

# 2010-2011 Annual Report





## Dear Friends,

Thank you to everyone who helped to make our **25th Anniversary Open Adoption Awareness Campaign** such an amazing success!

When our agency was founded in 1985, the movement to support openness in adoption had just begun. Although an entire generation of children have grown up in open adoptions since then, the problematic legacy of closed adoption often overshadows the public's understanding of adoption today. In honor of our 25th anniversary, we endeavored to bridge this informational gap by creating an educational campaign that would provide the community with an accurate and accessible vehicle for demonstrating the benefits of open adoption. In order to make this ambitious project a reality, we reached out to you, our open adoption community, for your involvement and support.

I'm happy to say the response was overwhelming! The campaign has been a success due to the contributions of our generous volunteers, donors and open adoption families who shared their experiences for this project.

At the annual 2010 OA&FS summer picnics, open adoptees, birthparents and adoptive parents told us what open adoption means to them and what messages they'd like the world to know about open adoption. Their heartfelt stories inspired and informed our campaign. We were so impressed by everyone's passion as they recounted their experiences, we knew that the best way to tell our story was to give our open adoption community the microphone! Over the past year, we've worked diligently with **Elliott Bay Productions** to artfully film your stories. Our efforts have resulted in a series of videos that we've crafted into a comprehensive DVD entitled **Exploring Reproductive Choices and Open Adoption**. The DVD effectively portrays the heart and soul of open adoption! We're also assembling short videos, which we'll launch over the next year on our website, that will feature the quotes families shared at the picnics in Eugene, Portland and Seattle.

Donor support for this project funded the production of the new DVD and allowed us to distribute it to service providers throughout Oregon and Washington. We've distributed over 3,400 copies of the DVD to

professionals who can now share this information with their clients seeking all-options pregnancy counseling and/or open adoption planning services. The impact from this outreach effort will continue to be felt in the Pacific Northwest for years to come. Thank you to all who made this wave of education possible!

Feedback about the videos from community members and colleagues has been overwhelmingly positive. The eloquent stories of our clients featured in the videos clearly demonstrate what open adoption is and allows people, who were previously unfamiliar with open adoption, to quickly grasp how openness in adoption works and how it benefits the children of adoption. We hear consistently from viewers how these new educational materials have helped them learn about open adoption on a much deeper level than anything else they'd encountered on the subject.

Now that we have these new educational materials, it's time to share them with the world! The videos are available on the agency's Web site and on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. Community participation on the agency's social media pages on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube has already begun. Please connect with us through this new medium and share these new videos with your friends, family and colleagues.

*Your membership and participation will strengthen our message and make it more likely that others will find this information.* Your posts, comments and feedback will greatly enrich the messages we're creating in this public forum. It will also give you the opportunity to share what you want the world to know about open adoption.

*We look forward to your participation, as together we can tell the world about open adoption and how much adoption has changed!*

*Shari Levine*  
Shari Levine

Executive Director



## Agency News

In May 2011, the agency welcomed administrative assistant **Robin Francisco** to the Eugene office. Robin has earned a master's degree in school counseling from **Pacific University**. "I am passionate about children and families, especially in helping to nurture healthy relationships, which this agency does so well!" said Robin. "I'm glad to be part of this organization and look forward to working with and getting to know agency families."





# 2010-2011 Highlights

## 25th Anniversary: Raising Awareness About Open Adoption

In celebration of its 25th Anniversary, OA&FS reached out to its growing open adoption community to help raise awareness about the benefits of open adoption. Support for the campaign allowed the agency to raise over \$22,721 towards the production of a series of educational videos about open adoption and OA&FS.

OA&FS board member and open adoptee **David Tilchin** contributed his skills as a videographer and still photographer. Over 36 families shared their perspectives on open adoption at the celebratory 25th Anniversary picnics in Seattle, Eugene and Portland. Several families also agreed to share their open adoption stories through extensive production shoots to develop longer format videos created by **Elliot Bay Productions**.

Through this community supported effort, the agency produced ten videos and two public service announcements. In support of the awareness campaign, television **Channel 21** (KTVZ, KFXO, KQRE and NTVZ) in Bend, Ore., volunteered to broadcast the OA&FS public service announcements on its regional stations for six months of 2011. The videos have also been published on the OA&FS Web site, agency Youtube channel, Facebook page and Twitter feed, as well as released on **Exploring Reproductive Choices and Open Adoption**, a free DVD compilation created for service providers and their clients.

