



OPEN

ADOPTION
& FAMILY
SERVICES

Annual
Impact
Report
2023



Dear OA&FS community,

It has been another pivotal year at the agency, and I continue to be grateful for the connections we have with each of the families and organizations whose values mirror and complement our own. We are listening to all of you as we learn how to better support one another as families and as members of the adoption and reproductive rights communities.

As we listen and learn, we are leaning into our values now more than ever, and they are guiding us as we refine our agency's services. In the past year, we have focused on: centering adult adoptee perspectives and lived experiences to shape our program and services; expanding our outreach and referral network to serve families in need; and diversifying our funding sources to better reflect and support the true nature of our work.

A few highlights from the past year:

- Board member Nathan Faust launched a monthly OA&FS adoptee affinity group as one effort in our goal of increasing adoptee engagement.
- Adoption Mosaic, an organization led by transracial adoptees, began presenting on transracial adoption at our monthly Pre-Adoption Seminar. We also updated our transracial adoption education materials after Adoption Mosaic completed a full assessment.
- We prioritized outreach and established and deepened relationships with community partner organizations that support new parents, enable access to abortion, and connect people with resources for housing and other concrete needs. We also helped these organizations understand our services so they can help people access our unbiased all-options counseling.
- We have continued to secure funding with new grants from private foundations. This moves us a small step closer to our vision of a future where our all-options pregnancy counseling services are not reliant on adoptive parent fees.

OUR VALUES

Transparency

Openness

Choice

**Adoptee
Centeredness**

Inclusiveness

Respect

Unbiased all-options counseling has always been core to our mission, and we recognize that this component of our services is a critical aspect of what draws prospective adoptive parents to our program, even as many of them are here because of their ultimate desire to parent through adoption. At a time when reproductive freedom is under social and political assault, we remain committed to promoting informed reproductive choice without stigma, shame, or agenda. As such, we wholeheartedly support the choices made by the approximately 90% of the pregnant people we work with who ultimately choose a path other than adoption.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to furthering adoption reform by increasing public awareness about ethical adoption practices. We will continue to equip adoptive and birth parents to have adoptee-centered open adoptions, and we will promote and support reproductive freedom. We embrace the ongoing work it takes to earn and keep the trust of all our agency's stakeholders.

Best,



Suzie Williams,
Executive Director



Open Adoption & Family Services Staff

Top row (l-r): Katie Raser, Lori Maas, Kristina Perkins, Kelsey Jacobs, Leah Lusk, Jan Jamieson, Suzie Williams, Arielle Fife-Klingler. Middle row: Haley Waggoner, Maria Villegas, Delphine Veith, Wendy Coleman, Sally Shuey, Sari Prevost. Seated: Adam Thomas.

Annual Impact Report is compiled and designed by Communications Director Sally Shuey and edited by Counselor Leah Lusk.

THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE MISSION

OPTIONS COUNSELING

156 expectant parents contacted OA&FS for initial pregnancy options counseling

54 expectant parents engaged in ongoing counseling services

3 weeks of counseling prior to adoption planning, on average, for those who chose adoption

