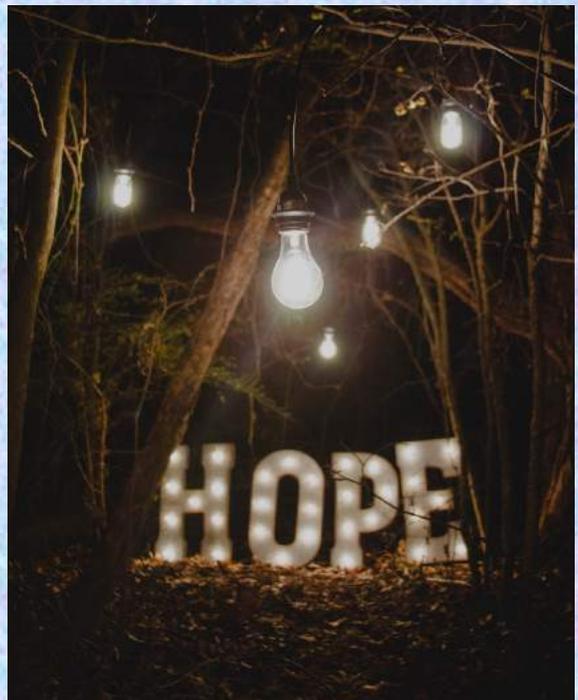
Riding the Waves of Addiction: My Story of Resiliency & Hope

By Mary Streeter

Our many children call us Tutz and Pops. We have three adult children and four grandchildren we have adopted. That is how I start my story because opening with *my daughter is an addict* seems too raw and vulnerable. So I create a story that may hold some element of grace within it. I like to give things a soft sway, a kindness within. Yet there are things that can only be called what they are, if we are willing to speak our truth. It's hard to move through the shame and fear and find the courage to share the "*S— we don't want to talk about!*" I feel compelled to share because I believe that only when we can speak our truth about addiction will we begin to find a way to heal. Perhaps if I share, others will feel empowered to also and the fog of shame will lift as we realize that while it doesn't make it go away or hurts less, it does lose its power and we can learn to walk beside it with more ease. I don't think it has to be in a defeatist way either - I believe we can live fully and joyfully. We will talk about pain and we will talk about resiliency and hope, because I believe there is plenty of room for both and they can feed off each other and lead to the discovery of a beauty we never imagined possible.

Let me begin by saying I wouldn't have ever imagined this story being part of my journey through this life. I know I am not alone in saying that because, as I have learned, addiction has no face. It doesn't care who it infiltrated or the lives it tries to destroy. It strips people of their sense of self worth and love and it takes an incredibly strong soul to shake loose of it. I only know this from the side lines though, so I am not going to try to tell the story of the addict, although I know it intimately. I can only tell my story.

As a mother the pain is unbearable at times, especially once you realize you can not save your child. No matter how strong your love or how good your intentions, choosing the road to recovery can only be done by the one suffering from the addiction. What sparks that flicker inside to finally take hold (and we all pray it does) is a mystery really. If we knew the secret of how to awaken that internal flame of desire and strength within another to shift from numbing to recovery, I would have given my soul for that to help my daughter to find the courage to feel again. Instead you watch from the sidelines with hope that "rock bottom" will come soon, before more damage is done to the souls of all those involved, and pray that death won't be the bottom this time. (continued on next page)



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Riding the Waves of Addiction: My Story of Resiliency & Hope (continued)

I was naive to addiction 6 years ago when I walked into my house to find my daughter on the couch, her 4 children (ages 1-7) running around her. She was almost lifeless as she turned to me and said "mom I need help". Followed by " I know you know what is going on ", but I didn't really. I knew her world was falling apart and that there were likely substances involved, but I really was so naive that I didn't know until she shared her truth, she was a heroin addict. POW, that hit my heart and gut hard. At that moment she was in withdrawal and was asking to go to rehab to detox and begin recovery. I'm good in crisis so immediately put my emotions aside and called all the places she told me to until we found an inpatient rehab a few hours away that could take her the next day, which seemed like a lifetime. It was ugly and I ended up in the emergency room with her as she needed something to help her get through the detox she was feeling. I work at the hospital and knew all about "drug seekers" and here I was with my daughter, full of shame, asking for help. It didn't come, she ended up getting some street drug to get her through. More shame. It's all kind of a fog now, but I was trying so hard to patch her up and get her to a place where she could get help. Which I did, however I now know that is not how you enter rehab, not with any hope for recovery. But I got her there, checked her in and headed home to my husband and 4 grandchildren, bewildered and frightened. My husband and I feeling, well, overwhelmed is not even the word that fits here, we looked at each other, pushed the incredible fear and sadness we felt off to the side because we had 4 children to care for. Our daughter was a "heroin addict" , something I couldn't even say out loud for months and even longer without a terrible ache in my gut and tears in my eyes. We thought "we can do this, rehab is what, 28 days, right?" Well she stayed for 2 days and we didn't hear from her for weeks. Was she dead or alive? We didn't know. The kids dad was struggling also and had fallen off at that point. What we did know is we had these little babies to care for who were crazy and confused with all that had gone on and now their parents were MIA.