## An Alternative to State Adoption

During the past five years, OA&FS has developed a collaborative relationship with **Oregon Department of Human Services** (DHS) to create an alternative track for parents who are at risk of losing their parental rights. Last year, DHS released a memorandum clarifying state policy to support women who wish to work with a private agency, such as ours, instead of facing involuntary termination of their parental rights. When parenting is no longer an option, women can now choose to proactively plan an open adoption with our agency. Through our open adoption model, high risk moms are empowered and honored as they create an adoption plan that truly meets their needs and those of their child. Through this collaborative relationship with DHS, we can now bring our services to parents who have previously had few adoption options.

Over the past several years, the number of moms utilizing our services, who were at risk of DHS

## Why Do You Give to OA&FS?

### Michele Greco:

"Since 2006, I've supported OA&FS by volunteering to speak to prospective adoptive parents about open adoption and what it was like to adopt through



*Adoptive mother Michele Greco and family*

OA&FS. By sharing our open adoption experience, my hope is that adoptive parents will be inspired to navigate openness with consciousness, confidence and excitement. In 2011, the agency also asked me to help represent the agency's open adoption model from an adoptive parent's perspective on a legislative committee created to improve adoption practices in Oregon. I was honored to participate and to have the chance to share this progressive way open adoption can work.

I truly believe that openness in adoption empowers all involved to be the best they can be. What I'd like the world to know about open adoption is that openness is wonderful and important for the whole family. It is an extra gift and an opportunity to grow in new ways.

I give my support to OA&FS because they've done a wonderful job creating and holding a space from which these amazing open relationships can germinate and continue to grow." ■

intervention, has steadily increased. These women, who had nowhere to turn, were suddenly able to choose open adoption in lieu of state involvement. As a non-profit agency, whose mission is to offer pregnant and parenting women viable choices that they can feel good about over time, this has been deeply satisfying work for us. We created a new brochure that describes this option and two of the videos on our DVD feature testimonials from moms who accessed this alternate path. In order to build this cooperative model, last year agency staff provided training to over 91 DHS case workers in Oregon. We look forward to working with **Washington Department of Social and Health Services** (DSHS) to bring this innovative cooperation to Washington.

*...continued on page 5*

# Thank You for Supporting Open Adoption & Family Services!

We would like to thank the following donors who have helped us grow and succeed in 2010-2011.

## **Hunker-Shields:**

Thank you to the 26 donors who contributed a total of \$3,245 in honor of the marriage of **Mark Hunker** and **Jeff Shields**. ■

## **Gifts of \$1,000 +**

Kay and Roy Abramowitz  
Laura Finney and Ariel Veroske  
Microsoft Matching Gifts Program  
Meagan O'Leary and Shannon Sedlacek

## **Gifts of \$500-\$999**

Kenneth Benedict  
Chris Chandler and Adam Baker  
Susan Crabtree and Erik Bergman  
John Flinn and Bill Hollands  
MiChelle and Allan Moore

## **Gifts of \$300-\$499**

Shelly and Rick Clough  
Diane Dickoff  
Karen Enns  
Lori and Paul Gates  
Kennedy/Jenks Matching Gift Program  
Mark and Diane Spaur  
Priscilla and Christopher Williams

## **Gifts of \$200-\$299**

Heather and Scott Allmain  
Karl Berry  
Dawn Cartwright and Christopher Brown  
City of Seattle Employee Combined Fund Drive  
Jeri Krier and Wally Roghair  
Sean McCumber  
Joslyn Moore and Jennifer Creegan  
Kathryn Olson and Jeff Petee  
Priscilla and Robert Rathbone  
The Running Lattes  
Starbucks Partner Giving Program  
Dayna Tolman and Tammy Snow  
United Way of Snohomish County

## **Gifts of \$100-\$199**

Ann and Jay Arney  
Jane Ault and Robert Trexler  
Judith and Paul Bulski  
Janet Buttenwieser and Matthew Wiley  
Carol Casciato  
Janice Chappell and Michael Demanche  
Steven and Laura Cross  
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Janice Rutherford  
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Sandra and James Stallman  
Terri Stone and Mary-Pat Soukup  
David Tilchin  
Ruth Warbington and Richard Hausken  
Waggenger-Edstrom Worldwide  
Ross Whitehead and Jean Gunther  
Suzanne Williams  
Anonymous (4)

