



2014-2015 Annual Report

I know that my kids
are truly loved. The adoptive
dads and I truly communicate
and work together.

~ Sharene, Birthmother



Hospitious dads and supportive birth family unite three siblings through open adoption.

by Shari Levine



Finn, OA&FS open adoptee.

We recently checked in on Brady and Peter, OA&FS adoptive parents extraordinaire. Brady is on the OA&FS Board of Directors and often shares their adoption story at our seminar. These are two remarkable adoptive dads who have opened their hearts to Finn and his big sisters Sophia and

Joanie, as well as their birth families. Read and view their inspiring story!

Why were you drawn to adopt through OA&FS

PETER. We liked the open and honest and transparent quality of the organization and we strongly believe in open adoption. We want our kids to know who their birthparents are, have an ongoing relationship with the birthparents as they get older and we don't really believe in secrets.

BRADY. [Open Adoption & Family Services was very open to gays and lesbians](#) and that obviously was important to us too.

What did you learn in your preparation to adopt that serves you now?

BRADY. We learned how important it is for everybody involved to have an open adoption; for everyone to have open lines of communication. It helps not only the birth family, but also the children as they get older. They can go back to their birth family and ask questions and get answers that they need.

PETER. If we have problems, issues or concerns with Sharene, the birthmom, we can just lay them out there and she does the same with us. Sometimes they're hard discussions to have but we've had them and continue to have a really good relationship.

Tell the story of your first adoption. What were memorable moments of feeling empathy for and connecting with Sharene?

PETER. We first met Sharene about four or five months before Finn was born. We had a great first meeting, we just talked and talked and talked and got to know her really well.

BRADY. Well, you talked.

PETER. Yeah. (Smiles.)

BRADY. I couldn't really talk during most of it.

PETER. You were kind of emotional.

BRADY. A little emotional.

BOTH. (Laughs.)

PETER. She was very honest. She told her whole life story basically in that first meeting and how Finn came to be. We really appreciated that. And then over the next four months we met with her and talked about naming the baby, and how we wanted him to grow up. We went to her prenatal appointments and were there at the hospital when Finn was born, which was pretty amazing. BRADY. We spent about four days in the hospital with Sharene and really got to know her and bond with her and our new little family all together.

PETER. You got to cut the cord when Finn was born.

PETER. It was a happy and sad time too because, obviously, we're happy this new life came into the world, but it was also sad because Sharene did have to say goodbye to Finn at that time. But we also knew that she would always be in his life. So it was a bittersweet occasion.



Watch Video: Brady and Peter's Interview

BRADY. It was scary too because the hospital just let us take home this brand new baby and we had no idea what we were doing! I remember kind of freaking out on the drive home not knowing what to do next and not sleeping at all for the next two days or so.

PETER. I think we cried that first night because we didn't know what to do and he wouldn't stop crying.

BRADY. I finally called my mom and had her come over and take care of all of us.

BRADY. A few months later Sharene got married and I had the honor of giving her away at her wedding. We had become that close. She really is part of our family now.

How did you come to adopt Finn's older sisters?

BRADY. We wanted Finn to know his older birth sisters so we would go visit them frequently. Whenever we'd visit the birthmom we would go to the home that the girls were living in at the time too. When Finn was almost a year old

the girls got placed into another foster home and it became apparent that they weren't going to be adopted so we started that process. It took us quite a few months to get them but we wanted to make sure that Finn and his sisters were together and kept that connection.

How old were Finn's sisters when you adopted them?

PETER. Joan had just



Sophia in the garden.

turned six and Sophia was three. That's when they moved in, and Finn was two. And about a year later we adopted them.

BRADY. It was a different process. We went through the state to adopt the girls and it took about 14 months after they moved into our house, but it took about 10 months just to get certified to have them in our house so it was almost two years from the start of the process until the adoption was finalized.

BRADY. And with Finn by the time he was four months old the adoption process was finalized.



Sharene, Joan, Sophia and Finn on a museum visit.

Did you have any kind of celebration or way to recognize when your children were officially adopted?

BRADY. With Finn he was so young we didn't do a big celebration. But when the girls were adopted we did have an adoption party. We invited our families over and framed their adoption certificates and had cake and ice cream.

PETER. It's a totally different process when you adopt kids that are older. Also with them in the foster care system they have more issues. So we've had them in therapy a lot and it's been a long difficult struggle – and it will continue to be – but we're still here and we're still a family.

Please describe your current relationship with the childrens' birthmother.