Scared, exhausted, angry, hurt- you name the emotion, we had it. It was like walking through fire. I remember we would fall into bed at night, muscles aching from lifting and caring for the kids, emotionally and physically drained. It was too much and I think we both questioned at times if we could continue - but we did. Come to find out we are malleable human beings, we adjust to our circumstances whether we like them or not. We had full time jobs which we needed to financially support everyone so we found daycare, enrolled them in school, picked up the pieces and went on. One day at a time, sometimes one moment at a time. We did the best we could, neither of us feeling like we were the best versions of ourselves, but as a friend said (continued on next page)

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Riding the Waves of Addiction: My Story of Resiliency & Hope (continued)

to me "maybe you're the best version of your messy self". I think that was true and I was grateful for her words and for all the people in "our village" that showed up to support us. I am still moved to tears to think of how generous people were of their time and resources when we were in need. Our first moment of hope; *discovering that genuine human kindness and empathy is rampant.*

We can not always move through life with complete grace, we do the best we can. I got to a point that I realized that although I had no control over this situation, of my daughter's recovery or ultimate outcome (*this is a letting go that does not come easy and takes time and practice*), I did have a choice of how I wanted to be with our situation. I could live in a place of anger and resentment, fear and hurt or I could choose to find space around it and make the best of our "new normal". I could choose to be with what is and invite in moments of joy. This is a realization I had come to many times in my life, sitting with moments of discomfort and finding my way through, releasing and inviting in positivity and seeing the gifts within. Practicing gratitude. It's hard when we are dealing with things that come into our life uninvited, and I certainly had not thrown a party inviting this in! But it was here and I was going to embrace the situation by letting go of the things that were beyond my control and embrace the things that were, the 4 children needing love and care and my own self care. Well turns out this is the serenity prayer...*grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.* If my therapist reminds me of this one more time, ugh.



Awareness and realization is the first step, then comes the practice. It is a daily

commitment, just like recovery. How ironic. The bottom line is that we are all struggling in one way or another. We all have our highs and lows of life and we can't stop those waves, but we can learn how to surf. Choice is our super power, one of many.

Mindfulness, walks and yoga have been some of my tools of resilience. They help me to pick up the pieces and step back into the arena of life over and over again, finding the light within the darkness and inviting more in. I encourage you to see the brave warrior within, discover what you need to strengthen your inner light and live the life you desire. I will share more of my story and perhaps you will share yours and together we heal ♥

To comment, see others comments or to find out more about mindfulness practices go to <https://www.mindfullivingvt.com/single-post/2019/05/02/Reviving-Resilience-My-Story-of-Addiction-Hope>

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THE DROSSART FAMILY SHARES PICTURES FROM THEIR ADOPTION DAY



Registration is Now Open for the 2019 RPC+ TIPS for Tuning In TRAINING of TRAINERS!

This 2 day course will be held on **Thursday June 6th and Friday June 7th**
 Participants must attend both days *Lunch will be provided both days*

FREE

UVM Extension Office in Berlin 9:00am – 4:00pm BOTH days

To register – please click below and fill out the brief form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfJPwEwnf_FoTADaS3iTOQHxUPcVIBGdxbwwjaiV37kcUeX1hw/viewform



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The Roller Coaster Ride of Adolescence and Adoption

By Donna Provin, Post Permanence Service Provider, Lund

Are eye rolls, shrugs and mumbled responses to your questions a regular aspect of your life? Do you feel like you are riding on a roller coaster where one day things are going really well and the next day is awful? Do you feel more like an Uber driver than a parent to your child? Does your child seem to value their peer's opinions and ideas over yours? If so, then you are likely parenting an adolescent! Often times, if you tell someone your child is now a teenager the first thing they say is "I'm sorry!" Almost everyone knows that parenting an adolescent can be challenging to say the least. Adolescence is a time of significant growth and development--both of the body and the brain. Adolescents are working hard at becoming young adults by attending to several developmental tasks. Adoption can have a significant impact on many of these developmental tasks. As a parent, your job is to help your teen prepare for the future by learning how to have adult relationships, managing adult responsibilities while also maintaining a connection to family. Young adults need a home base and family to provide support as needed, even as they push away to become independent. Your role as a parent must shift in response to your adolescent's needs. Below is a list of the normative developmental tasks that adolescents are working on (whether they know it or not!) and some of the possible ways that adoption might impact those tasks.