## **Gifts Up to \$99**

Peggy and Richard Babunovic  
Mary and Hoyt Bonar  
La Verne B. Brown  
Mary Ellen Bushnell  
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Cindy Dahl and Charles Thierheimer  
Grayson and Jack Dempsey  
M.J. and L.B. Flick  
Sharon Fridrick and

Steven Shapiro  
Margaret and Robert Fuller  
Halina and George Gagne  
Camille and Adam Gilbert  
Marty Giovannini  
Paul and Alison Heimowitz  
Lois Heinlein and Thomas Mathews  
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Sari Prevost  
Hope and Steven Ruprecht  
P. Saraceno  
Verna and Manvel Schauffler  
Laurel and David Stitzhal  
Richard Torpie  
Melanie and Jonathan Turnbull  
Deena and Scott Weninger  
Nancy and Gordon Whitehead  
Kerri Winters and David Stone  
Anonymous (2) ■

## Birthmothers

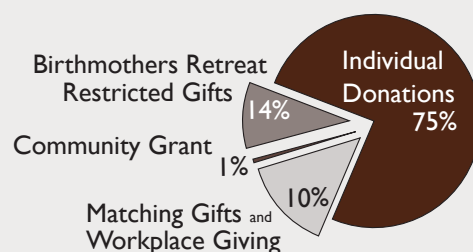
### Retreat:

All the Knitters  
Cindy and Helen Best  
Jodi Bernstein  
Katelyn Berry  
Benny and Wright  
Burnett-Smith  
Shelley and Rick Clough  
Sarah Felstiner and  
Scobie Puchtler  
Sharon Fridrick and  
Steve Shapiro  
Kim and Matt Heavener  
Addison Humbert and  
Dan Schechter  
Jan Jamieson  
Dana and Greg Jones  
Satya Kline  
Karen Kwiecien and  
Tom Roick  
Cynthia Lee  
Lori and Ryan Maas  
Jessica and Ivo Mijnsen  
Kathryn Olson and Jeff Petee  
Magdalena and Jerry Rapisarda  
Anne Roberts  
Kristen Ryan and Misty  
Gonzales  
Jennifer and Bob Samer  
Dawn Stahlberg and  
Tim Thornes  
Townley Slack-Stevens  
and David Stevens  
Kelly and Ben Sullivan  
Britt and Curt Udy  
Thomas Valvano  
Cheryl and Michael  
Wiznerowicz  
Ginny and Andy Woo  
James Wysocki  
Isabel Wyss and Todd  
Ebersole  
Myrna Yoder and Karl Kesel  
Stefan Youngs  
Anonymous ■

**Your generous support makes our mission possible.**

# Thank you!

OA&FS is a charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



**Types of Donations Received**

## Recognizing Volunteers

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who contributed their time, talents and expertise to support the agency's mission last year.

All OA&FS Families Interviewed for the 25th Anniversary Awareness Campaign

Megan Adams	Denise Jarrett-Weeks
Lisa Adriance	Megan Jeske
Heather Allmain	Karl Kesel
Jacki Amberwood	David Kunselman
Ben Anderson-Nathe	Suzie Lewis-Ship
Michael Anderson-Nathe	Debi Marshall
Annie	Mary
Krista Baugham	Carol Merwin
Jennifer Blakely	Sunny Moore
Eva Blum	Cory Morris
Margi Brailsford	Oaks Park Skating Rink
Chris Brown	Liane Owen
Janet Buttenwieser	Jim Pearson
Channel 21, Bend, Ore.	Portland Children's Museum
The Circuit Boulderling Gym	Scobie Puchtler
Ben Crandall	Amanda Reed
Matt Dorbin	David Rexford
Jen Downer	Wally Roghair
Elliot Bay Productions	Sellwood Middle School Marimba Band
Enchanted Forest	Bill Soderberg
Karen Gagne	Mary-Pat Soukup
Garret Garfield	Heidi Standley
Carrie Garrett	Terri Stanik
Michele Greco	Derek Stanley
Stephanie, Kevin and Sheridan Greco	Terri Stone
David Gullino	David Tilchin
Dr. Meg Hayes	Josh Tucker
Kim Heavener	Chrysia Watson
Karie Herlinger	Myrna Yoder ■
Doug Hunt	

## 2010-2011 Highlights

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### Connecting With Professionals and Teens

In the past fiscal year OA&FS distributed over 3,400 copies of the new DVD, **Exploring Reproductive Choices and Open Adoption**, to service providers in Oregon and Washington. Agency staff began utilizing videos from the DVD in presentations and training sessions. Last year, staff provided training about open adoption and OA&FS services to over 1,079 professionals and students.

