Adoption Journeys Newsletter
A seasonal update of our programming for adoptive families living in Western Massachusetts

Swim and Supper!
For parents & kids 4 feet or taller!
Water slides and poolside pizza supper social
Friday, January 11th. 5:30-8:00 p.m.

$10 Registration Fee includes access to water slides, pizza & salad supper. All located inside the Clarion Hotel in West Springfield. Register by December 28th
Clarion Hotel, 1080 Riverdale Street, West Springfield, 01089

Mail-in Registration for Water Slides and Supper Social for Families
Mail-in Registration Deadline December 28th
Friday Night, January 11th, 5:30-8:00 pm, Clarion Hotel, West Springfield

Parent Name(s) ________________________________________________________________

Names (and ages for kids) of all attending __________________________________________

NOTE: $5.00/person if you are a parent who will not be swimming, but will have supper. $__________ Amount Enclosed. $10/person, SWIM AND SUPPER (max $40 per family).

Please confirm we have your correct email: _________________________________________

Mail registration with payment to Adoption Journeys, PO Box 60006, Florence, MA 01062
(financial assistance available if requested)

Adoption Journeys 413-320-4680 lmintz@cfservices.org
Boys Bowling Night!
For age 13+
at Spare Time Bowling Lanes in Northampton
Friday, January 25th 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Spare Time Bowling Alley at 225 North Pleasant Street in Northampton
Just $10 per person includes 2 hours of bowling
plus pizza and those fabulous rented shoes!

Bumper guard rails available for all ages!

Sign-Up Deadline is January 15th.

Registration Form for Boys Bowling Night
Friday, January 25th, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Spare Time in Northampton

Names and ages of teens attending
________________________________________________________________________________

Email Address ____________________________________________________________________________

Parent Contact Info. Daytime phone: ________________________________________________________

$________ Total Enclosed Amount $10/per person. (checks made out to Adoption Journeys)

Please complete and mail this registration with your check to
Adoption Journeys, PO Box 60006, Florence 01062
Sign-up Deadline is January 15th.
Save the Date for...
Dinner and a Movie for A.J. Parents
Parents are invited to join us in Florence for dinner and an adoption-focused film.

The theme will be birth sibling search and reconnection with the film, Twinsters. See a preview HERE.

Come meet new friends, enjoy an evening to relax and have supper while watching a documentary together. Informal discussion to follow. Join us for a film about two sisters, born in Korea and adopted by families in different countries who share the adventure of being found and discovering sisterhood as young adults.

When: Tuesday, February 12th, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
Arrival: Dinner at 5:30, film starts at 6:00.
Location: Adoption Journeys office in Florence
Cost: $5/person contribution on the night of event to offset dinner cost.

One of our favorite sites for concise and to-the-point articles is pact adoption alliance. Here are a few recommendations from pact. To learn more about them or to read through their vast library, go to www.pactadopt.org. Click on the links to the articles below.

Attachment: Interpreting Regression in Children, adapted from Holly van Gulden.

Transracial Adoption: Talking to Young Children About Race and Racism.

Asian American Adoptee Experience: Searching for Me.

The Unseen Impact of Birth Families & Genetics: Adoption and Genetics: Why We Need to Pay Attention.

Adoptive Identity: Building an Adoptive Identity: It’s not just about adolescence anymore.
Rock Climbing for Teens!
A Fun Chance to Try it Out

Come climb the walls with Adoption Journeys at the Central Rock Gym, 165 Russell Street, Hadley!

Try-A-Climb for All Teens age 13+
Friday, March 15th, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
$10 per Climber!
Age 13 or older can sign up for our Intro to Rock Climbing session where you will learn how to harness up, tie knots and get climbing tips and practice climbing the walls! You will be belayed by AJ and Rock Wall staff. Deadline to register is March 1st.

Mail-in REGISTRATION for Teen Rock Climbing “Try-A-Climb”
March 15th Event: Introduction to Climbing for age 13+
Pre-registration and pre-payment is required by March 1st.

Family Name: _________________________________________ # teens attending _______
First Names of teen(s) attending - include age: _______________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Cost is $10.00 per person and includes an hour of instruction, snack break, and an additional hour of staff-belay for climbing the walls! Make checks out to Adoption Journeys. (financial assistance available if requested)

$10.00 Per Climber. Total enclosed = $________
Parent's Daytime Phone Number and Email: ____________________________________________________

Please mail with payment to Adoption Journeys by March 1st to PO Box 60006, Florence, MA 01062

Hey Teens, check out the Hadley Rock Gym online. https://www.centralrockgym.com/hadley/ and sign up soon!
Parents will receive links to waivers once your registration is received.
YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN ADOPTION JOURNEYS FOR A

Parent Wisdom Night

Parenting Your Child Through Their Emerging Adulthood: how to survive and thrive during this phase

Tuesday, March 26th, 6:00-8:30 p.m.
Adoption Journeys office, 140 Pine Street, Florence

Call or email the office by March 8th to sign up!
Refreshments served. No fee to attend.