Developmental tasks for ALL adolescents (adoptive impact in italics)

- 1) Adolescents must adjust to sexually maturing bodies and feelings
 - this can be complicated by the teen's trauma history (if applicable)*
 - And/or negative perspective of the teen's birth parent(s) held by the teen, parents or the community*
- 2) They need to develop and apply abstract thinking skills
 - youth may be haunted by unanswerable questions*
 - youth may have the perception that they are not just the center of their world but of everyone's world.*
 - feeling that no one has ever gone through what they have (no one can understand and no one has it worse than they do!) keep in mind there is some truth to that because when you have been adopted, your inner world can be challenging and different in ways that are hard for others to understand or put into words*

(continued on next page)

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The Roller Coaster Ride of Adolescence and Adoption (continued)

- 3) Develop and apply new perspectives on human relationships
- 4) Develop and apply new coping skills in areas such as decision making, problem solving and conflict resolution
- 5) Identify meaningful moral standards, values and belief systems
 - whose morals? Birth parents, adoptive parents, friends?*
 - sometimes society's view of birth parents is negative which can cause shame and/or a loss of self-esteem for the adopted teens*
- 6) Understand and express more complex emotional experiences
- 7) Form relationships that are mutually close and supportive
 - this can be complicated by attachment challenges*
- 8) Establish key aspects of identity (influenced by peers and culture)
 - adoptive teens are influenced by their adoptive family, birth family, previous foster or other guardians and caregivers (alive in child's mind whether known or imagined)*
- 9) Meet the demands of increasingly mature roles and responsibilities—challenged to become more independent and self-sufficient (emotionally and financially)
 - teens who were adopted feel pulled in opposite directions, they know it's time to grow up but some have had to endure a lot before they were with their adoptive parents and pulling away can make them feel lost and alone.*
 - some teens who were adopted may be temporarily delayed in their development due to trauma they experienced which may make this task very challenging for them*
- 10) Renegotiate relationships with adults in parenting roles



As you can see from the list above, adolescents really are learning and growing constantly which leads to the big question. How do you effectively parent adolescents who have joined their families through adoption and guardianship? Here's some ideas and thoughts that may be helpful.

Ideas and thoughts...

Remember, as the parent you have a significant impact on your adolescent whether they let you see that or not. You can hurt their feelings without even realizing it. You can inadvertently project your feelings onto your teen. Don't assume you know how they are feeling or thinking! Always remember, they are not you and they are not their birth parent(s)—they are unique. (continued on next page)

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The Roller Coaster Ride of Adolescence and Adoption (continued)

Don't constantly rescue your adolescent! If you get frequent calls from your teen because they've forgotten their soccer uniform or their saxophone for band, it's time to empower them. Have them come up with a way to deal with it. What are some tools they can use to help themselves? They will likely figure out the answers to small inconveniences when given the opportunity or you can help them brainstorm a solution. There will still be times when your teen needs your support, but it is important to differentiate when your teen really needs support or when it is time for them to step up and manage things themselves.

Set appropriate and realistic limits for your teen. You can set limits based on reasonable compromises with your teen, but no negotiating limits once they are set. Have reasonable and logical consequences. If the teen's behaviors have hurt someone emotionally or physically, consequences should involve reparative work. Avoid contracts as that can be triggering for some teens that were adopted.



Have connected conversations with your adolescent, listen and avoid judging. Try to ensure that they know you love them and will be there for them always. Make suggestions and be curious!

Help your adolescent envision a future for themselves where they are happy, productive and successful in their own unique way.

Need more ideas? Check out these books and services specifically for families formed through adoption and guardianship...

Post Permanence Services Providers (PPSPs): There is a PPSP in every county of Vermont to provide support and services to families. *See page 18 for more information*

Support Groups for families formed through adoption and guardianship: *See page 15 or more information*

Parenting in the Eye of the Storm: The Adoptive Parent's Guide to Navigating the Teen Years by Katie Naftzer

Parenting Adopted Adolescents Understanding and Appreciating their Journeys by Dr. Gregory Kaeck

Behind the Mask: Understanding Adopted Teens by Debbie Riley and Dr. John Meeks, MD.

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VERMONT CONSORTIUM LIBRARY

for ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP

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!