Agency staff met with over 80 professionals that provide services for teenagers to inform them about our services and provided education about open adoption to 382 teens at high schools throughout Oregon and Washington.

### Serving Eastern Oregon and Washington

As part of the agency's commitment to expanding services to rural communities, OA&FS contract worker **Marianne Harris** and counselor **Angie Lunde** conducted extensive outreach last year and met with over 202 contacts in Eastern Washington and Oregon. Providers were pleased to hear about services OA&FS could offer and the agency is proud to be a resource they can rely on to meet the needs of their communities. Many of these small towns have previously had very limited resources for pregnant women in crisis.

Although Marianne's main focus has been on reaching out to clinics, social service agencies and schools, she has also provided training to staff who recently opened a homeless shelter for teens in Yakima, Wash. Marianne met with staff at the only substance abuse treatment center in Eastern Washington that allows clients to bring their children with them during treatment. Marianne also took part in a resource fair in Grandview for parents, students and service providers.

For the past four years, Angie has created strong relationships with agencies, hospitals, and organizations in Eastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington. Last year, she focused on providing trainings for new staff at agencies that have experienced staff turnover and encouraged contacts to review the new DVD and share it with their clients. She delivered presentations about open adoption for high school students, organizations and a class for youth offenders.

### Birthmothers Retreat

OA&FS hosted the annual **Birthmother's Retreat** on May 21 in Portland, Ore. By attending the retreat, 26 birthmothers from all over Oregon and Washington

had the opportunity to connect, support, and share with one another. The **Playback Theater Company** created a performance that brought to life the depth and intricacy of the birthmothers' stories through movement, music and acting. The agency is so grateful to donors who contributed to make this special day possible, especially **Karen Gagne** and her fellow knitters who created gorgeous, hand-made scarves for all of the birthmothers!



### Pregnancy Options Dialogue

Last year OA&FS continued its dynamic partnership with **Adoption Access Network, Backline, Center for Health Training and Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette** to offer the **Pregnancy Options Dialogue** in Portland on October 22, 2010. The dialogue allowed service providers to expand their understanding of abortion, adoption and parenting and to discuss what it means to offer thoughtful, non-biased options counseling.

**Grayson Dempsey**, OA&FS board member and the founder of **Backline**, and OA&FS counselor **Katie Niemeyer** co-facilitated the session, leading 70 professionals to a deeper exploration of their work offering all-options pregnancy counseling. Nurses, social workers, teachers, doctors, health educators and school-based clinicians listened as a panel of experts shared up-to-date information about abortion, adoption and parenting advocacy. A second panel featured women who eloquently shared their personal experiences in receiving pregnancy options counseling and their decision-making process to have an abortion, plan an adoption or parent.

Those who attended the dialogue reported feeling grateful for the wisdom and courage shared by the panelists, as well as the information they learned from one another. The remainder of the day was spent discussing ways to integrate this information into current practices and provide optimal support for women making decisions about their pregnancy options.

Dialogue attendees expressed the need for hands-on skills training in offering all-options counseling. In response, the partnering organizations have decided to offer a unique version of the dialogue in Portland on February 10, 2012. The upcoming event will be a hands-on skill-building workshop. As attendees at past dialogue events had identified gaps in their concrete knowledge around one or more pregnancy options, the upcoming dialogue will also include breakout sessions covering each option in-depth. Learn more about this professional training opportunity at: **www.pregnancyoptionsdialogue.org**. ■



# Service Statistics

July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011

**Open Adoption & Family Services (OA&FS)** is a pro-choice nonprofit adoption agency. We provide free, all-options pregnancy counseling for pregnant women and couples in Oregon and Washington. We plan open adoptions at no cost to birthparents. We offer lifelong counseling for our clients. We've completed over 1,200 open adoptions since we were founded in 1985.