Are you facing challenges as your child approaches the transition to adulthood, or is in the middle of this often volatile time? Join us for an evening of shared wisdom on the topic of how to best manage, survive, and thrive during your child's emerging adulthood. We will have a panel of four parents with varied experience, each with particular gems of learned wisdom.

What is a Parent Wisdom Night?? It is an evening in which parents, who have experienced success in a particular area, share what they've learned with others. A panel of adoptive parents who have navigated this phase of their children moving towards independence and young adulthood, (and made it through to the other side!), will share their insights and strategies. There will be time for questions and informal discussion as well as sharing of resources.

We will talk about...

* How to maintain your own health, wellbeing and healthy relationships.
* How to manage your child’s interest in/contact with birth family.
* How to understand your child’s possible underlying fears and motivations.
* How to highlight your child’s and your own strengths during this time of intense expectation.

RSVP REQUIRED. Please register by phone or email if you plan to attend.
phone: 413-320-4680  email: lmintz@cfservices.org
Save-the-Date for two events for High School teens.

May 25th-26th
TEEN GETAWAY
Weekend overnight at the Becket YMCA Outdoor Center
(High School teens only)
Arrive noon on Saturday and depart 5pm Sunday.
Look for Registration Emails this spring

Saturday, April 6th
Curious about college? Teens in high school are invited to join us on a tour of UMass, and check out the only college in MA with a support program specifically for students who are adopted! Parents are included for tour and info session with Adoption Journeys and UMass Staff.
Save the date, 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

SPRINGFIELD MUSEUMS
ART • HISTORY • SCIENCE • SEUSS IN SPRINGFIELD

NEED AN OUTING FOR WINTER BREAK? VISIT A MUSEUM!
Borrow our pass and get FREE general admission for up to 4 visitors to the Springfield museums. Regular admission fee is $12.50/adults and $6.50/kids.
Fabulous youth and family activities scheduled throughout the winter! Family events and special holiday exhibits and many more winter events on their calendar. You may borrow our pass for up to two weeks!
Simply call Adoption Journeys to reserve the pass, and we’ll mail it to you! 413-320-4680. Or email us!

Adoption Journeys 413-320-4680  lmintz@cfservices.org
Some Parenting Reminders for the Holiday Season

We like to think of holidays as joyful times, moments to reflect, give thanks, and to be with loved ones. However, we at Adoption Journeys are also familiar with the “holiday stress” this time can bring, so we would like to share some tips for survival.

Remember that holidays are loaded in all kinds of ways. Our senses are often over-stimulated with different sights and sounds, and with the expectation to be happy. Adults are very often stressed, over-loaded and dis-regulated themselves. Routines are interrupted. For children who were adopted at older ages, there may be unhappy memories of past holidays that arise, feelings of loss associated with holiday time, or actual traumatic memories that are triggered.

What to do:

★ As much as you can, try to keep the world small and close. Limit the number of trips, extra activities, shopping, etc. Plan to arrive a little late and leave gatherings a little early if that helps. Feed your and your child’s senses in small, close ways: bake cookies, snuggle in for a movie or a book, play with clay together.

★ Accept sad, moody and even angry feelings in yourself and in your child(ren). Leave room for it, acknowledge and name the feelings, and then bring the world in close and attend to the senses. Take needed breaks for yourself and your child.

★ Try to ease the transitions and changes in routine as much as you can. Pace yourself! Process ahead of time with your child about what to expect at family visits or gatherings and make a plan together. Change the visual environment (holiday decorating) gradually, keep as much of your routine the same as possible, build in new grounding rituals to help with all the dis-regulation, for example a funny handshake in the morning before school or a poem before bedtime.

★ Make connection, laughter and sensory pleasure the priorities, instead of the the pressure to buy gifts or visit friends and/or relatives.

★ And please feel free to call us anytime to get direct and specific support during this time.

Adoption Journeys Fathers Group for Peer Support

Our Discussion Nights for Dads aim to build bonds and camaraderie while sharing what is unique to fatherhood in adoptive families. Participants talk about successes, challenges, and find support to be the best fathers they can be. We have received extremely positive feedback about the benefits of having this unique group just for fathers. Dads raising children of any age are welcome.

One Wednesday monthly, 7-8:30 p.m., February-May.
Sign up now for spring series. (Just email or call. No fee)

Location: Adoption Journeys Office, 140 Pine Street, Florence

Facilitated by David Scherer, Ph.D.: UMass Psychology Professor and Adoptive Parent
Adoption Journeys

GROUPS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND YOUTH

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

Dads Discussion Group - Florence. This group is offered in the fall and again in the spring. Each cycle is 4 meetings; one Wednesday evening a month. Fathers only. Get involved with a great group of dads and share perspectives on fathering in adoptive families. Call us to register for the spring series starting in February.