PETER. Sharene is wonderful, we have a really good relationship with her. She's like our family. She has three visits a year at least where she sees all three kids. And she talks on the phone with them and texts and sends pictures. It's just a very honest and open and loving relationship. If there are issues or concerns



Joan at the beach.



Peter and kids take in the surf.

Sharene was adopted through open adoption.

PETER. (Her adoption) was through the state foster system.

BRADY. So there's even more birth family members.

PETER. It's a very complicated web of family members, but it's a good relationship.

How do the kids talk about their relationship with Sharene with their peers?

PETER. I think I've heard Joanie say, "this is my birthmom Sharene". We made life books for the kids, Sophia and Joanie, so they could understand their path through life starting with Sharene, and all the foster families pictures and things. They understand (Sharene's) their birth mom, but she couldn't take care of them. So other people and now we take care of them. They refer to her as "my birth mommy Sharene" or "Mommy Sharene". Sharene is very respectful about us being the parents and setting the rules and raising them. She completely understands and respects that. I think we both respect each other's boundaries in terms of privacy.

Describe your life as a family now.

BOTH. (Laughs.)

BRADY. I mean, three kids.

PETER. It's nonstop the moment they get up until the moment they go to bed. (We have a) very active household. They're always exploring and running around and energetic and jumping. We live on a farm, so they explore outside a lot and play with the animals. We do things together of course, like any family – vacations and outings and things like that.

Could you give us a snapshot of what each of your children is like?

BRADY. Joan is very inquisitive and needs to know everything about everything. She's pretty smart, so she can retain that information.

PETER. She is very extroverted and a social butterfly. A very intelligent, inquisitive, curious child who's very active. Though

– even though they might be difficult – we bring them up with her and she does likewise with us.
BRADY. Sharene's been really great about introducing us to other birth family members too.

because of all the experiences she's had, and trauma, she's had some issues she's had to deal with.

BRADY. Sophia is a little princess. Or she likes to think. She's a little cutie.

PETER. She loves to play dress up, has an active imagination and wears her heart on her sleeve. She's very emotional – you know when she's upset, you know when she's happy, she's like a volcano, she erupts!

BOTH. (Laughs.)

PETER. It's true!

BRADY. Finn is wild.

PETER. We call him Bam-Bam right now because he's four and is extremely physical. He runs around, throws, wrestles, but also has a sweet nurturing side. He'll go up to kittens and pet them, sees little babies and pets them.

BRADY. He's a little snuggle bug.

PETER. (Finn) loves to snuggle, all the kids like to cuddle.

BRADY. But then he'll go rip a door off of its hinges and throw it at somebody.

PETER. Hopefully he'll grow out of it.

BOTH. (Laughs.)

BRADY. Or we'll channel it to some Olympic sport or something. Parkour, that's what we're looking at.

Is there anything that you'd like to add?

PETER. (Open adoption is) an ongoing journey, like parenting. It's never ending and you never have all the answers, so you just figure it out as you go along.

BRADY. It seems to always turn out for the best. No matter what the struggles are they always work themselves out. ■

Shari Levine is the Executive Director of Open Adoption & Family Services, and an adoptive parent of two children in open adoptions.



Brady, Peter, birthmother Sharene and newborn Finn.

Birthmother Sharene's story: "They're the best Daddies ever".

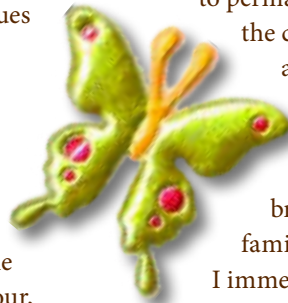


Sharene holding baby Finn.

by Shari
Levine

We first started working with Sharene in 2010, when she reached out to OA&FS as part of our collaborative relationship with Oregon

Department of Human Services. She had – and continues to have – a strong vision for her children's lives. Because of this, she was featured in our video ["Open Adoption: An Alternative to Foster Care"](#), which chronicles the early stages of Finn's adoption. We've kept in touch since then, and are so grateful to Sharene for continuing to share her experiences. So often in adoption the focus is on the moment the baby is placed. Now that her son Finn is four, Sharene, along with Finn's Dads Peter and Brady, have a more evolved open adoption story to tell. Here's hers.



Why did you choose to plan an adoption with OA&FS?