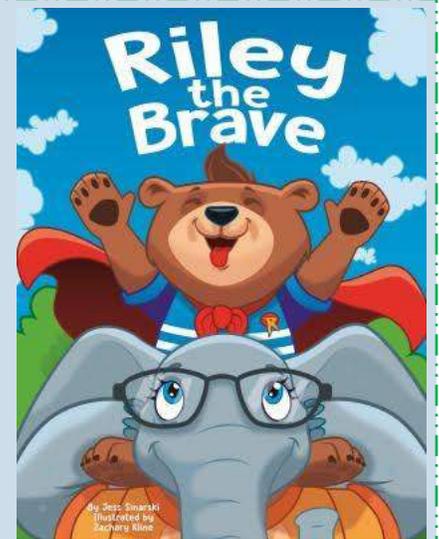
The library is available to Vermont parents, children, youth, and the professionals who serve them. The library is physically located in the Vermont easterseals office, 641 Comstock Road, Berlin, VT—please call before stopping by: 802-223-4744. The library is also accessible on line at <https://vac.myturn.com> - 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!

Riley the Brave

by Jess Sinarski *Book Review by Janet Benoit Connor*

Riley the Brave is a wonderful book, filled with colorful illustrations and language that is sure to touch every child, youth and adult and can be used in homes, schools, and libraries or wherever great books are read. Riley struggles with being the same yet different from those children around him/her. Riley's emotions and coping behaviors are a result of trauma. This book is simple in its language but very powerful in its message. It provides hope and guidance for the children who have joined our families through adoption, kin or foster care. We as the parents, teachers, caregivers etc. have lots to learn from this book and I highly recommend it to all!



This book is now being used in our training for school personnel “Creating Adoption Sensitive Schools.” It is accompanied by a “Tips for Teachers” and “School Counselor Guide” and can be very useful to continue to the conversations about the impact of trauma and adoption on our children.

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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

Bellows Falls

Circle of Support for Adoptive and Guardianship Families meets the second Wednesday of each month from 6 to 8 pm at the Health Center at Bellows Falls, 1 Hospital Court. Please call Stephanie Amyot for more information (802) 735-5031

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 at lunchtime one Wednesday a month 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

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

Transracial Adoptive Families of Vermont meets up in various locations, generally in the Chittenden Country area. 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

Celebrate foster parents—they make a difference in so many children’s lives!

Join the Vermont team of the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship Support and Preservation (QIC-AG) project for a **FREE** two-day summit located at the beautiful **Lake Morey Resort** in Fairlee, Vermont on August 14, and 15, 2019. Each day has a different audience focus, on **Day One (8/14) of the summit, conversations will focus on topics relevant to those parenting by adoption and guardianship.**

The Vermont team for the QIC-AG has completed our five-year Vermont Permanency Survey Project and we have received valuable input from **643** Vermont families formed through adoption and guardianship. You will learn about the thought provoking findings from the survey, learn about recent initiatives in the field of support and health for families joined by Adoption or Guardianship and hear about the improvements to services that are already underway based on our findings.

April Dinwoodie, a nationally recognized thought leader on adoption and foster care and a transracially-adopted person, will be our Keynote speaker. Through a rich and very personal lens of adoption and foster care, with the calendar as a guide, April will candidly explore the beauty and complexity of our closest, most powerful relationships with our families and ourselves and how those relationships impact our identity and place in the world.

For more information and registration for the **caregiver day, 8/14/19**, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-journey-continues-avoiding-the-potholes-caregiver-day-tickets-54543649524>

For more information and registration for the **provider day, 8/15/19** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-journey-continues-avoiding-the-potholes-provider-day-tickets-54543826052>



Creating an Adoption Sensitive School

The Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship has trainers ready to go to your school and work with the staff to support them becoming more adoption sensitive.

This is a free 2 hour training for the schools—teachers, guidance counselors, and principals have said:

- * With this information I'm ready to change the way I interact with my students
- * Good updates on changes in language and reminders of activities
- * It was amazing and helpful!

Please consider encouraging your school to reach out and schedule a training!

**All they need to do is email or call Catherine Harris at
vtadoption@vermont.gov or 802-241-0901**

Celebrate foster parents—they make a difference in so many children's lives!

Talking With Our Children About Adoption



**How comfortable are you having these conversations?
Are you worried about the impact on your child?**

JOIN: Nancy Birge, LICSW

ON: June 6th

FROM: 5:30—7:30 pm

**AT: The Church of the Rock,
1091 Fairfax Road, St. Albans**

**Learn what's important to talk about with your child and why
And practice these conversations safely and with support so
that you are ready when you go home.**

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/june-6th-talking-with-our-children-about-adoption-tickets-59594699350>

And if you're interested in bringing this training
to your community contact Catherine Harris at
vtadoption@vermont.gov

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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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