51 registrations for our eight virtual birth parent gatherings

PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENT SERVICES

18 adoption information meetings held

156 people attended an adoption information meeting

10 pre-adoption seminars held

94 people attended a pre-adoption seminar

WAITING FAMILIES

60 homestudies completed

38 families entered our waiting families pool

66 families in pool, on average

14 months between pool entry and placement, on average

93 total attendees at our 13 waiting family pool parties

ADOPTIONS

18 infant adoptions completed

33% of placements were "last minute," when adoption planning begins at birth

29 average age of birth parents

39 average age of adoptive parents

OUTREACH FOR PROFESSIONALS

8 webinars presented by OA&FS counselors

192 service providers registered for webinars

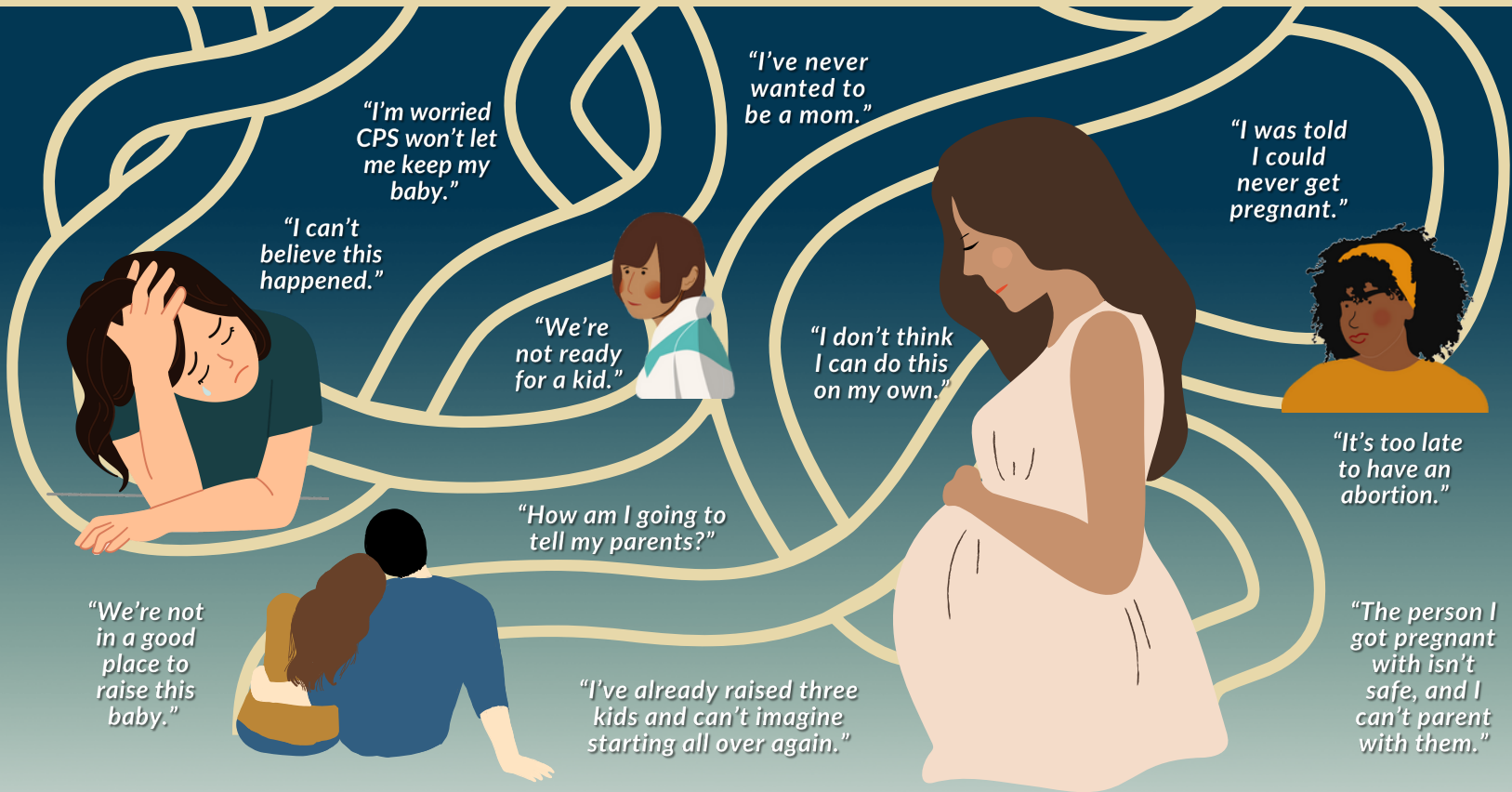
25 outreach presentations to individual organizations

707 service providers engaged with our trainings

3,700 service providers received our promotional emails

80 organizations requested our brochures

Holding space, honoring choice



By Delphine Veith, Program Manager

Each person and each story is unique, but everyone who reaches out to Open Adoption & Family Services for options counseling comes to us during a vulnerable time, often at one of the hardest moments in their lives. They are facing a complex decision, and they trust that we will be able to help. Some of the most meaningful work we are privileged to do as OA&FS counselors is to offer space where people are able to look at all their options, to turn over the stones of each choice without pressure or judgment. And it is hard emotional work.

I came to my role as a counselor at Open Adoption & Family Services with a firm belief in everyone's right to have agency over how, when, and if they become a parent. I still believe in this ideal, and I've also come to understand just how complex it is when applied in real life, where people's choices intersect with systems,

laws, biology, and human relationships. I've also learned, in working with pregnant people and families, that they are rarely offered a truly supportive and neutral space to carefully consider what they want and what is possible. We make this space available so people can listen to their hearts, tap into their own wisdom, and converse with their fears and feelings to gain greater clarity. We know that this is not what most people expect to find at an adoption agency, and we also know that it is an essential service for people who are facing such complex decisions. This is why options counseling is core to our mission.