I chose to plan an adoption for Finn with Open Adoption & Family Services because I had two older children, Joan and Sophia, that were placed in foster care. Given their experience of abuse, feeling neglected and unloved and having to constantly be shuffled back to an abuser's home, I didn't want Finn to go through that. I wanted him to have a better upbringing – a good and happy life without fear. Where he can grow as a normal child and I can still try and be his mom the best I can. Picking OA&FS was one of the best things I've ever done.

What was your experience with DHS regarding your older daughters and foster care?

My girls felt unwanted and unloved. They weren't happy and would beg to come home

constantly. It was really tough to watch my children go through that and not be there every day to hold them and tell them it's okay. Based upon what happened to my girls, making the decision (to place in open adoption) was best for my son. It wasn't the easiest, but I knew I was doing the right thing. Especially after watching my daughters being shuffled into another foster home and asking "Does anybody love me? Am I wanted?" I say yes, you're wanted. I want you every day, trust me that. I tell them that all the time. It was hard.

How did Brady and Peter come to adopt your older daughters?

Things went awry in the home where my daughters were supposed to permanently live. When that family started to break up and the couple got divorced my girls were removed. Since Brady and Peter were raising their brother, I had worked hard with them to have a bond with my girls. Every time Brady and Peter came to visit me they would also visit Joan and Sophia. The girls could see their brother, spend time with him and bond with the whole family. When I got the call that the girls had been removed, I immediately called Brady and Peter and told them what was going on. Brady said, "Let me call Peter. We're going to talk and we'll call you back." And that's what they did. They stood up and took my girls, and have been wonderful fathers to them. The best daddies ever, and great role models. I couldn't ask for better fathers.



Watch Video: Sharene's Interview

What does having an open adoption with ongoing visits mean to you?

It means that I get to be a part of my kids' life. I see them grow and experience things. I may not get to be there every day, but I still enjoy being involved through pictures, videos, text messages and phone calls. I visit my kids every three months and am with them for a whole day. We go out, have lots of fun and make lots of memories. We have such a wonderful time. And the bond is strong. They're always happy and excited to see their mom.

Can you share any memorable moments of your time together?

Oh, there's so many! I have great pictures of them playing together, running around, eating lunch. We go to parks, museums, the zoo, and have a blast! We just had the time of our lives. When I took Finn's biological dad to meet him for the first time it was really great. We all went to the agency's main office in Portland and Finn bonded to his birthfather instantly. It was adorable.

What do you appreciate most about Brady and Peter?

I think most of all the hard work, the dedication, the consideration that they have for me as well. And the fact that even after adopting my son, they also took on Joan and Sophia. That never happens. They have been the children's rock. I don't think I could ever be more grateful for two men in my life who have stepped up to the plate. It really shows what it means to be the world's greatest fathers. And they truly are. I made the best decision ever picking them the day I read their letter. I still to this day stand by my words – they are the ones. They've followed through with

everything they've said in their letter. They've gone above and beyond and more. They're just two amazing men. I will forever be in their debt. They're the reasons my kids are growing up happy, healthy, and normal children. I couldn't ask for anything more.

How do you feel when you spend time together?

I feel like we're a family. We get along great, we laugh, we joke. My relationship with them is amazing. I talk to them constantly. We text or instant message each other just about every day. Peter is really awesome about sending me pictures and videos of the kids. It's great when I'll be off doing something and my phone buzzes with a text message from Peter. I'll open it up, and it's a picture of the kids or a video of them playing soccer, running their little hearts out going for the goal. It's the greatest thing ever.

What are your hopes and dreams for your children in this open adoption relationship?

That they can see that three different people can work together, and strive to give them the best that they possibly can. And know that they are truly loved. And that we truly work and communicate together for them. The greatest thing is how Brady and Peter have involved me. There's never anything I have to worry about. I'm always right there, even if I'm a couple of miles away. They're awesome. ■

Shari Levine is the Executive Director of Open Adoption & Family Services, and an adoptive parent of two children in open adoptions. Answers were edited for clarity.



The year in review: Open adoptee video project caps agency's 30th anniversary.



Shari Levine

2015 marks the agency's 30th year, an incredible milestone. Over the past three decades, we have become a national leader in adoption with our unique high-integrity open adoption model. We've redefined what adoption can, and should be: an inclusive process of entrustment that holds the child's needs at its center.

To celebrate our 30th anniversary, we've looked back to the teens and young adults we placed in open adoption families years ago. We asked them a series of questions about what it was like to grow up in an open adoption. They've shared their stories in a video diary format, which we bring to you in [this compilation](#).

