Annual Summer Family Picnic

Please Join Us for a Summer Kickoff!
Tuesday, June 27th
at Stanley Park, Westfield
5:00 p.m. ‘til dusk

Take a summer evening to relax and enjoy new friends! Bring your favorite dessert, a picnic blanket and toys to share with new friends.

**We will provide good food, and fun family games!**

Adoption Journeys will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers, salads, snacks, and lemonade for everyone! So for picnic planning purposes, we must know in advance if you will attend.

**RSVP REQUIRED** by phone or email.
(Please include the number of people in your RSVP.)

We ask that families please bring a dessert to share. Parents must supervise their own children.

**Stanley Park:** 400 Western Ave., Westfield. Use the Recreation Entrance, directly across from The Woodward Center, and look for us on the left under the pavilion adjacent to giant play structure. Free entry and parking.

**RSVP required. We need to know you are coming!**

We will need volunteers for our “grill crew.” Let us know if you can help.
AMP, for me, has been nothing short of life changing. Beyond the mentoring aspect of the program, which I cherish with all of my heart, the classroom setting that I would retreat to once every two weeks became the greatest blessing that I could have ever asked for. AMP was the first adoption-centric space I had ever inhabited. Before AMP, I spoke quite little of adoption outside of the close confines of my family. …

The community that AMP immersed me in is in full display here tonight. And tonight, with all of us coming together to be part of this special celebration from such diverse backgrounds, it is truly a testament to the nature of adoption itself. The diversity of our community stands as a beacon of hope for a world that too often attempts to dictate our identities by how we look or how we speak, or even by whom we look like and whom we speak like.

It can be difficult to see how we fit into the rigid boxes that society assigns to us or into the narratives that people see fit to chain us to. But tonight gives me hope. To quote from an article that Jenny and I found while researching, “The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not to react.” So, together, let’s reclaim control over our identities and over our self-perceptions. I challenge you to reject the rigid categorizations and embrace your full experiences and sense of self; you all have unique stories to tell and lives to share that no matter how much other people can try, can never be denied. Your truth is your truth.

…

We, as adoptees, not despite our unique lived experiences but because of them, have so much to offer to this world, and the world in turn has so much that it can learn from us -- about race and culture, identity and basic human empathy. About family. About love.

And in this present historical moment, as forces of fear, anger, “othering,” and hate seem to be rising across the world, we can no longer afford to remain silent. It is not just our privilege, but now our obligation to stand up together and speak out against the injustices that threaten our rights and our lives as members of the adoptive community. When able to and comfortable doing so, we must share our experiences and our truths with the world, and now, more than ever before, we must act to preserve the rights fought for by those who came before us and safeguard these rights for our children and for all future generations of adoptive families. …

-Andrew Drinkwater
Summer Family Fun Day
Bousquet Mountain in Pittsfield,
Wednesday, July 19th, 1:00-6:00 p.m.

Join us at Bousquet Mountain for an afternoon of swimming, sliding, and minigolf for the whole family. Bring snacks and sun screen and come take a mini-vacation with us! $10 per person (payable to Adoption Journeys) gets you into the activity pool, the giant water slides and unlimited rounds of 18-hole mini-golf. Also included is a family BBQ at 4:30 p.m. of burgers, dogs, salads, and drinks. Arrive at 1pm and spend the afternoon. Depart by 6pm.

Bousquet’s three giant water slides drop into a 4-foot deep “landing pool”. There is a 2-foot deep activity pool with gradual entry for little ones who can enjoy the three easy slides in the activity pool. Or move on up to the three big slides for fast fun on the white-water. The 18-hole mini-golf course is located next to the slides and offers a challenge between dips in the pool. **NOTE: Large water slides have a 4-foot height requirement and are for strong swimmers.** Additional activities such as zip lining, climbing wall, and go karts are also available for extra fees. Pools and activities close at 5pm; park closes at 6pm.

To learn more about the park, please go to [http://www.bousquets.com/summer/](http://www.bousquets.com/summer/)

Please fill out and return this Registration Slip by June 28th!

**Mail w/ payment to Adoption Journeys, PO Box 60006, Florence, 01062**

Adults attending: ____________________________     #Adults _____     # Kids under 18 ________

Name & ages of youth attending __________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Enclosed is a check for $_________________     Best daytime phone________________________________________

$10 per person (regardless of age) includes entrance to both pools, unlimited mini-golf, and BBQ dinner.