They can be anyone

When we initially meet with prospective adoptive parents, we often ask them to share with us who they imagine expectant parents to be. It's a trick question, of course, because the

reality is they can be anyone, facing any number of circumstances. When I think back on the many people we've been privileged to work with over the years, I recall just a few examples ...

- The woman who knew she didn't want to be a mother and found herself seven months pregnant. She valued her freedom and independence, and doubted whether she had the instincts required for parenting.
- The pregnant couple who were already struggling to parent a young child, who lacked family support and resources. They knew they loved this new child but weren't sure how they would be able to give two kids everything they needed.
- The children conceived through sex work, whose parents face stigma and judgment no matter what options they consider.
- The people who arrived at the hospital with severe abdominal pain, unaware of their pregnancies until they were told they were in labor, who then had to process becoming a parent as they grappled with what it might mean to raise a child – or decide not to.
- The parents whose fears of state involvement made them believe that open adoption might be the only way they could remain a meaningful part of their child's life.
- The woman who just learned that the baby she was pregnant with had Down syndrome and was overwhelmed with what this diagnosis meant for her family.
- The woman in her early 40s who discovered she was pregnant with twins after she had already raised kids.

In each of these circumstances, our counselors listened, held space for big feelings, explored perceived barriers, and, most importantly, gave people the time and encouragement to sit with each possibility.

It's a different life

Some expectant parents have internalized the message that adoption will lead to a better life for their child. But who decides what's better?

Is it better for a child to be raised by people who have had to prove their readiness to parent, for a child to have access to resources and opportunities that might otherwise be unavailable? Or is it better for a child to be raised within their biological family, sharing genetic roots and mirrors and everyday family connections, while living a life that may well include insufficient resources and support?

We've seen people choose each of these options over the years, and we can't compare any particular life with what it would have been had a different choice been made. Each choice sets in motion a life path with rippling effects.



The path not chosen would have been different, assuredly, but there's no telling whether one or the other was the "better" choice. And there are adult adoptees that say with clarity that adoption has not provided them with a better life, a perspective we must hold space for as we do this work.

We often speak with people only briefly, and we may not know what choice they ultimately make. But we always have the privilege and duty in our work to remind people of their ability and right to consider all their choices, including the

choice to parent, despite the many real and perceived barriers people face. Every now and then we hear from people we've worked with who chose to parent. They might share the pride and joy they feel as parents and, meaningfully, an appreciation that we held space for them to choose this path.

When we hold space for each choice as equally valid, assumptions can shift, and fears can move. Ultimately, this work is about creating space where people are empowered to explore how, when, and if they will become parents.

"Thank you for the compassion."

"Thank you for helping me talk to my family to ask for help."

"Thank you for listening."

"Thank you for not taking advantage of a vulnerable person."

"Thank you for supporting me in changing my mind."

"Thank you."

"Thank you for being a safe space."

"Thank you for giving me time to think."



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We appreciate the contributions of these outgoing board members

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Registered Nurse

MICHELE GRECO

Adoptive Parent, Mindfulness
Based Life & Business Coach

JENNIFER JOHNSON

Adoptive Parent

APRIL VANDERKAMP

Adoptee,
Registered Nurse

FINANCIALS

*July 2022-June 2023**

EXPENSES

Programs (80%)

\$1,072,397

Management & General (17%)

\$227,884

Fundraising (3%)

\$40,215

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$1,340,496

REVENUES

Contributions

\$28,689

Foundation Grants

\$22,450

Contracts

\$6,107

Prospective Adoptive Parent
Fees for Service

\$1,042,913

Other**

\$5,487

Net Investment Income

\$102,660

TOTAL REVENUES

\$1,208,306

*Internally prepared, unaudited Fiscal Year 2023 financials.

**Includes sales and miscellaneous revenue

THANKS TO OUR DONORS

GRANTS

Google Ads
Spirit Mountain Community Fund
Summer Lea Hillman Foundation
Herbert A. Templeton Foundation