This was a deeply gratifying project that affirmed for us how profoundly meaningful an open adoption can be for everyone involved, mostly the child. Their overarching message was how grateful they are, not because they were "rescued by their adoptive parents", like many would assume. But instead, they're so appreciative that [open adoption \(OA&FS-style\)](#) exists, providing their birthparents with a process to hand-select a family for their child and stay in their child's life. It meant the world to them to have "all of the pieces to their puzzle". They don't have to search, or wonder, or fear they had been abandoned or rejected. Instead, their birthparents are right there letting them know how truly cherished they are, and will always be.

Over 30 years ago, we set out to create an open adoption model that is truly child-centered. To hear back from the now grown children themselves that we succeeded, is deeply affirming. It demonstrates to us that the path we've hand-carved has genuinely met the needs of these children and the birth and adoptive families that surround them. We hope you'll join us in celebrating our first 30 years of high-integrity, heart-felt open adoptions.

Shari Levine

Shari Levine
Executive Director

National Exposure

National Pro-Choice Adoption Collaborative, (NPAC). We established a new partnership with Friends in Adoption, a Vermont adoption agency that shares our philosophy, as the [National Pro-Choice Adoption Collaborative](#). Our agencies are the only two in the country that offer all-options pregnancy counseling, embrace diversity, have fully open adoptions and lifelong services.

**National Pro-Choice
Adoption Collaborative**

Attorney Alliances. As part of our national service expansion, we've reached out to partner with adoption attorneys throughout the country. They provide the state-specific legal expertise and we bring the philosophical framework of open adoption and well-prepared families, who genuinely want an ongoing relationship with the birth family.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Working in conjunction with Friends in Adoption as NPAC, we've approached [PPFA](#) to make our two agencies their online partners for adoption referrals nationally. Some Planned Parenthood affiliates currently partner with agencies that don't share their pro-choice values, others default to the adoption section of the national website. We submitted suggested copy edits to the adoption section of PPFA's national website. Discussions continue.

Abortion Care Network. This [group of independent abortion care providers](#) has accepted OA&FS as an allied organization and will include us in the referrals list on their website.

Other Networking. We've offered to provide interviews and/or video links to [Adoptive Families Magazine/Building Your Family](#), and [Creating a Family](#). We've encouraged them to write articles/blogs about our unique programs and projects. The agency is also supporting the [Donaldson Adoption Institute](#) in their new "[Let's Adopt Reform](#)" initiative in an open adoption expert capacity.

Local Exposure

Coalition of Oregon Adoption Agencies (COAA). [This organization](#) welcomes all adoption agencies in the state and has been very active for at least 25 years. It has served to bring the agencies together in a collaborative forum to review adoption



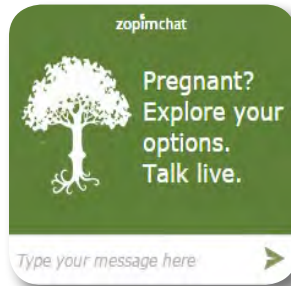
legislation, licensing issues and the ever-evolving field of adoption. Shari Levine is a past-president of COAA, and has once again taken this leadership position.

Planned Parenthood of the Columbia-Willamette (PPCW).

Shari Levine met with Stacy Cross and Rian Frachele at [PPCW](#) to initiate a partnership. This was well-received, with PPCW providing emails for managers of all their clinics for the agency to contact them directly. Outreach presentations were completed in Portland, Beaverton, Salem, Vancouver and Bend. We continue to work with PPCW to provide our materials to every pregnant patient and launch an online partnership on their website.

Reaching Expectant Parents

Live Chat. A new program – [Zopim](#) – was installed into the home page, pregnant and birthparent sections of our site. This allows visitors to chat online in real time with a counselor, and is staffed to seamlessly support expectant parents.



Birthfathers' Brochure. The "[Fathers Matter](#)" brochure was updated by taking a fresh look at how to best communicate with millennial males in their mid- to late 20s. This led us to develop a direct infographic approach in which information is segmented and steps are clearly defined.



Spanish Take One Cards. A [Spanish version](#) of this popular collateral piece was produced at request of outreach providers and is especially popular in Eastern Oregon.

Reaching Prospective Adoptive Parents

Identified Adoptions Booklet. All information for this service is now in one piece and clearly compares the strength of OA&FS identified adoption offerings vs. attorneys or other agencies.

OA&FS Website

Expectant Parent Online Inquiry Form. Content was added to [the landing page](#) for these forms to increase their relevancy within Google searches. The majority of Adwords text ads now link to this page so expectant parents can connect with OA&FS faster and easier.