## OA&FS Placements

- During the last fiscal year, OA&FS completed 48 adoptions. Last year, our agency completed more domestic adoptions than any other agency in Oregon or Washington.
- On average the agency completes 38 to 60 adoptions per year, with a 10-year average of 49 per year.
- 29% of placements involved no pregnancy-related expenses; 71% of placements involved pregnancy-related expenses, with an average total of \$1,259.

## In 2010-2011, OA&FS:

- Responded to 220 calls from women facing unplanned pregnancies.
- Answered 379 information calls from prospective adoptive parents.
- Hosted events attended by 835 members of the open adoption community.
- Delivered presentations about open adoption to over 1,079 professionals and students.
- Distributed over 3,400 copies of the new DVD **Exploring Reproductive Choices and Open Adoption** to service providers in Oregon and Washington.
- Shared over 5,000 brochures about open adoption as an alternative to state adoption with professionals who work with clients at risk of state involvement.

## OA&FS Clients

- Last fiscal year there were an average of 77 families waiting in the prospective adoptive parent pool.
- Overall, adoptive parents waited 11 months before being chosen by birthparents.
- Gay and lesbian adoptive parents waited an average of 14 months before being chosen by birthparents. Placements with gay and lesbian families totaled 13 (27% of the total).
- Last year, adoptive parents and birthparents agreed upon an average of two visits per year in their legally-enforceable open adoption agreements.
- Birthparents received an average of 10 weeks of counseling prior to placement.
- The average age of birthmothers was 22 years old, 24 for birthfathers and 40 for adoptive parents.
- Of the children placed, 88% were newborns.
- Of the children placed, 54% were female and 46% were male; 61% were Caucasian, 35% were of mixed ethnicity and 4% were Asian-American.
- Most (58%) of the children placed had zero to mild prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol; almost half (44%) had no exposure; 14% had mild exposure; 21% had moderate exposure; and 21% had severe exposure.

## 2010-2011 Board of Directors

**President Roy Abramowitz**  
CPA; Perkins & Company

**Vice President Erik Bergman**  
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Worldwide

**Secretary Elizabeth Carroll**  
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County Health Department

**Grayson Dempsey**  
Founder; Backline

**Karen Enns**  
Program Manager; New Parent  
Services of Hood River County  
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Counties

**Andrea Hardy**  
Birthmother, Parent and Pediatric  
Nurse

**Shari Levine**  
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**Kathryn Olson**  
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**Mark Spaur**  
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Engineer; Kennedy Jenks

**David Tilchin**  
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Programmer

**Alex Trotter**  
DHS Permanency Worker

**Melissa Valencia-Manerini**  
Birthmother

**April Vanderkamp**  
OA&FS Adoptee and Student



**Open Adoption & Family Services**

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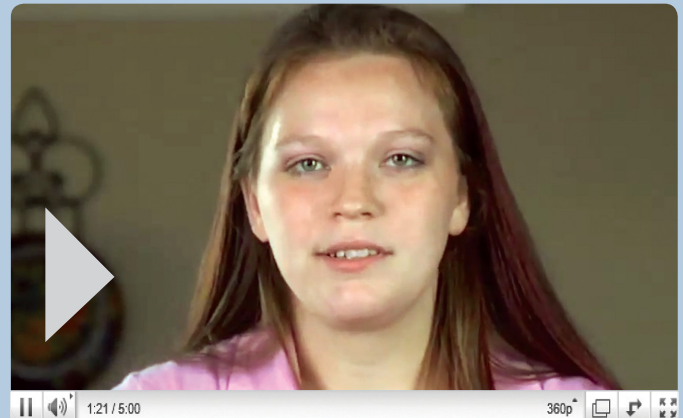
## Open Adoption Awareness Campaign

Would you like to help us raise awareness about the benefits of open adoption?

There are many ways you can help.

Post your stories and what you most want the world to know about open adoption on the OA&FS Facebook page.

Watch the new open adoption videos on Youtube and share them with your friends, family and colleagues.



Hear my story on Youtube!

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[Twitter.com/OpenAdoptionFS](https://twitter.com/OpenAdoptionFS)

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