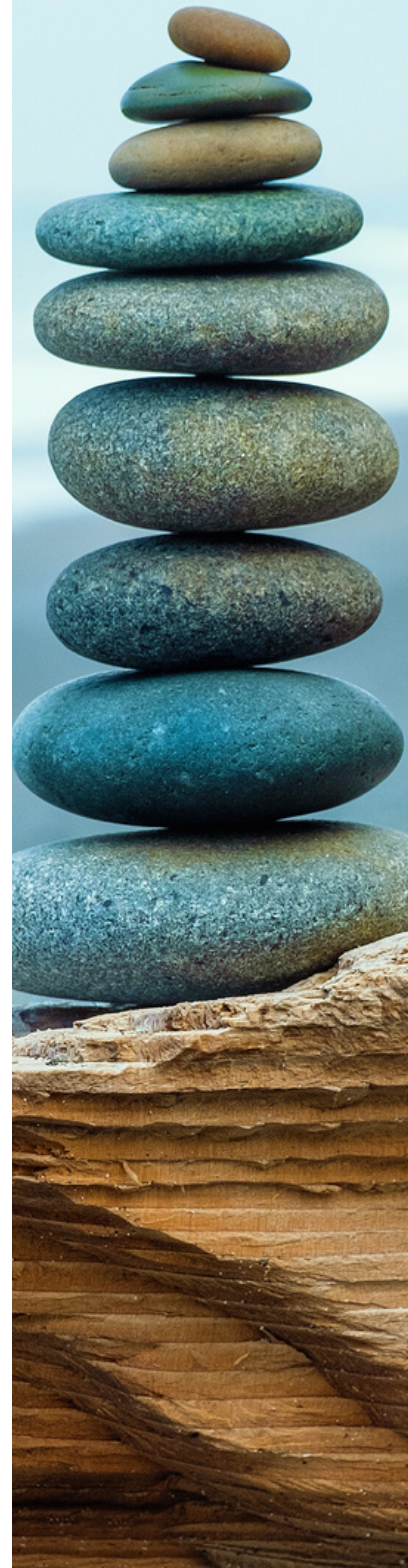
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Kennedy Jenks -matching gift program
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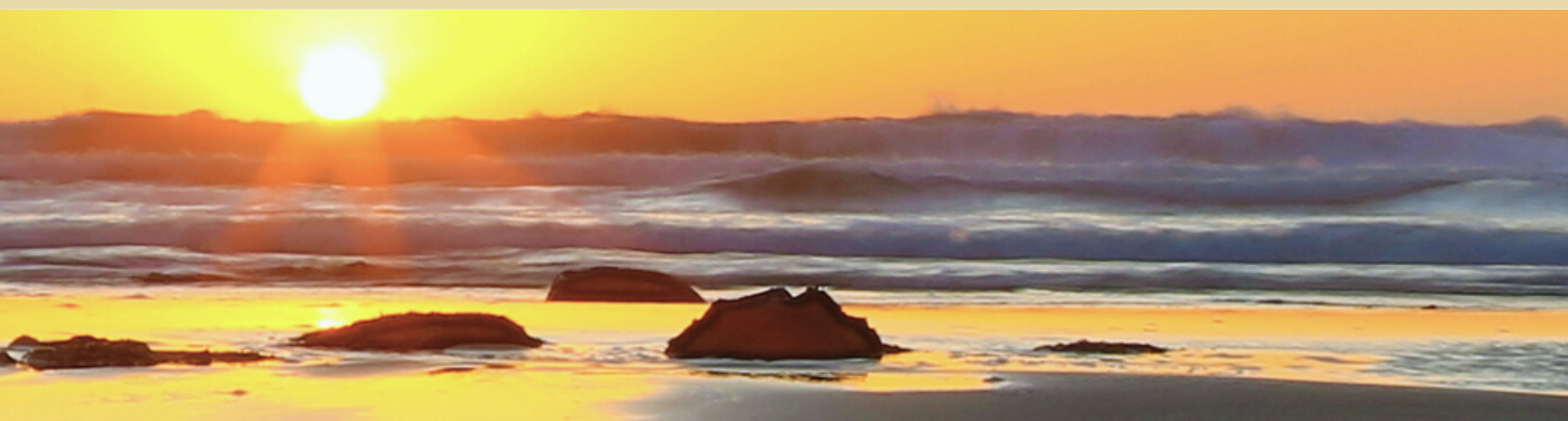
Help us expand our adult adoptee community!

Hey adoptive parents, is your adoptee connected with OA&FS? So many adoptees from our early days are now adults, and we want to make sure their voices are heard! Encourage them to update their contact information with us so they can find community with other adoptees, stay informed about our goings-on and play a role in shaping our services and vision. Please send any updates to info@openadopt.org.

Our mission

Open Adoption & Family Services supports people in exploring all of their pregnancy options in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

When the choice is adoption, we facilitate child-centered open adoptions. We assist birth and adoptive parents as they create healthy, long-term relationships that address the ongoing needs of the child.



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