Website Reboot. Started the steps to transition current website to a [responsive design](#) in which content will reshape itself based on the device used to view it – desktop, mobile, tablet. Chose [WordPress](#) as the new platform and selected a design theme that uses current best practices for page layouts, scrolling effects, navigation, etc.

Online Marketing

Adwords Campaigns. [These text ads](#) that appear next to Google search results were optimized with the assistance of a search engine marketing professional. His methodology was to decrease competition among our campaigns that were using similar search terms, use Adwords keyword and demographic filter tools to increase lead quality, enhance ads with extensions that gain us additional lines at no additional cost and carefully set keyword bids so our ads stay in top three positions without overpaying.

Remarketing Display Banners. Built ads with graphics which are shown only to people who have visited our website within the past 90 days, or have viewed one of our YouTube videos. Known as [remarketing](#) this ensures they're reaching an audience who will find our message relevant, and remind them of our services.

Infographics

This popular style of communication was added to our marketing toolkit. [Infographics](#) use words and pictures to effectively present complex information quickly and clearly. Infographics were created that address changes in adoption, unplanned pregnancy, how to choose an adoption agency, how our adoption programs are unique, fully open adoptions vs. other adoptions and FAQs about open adoption. These pieces have been repurposed for our website, social media and emails directed to a variety of audiences.

Social Media

Tumblr. An [OA&FS Tumblr feed](#) was started to showcase videos, infographics and agency services in this multimedia and microblogging platform that's very popular with young adults.



Vimeo. We established a [presence on Vimeo](#), a video sharing website similar to YouTube. This allows us to increase exposure for the open adoptee video project and other videos.

Video

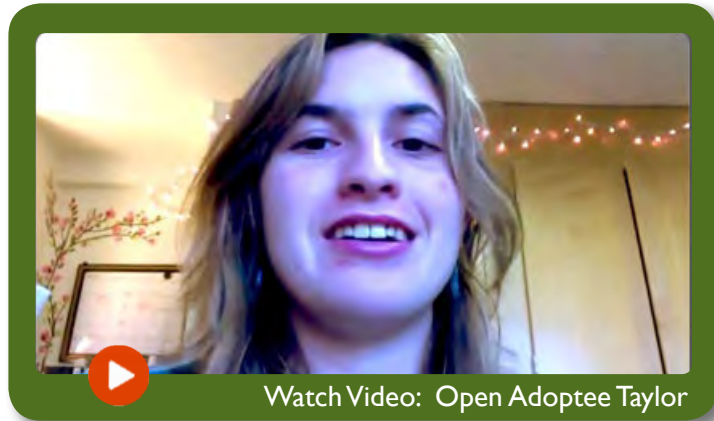
Open Adoptee Video Project. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of OA&FS, we asked teen and young adult OA&FS adoptees to share their adoption experiences via video diaries.



Nine adoptees submitted footage, with each being produced into an individual video and a compilation. With [these exclusive videos](#), they're sharing in their own words what this experience has been

like for them. A launch plan was developed that includes emails to the OA&FS community and pitches to adoption-related websites and other media outlets to run stories and/or links to our videos.

Updated DVD. A new DVD was pressed that combines OA&FS process videos with the new open adoptee experiences videos. This was distributed to all outreach providers and open adoption community members who came to the agency's 30th anniversary picnics.



Events

AAAA/AARTA Conference. Shari Levine and [Friends in Adoption](#) Founder Dawn Smith Pliner gave a presentation -- "Adoption in the 21st Century" -- to over 150 adoption attorneys at the [American Academy of Adoption Attorney's](#) national conference. They shared our agencies' unique open adoption model and discussed how attorneys can successfully collaborate with us. We also purchased side-by-side exhibitor tables with FIA under a "National Pro-Choice Adoption Collaborative" banner to publicly establish our partnership.

30th Anniversary. The keystone initiative to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of OA&FS was the adoptee video project. We also held 30th anniversary-themed community picnics at which DVDs of the [Open Adoptee Experiences compilation video](#) were distributed.

Birthmothers' Retreat. This special occasion held on the Saturday before Mothers' Day had 14 attendees who participated in ice breakers and small group discussions.

Legislation

Oregon Law Commission. Shari Levine participated in the second phase of the [OLC adoption workgroup](#). This has consisted of combing over other parts of the Oregon adoption statute to discuss and recommend changes. These were presented to the legislature in the form of [HB 2365](#). Throughout this complex process Shari has worked with a variety of adoption agency representatives, adoption attorneys, adult adoptees, birthparents, adoptive parents, DHS representatives and DOJ workers.