Parents of children of any age - Amherst. Support and discussion on variety of topics related to adoptive parenting at any stage. Each cycle is 8 meetings; meets twice monthly on Thursday evenings in the fall and spring. Ongoing group. Join anytime. Contact us for dates or more info.

Parents of children of any age - West Springfield. Support and discussion on a variety of topics for adoptive parents in the Lower Pioneer Valley area raising children of any age. On-site childcare is available. Meets monthly on the fourth Monday. Call for dates and details.

Parents of Children with Histories of Attachment Trauma (P-CHAT) - Northampton. Meets every other month October - June. A group specifically for parents raising children with attachment disorders. Please call for pre-group screening and details.

Groups for Youth

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 for an 8-meeting program. Spring session begins in February. Schedule your pre-group screening now for January. Half-hour pre-group meetings for prospective new members are being scheduled for Thursday, Jan 31st. Please call the office, if you are interested.

Teen Activity Series for Boys (age 13-17) Fun activities for teens to get together in the community and have fun and make new connections. Contact us to get on the mailing list for reminders.

Teen Activities for ages 13 and up. A chance for teens to connect with other adopted teens doing a variety of social activities. Don't miss out! Keep your eyes open for registration flyers in your email and in this newsletter. If you have a teen at home, contact the office to get on our outreach list.

To participate in any of our groups, please call or email the Adoption Journeys office to register.
Adoption Journeys Defined...

We’re growing!

Adoption Journeys was formed in 1997 when parents who had adopted through DCF found that they needed ongoing support, and lobbied the state for services. A grant was created, and in agreement with the wishes of these lobbying parents, was made available to all adoptive parents in MA, regardless of type of adoption (public, private, international or domestic), and guardianship families. At that time the legislature added money to the Department of Children and Families' budget specifically for the provision of post-adoption services. Child and Family Services of New Bedford Inc. was awarded the initial contract and has been providing the Adoption Journeys Program statewide since that time.

Our program provides a set of core services to families formed through adoption, through 5 regional offices. The services offered are Short-Term Clinical Family Support, Consultation, Parent Advocacy, Professional and Community Education, Social and Recreational Opportunities, and Respite Support. The only qualifier for service is that the family must have a legally finalized adoption or a legal guardianship.

Each regional office is similarly staffed and provides clinical supports, and offers advocacy and referral services in addition to providing community and professional education. The Western Region Adoption Journeys office is located in Florence, MA. The staff who are located at this office are described here. Please contact any one of us if you have any questions about us!. We are a very flexible program and will be glad to do what we can to assist you in accessing the resources and support you may be seeking.

Nancy Solow, MSW, LICSW, Regional Manager. Nancy has worked with foster and adoptive families since 1990. Her experience includes child welfare, individual and family therapy, and parent and adolescent group work. Nancy has been leading the Regional Response Team of Adoption Journeys since 2003, and has been Regional Manager since 2016. She is a certified trainer in Adoption Competence for the Center for Adoption Support and Education (CASE). Nancy provides trainings for school personnel who serve students with histories of attachment trauma. She is also a frequent presenter at local conferences.

Maya Rege-Colt, MSW, LICSW. Maya has been a service provider to parents, teens and young children in a variety of settings for over 25 years. She has a strong foundation in early childhood development, family work, group facilitation, and peer counseling. She has been on the Regional Response Team of Adoption Journeys since 2004 providing clinical services to families, providing training to professionals, and facilitating groups for parents and for teens. Maya especially loves groups! As a first-generation Indian-American, issues of identity, racism, & importance of connection to culture consistently inform her work.

Lisa Mintz, M.Ed. Lisa has been a provider and program manager of family services for over 20 years in the context of women's health, child abuse prevention, sexual health, parenting support, and public health education. With Adoption Journeys since 2009, Lisa oversees our social activities for youth and families, parent education, and professional trainings. She provides direct clinical support to parents as a Regional Response Team Worker, does community training, and facilitates parent support groups as well. As our “resource librarian” she maintains a directory of community resources, referrals, and our extensive lending library. Lisa also writes our newsletter and manages our outreach to parents and professionals.

We are excited to welcome our newest staff member!

Micki McInnis, B.A. Micki comes from a background of working with family-service non-profit organizations as well as directly with children and families. She is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a concentration in adoption psychology and a focus on foster care experience and adolescence and brings a particular proclivity for research. As an adoptee herself, she is dedicated to helping the adoptive community and is looking forward to working with all of our families here at Adoption Journeys. We are thrilled to have her on board!