This event is only open to household members of Adoption Journeys families.
Your Brain on Nature: Forest Bathing Reduces Stress and Cortisol Levels

Studies show shinrin-yoku, also known as forest bathing or time spent in green spaces, can reduce the stress hormone cortisol and increase your immune defense system. It's no surprise that fresh air is good for your health, but that doesn't always make it easier to get a balance of healthy immersion in nature. Your Brain on Nature (Wiley, 2012) makes a case for better, healthier, greener thinking and improved mental health through exposure to green spaces and provides tips for how to apply the science of optimal brain health to everyday life. In this excerpt, authors Eva Selhub and Alan Logan discuss research linking shinrin-yoku (Japanese "forest bathing" or "forest therapy") to increased cerebral blood flow, immune defense and improved mental health. (Eva Selhub and Alan Logan, Mother Earth News, 2013)

Forest bathing is defined as making contact with and taking in the atmosphere of the forest. What sets forest bathing apart from simply taking a walk in the forest is that we consciously take in the sights, sounds, smells, and the whole experience, rather than allowing our minds to do the things they habitually do, like putting together a mental grocery list. Results of a study of 280 subjects conducted in 2010 found that forest bathing was associated with lower levels of a stress indicator called cortisol, lower pulse rate, and lower blood pressure. The participants of the study had decreased activity in the part of the nervous system that activates when we are stressed and increased activity in the part of the nervous system that activates when we are relaxed. Relaxing like this is crucial for good health if you consider the fact that chronic stress reduces immune function and makes us more prone to depression, heart disease, and other disorders. (Christa Smith Psy.D., Psychology Today, 2013)

Shinrin-Yoku—Forest Bathing
Read the full article here from Mother Earth News: The original guide to living wisely.
www.motherearthnews.com

Your Brain on Nature examines the fascinating effects that exposure to nature can have on the brain. Scientific studies have shown that natural environments can have remarkable benefits for human health.
Adoption Journeys attends *Resilience* Screening and Discussion

On May 10th, Adoption Journeys attended the film *Resilience* at Amherst Cinema. We participated in a follow-up panel discussion on which our post-adoption social worker Maya Rege-Colt shared responses to the film and experience in working with adoptive families and specifically in advocating for children in schools.

The film *RESILIENCE: The Biology of Stress & the Science of Hope* teaches about the ground-breaking results of the ACE Study: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations ever conducted to assess associations between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being. It gives us the scientific research to motivate our society to reduce the impact of trauma and toxic stress on our children. We are excited to be a part of this growing movement. As important natural gardens for nurturing and building resiliency in children, we believe that adoptive families are potential leaders in this conversation.

Follow this link to read *Fostering Resilience: Preparing children and teens to thrive through both good and challenging times*

http://kpjrfilms.co/resilience/resources/

A broad range of learning resources for parents and educators are also available on this same page!
Adoption Journeys

GROUPS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND TEENS
ALL RESUME IN THE FALL

If you are interested in participating in any of the programming below, please contact us to receive more information regarding times and locations.

**Groups for Parents**

**Single Parent Support Group** - Florence. This group meets on the Second Thursday evening monthly and is specifically for those parenting as a single. On-site childcare is available. Call to register and for more info.

**Men's Discussion Group** - Florence. This group runs one Wednesday evening a month. Fathers only. Get involved with a great group of dads. Call us to register and for more info.

**Parents of children of any age** - Amherst. Support and discussion related to parenting children of any age. Meets two evenings monthly, concurrent w/ teen girls group. Ongoing group. Join anytime. **Thursday eves, twice monthly.** Contact us for dates or more info.


**Groups for Teens**

**Adolescent Girls Adoption Group (age 13-17)** - Amherst. A great opportunity for girls to explore issues of identity, adoption and adolescence in a supportive environment. Pre-group screening required. Meets **Thursday nights, twice monthly.** Call this summer to let us know your interest in our next session starting in the fall.

**Creative Writing Group for Youth age 12-16.** A 6-session writing workshop in Florence. Next series begins in September. No writing experience required! Contact the office to learn more.

To participate in any of our groups, please call or email the Adoption Journeys office to register.
Do you know about the Family Resource Center Near You?

www.frcma.org.

Amherst 413-549-0297
The Bridge Family Resource Center
101 University Avenue, Suite A3

Greenfield 413-475-1555
Community Action Family Center, 90 Federal Street

Pittsfield 413-442-5333
Family Resource Center, Berkshire Children and Families,
480 West Street

Springfield 413-733-7699
The Springfield Family Support Programs
Family Resource Center, 18 Gaucher Street

North Adams 413-663-7588
The Family Place, 61 Main Street

There are 14 Family Resource Centers state-wide in Massachusetts. These are newly-funded resources in your community that offer a broad array of support at no cost. Check into the Family Resource Center closest to you to see if they have events or resources that are a fit for your needs.

Family Resource Centers Offer:
- Therapeutic mentors
- School Liaisons
- Parent groups
- Teen activities
- Parent Support
- Healthcare Access Assistance
- Budget management
- Community referrals
- Mental health assessment and referral
- Childcare resources
- Special Education Referrals
- LGBTQ-friendly support
- Explore work opportunities
- And many referrals available for other areas of support.
Adoption Journeys Newsletter
A seasonal update of our programming for adoptive families living in Western Massachusetts

- Fun Day at the Water Slides at Bousquet in Pittsfield
- Family Picnic in Westfield at Stanley Park
- New Resources in your community for families
- Writers Group for Youth
- Forest Bathing - learn something new!