Outreach Efforts

Annual Mailing. Service providers received our annual spring agency update in two forms this year -- email and US mail. This gave us two opportunities to get our message to this key audience. Both featured the new Adoptee Experiences video. Following email deployment, packages delivered that included a DVD with the adoptee video plus our cornerstone program videos, a flier reinforcing the benefits of working with OA&FS and "take one" cards in Spanish and English.

Outreach Coordinator. The agency hired a dedicated Outreach Coordinator -- Rene Rice -- whose job focus is to nurture and expand our database of outreach contacts. She works to ensure our outreach efforts are meeting the needs of the organizations we reach out to.

Counseling Program

Origins Therapy. Launched in fall after reaching HIPPA compliance. [This program](#) provides counseling for individuals and families involved in adoption, surrogacy and reproductive technologies. Our services are advertised via online listings in [Psychology Today](#) and [Good Therapy](#). One counselor in each office meets with Origins Therapy clients.

Development

Rewards Program Email. An appeal email was sent to the OA&FS community asking them to add our agency to retailer rewards programs for non-profits. These programs, such as [Amazon Smile](#) and [Fred Meyer Community Rewards](#), give customers an opportunity to support the agency while they shop. ■



Wow, what a year!

We're so proud of the projects initiated by the agency this year. These ongoing efforts enable us to make a difference in the world of adoption. Thank you for the donations that make this progressive work possible.



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Thanks for your generous support of Open Adoption & Family Services!

Gifts of \$1,000 +

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Anonymous; United Way of
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Arthur Donnelly - in honor of
Chandler/Baker family
Lynn Douma; In celebration of
Hoppe/Weckesser Marriage
Marilyn Flick; in honor of Jan
Jamieson who speaks every
year in her classroom

William & Amy Prestia
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Foundation; Standard
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Steven & Christine Snider;
In celebration of Hoppe/
Weckesser Marriage
John Stanley, in memory of
Robert Olson, MD
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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.

WHY DO YOU GIVE TO OA&FS?

On a sunny weekend day, you're most likely to find Matt, Ben, five-year-old Zachary, and almost-two Cordelia at the zoo. Cordelia adores animals of all shapes and sizes - she's just as fascinated by the ducks as the tigers, and Zachary takes his big brother responsibilities very seriously, pointing out everything he sees to her. Zachary also loves going to the beach with Matt to collect 'treasures' in a pail, while Ben takes Cordelia out after her nap for a frozen yogurt break.

Zachary's birthmother lives only twenty minutes away, but Cordelia's birthparents are in the Midwest. It's meant managing two different styles of relationship: Matt and Ben schedule time with Zachary's birthmother more casually, whenever everyone can get together (though she never misses the annual Zach's birthday/Super Bowl party), and make scheduled, longer trips every other year to visit Cordelia's birthparents. Birthparents, grandparents, aunts and uncles are all friends of Matt and Ben on Facebook and get a steady stream of cute kid pictures and stories, which helps everyone feel connected, especially people hundreds of miles away. "One of the things that really warms our hearts is the way our children's birth families have embraced not just their child, but their sibling as well. It's been an expansion of what family means for everyone involved."

When did you first hear about OA&FS? What attracted you to the agency?

We're pretty sure OA&FS was first 'the agency Dan Savage used' to us, though neither of us can remember who actually told us that anymore. We came to the first informational meeting in Seattle and the concept of openness in adoption (which seemed much less mainstream seven years ago than it is now) clicked for us immediately; Matt has four adopted cousins and we both have adopted friends as well, and that desire for connection with their birth families was present in so many of them to greater and lesser degrees. It felt like the best possible outcome for everyone concerned.

What do you appreciate about the OA&FS mission? What aspects of the agency's work are meaningful to you?

We really appreciate OA&FS's focus on the well-being of every part of



Zachary, Matt, Cordelia and Ben, (l-r).

the adoptive triad. Adoption is a life-changing experience for everyone involved and we would never have been comfortable proceeding with it without feeling completely confident that the agency had the best interests of the birth family firmly present in their minds. We felt that every step of the way with OA&FS: the first woman who chose us ultimately decided to parent, and as hard a time as that was for us, it ultimately strengthened our confidence in the agency and our own principles. Knowing that the agency would respect and honor a decision to parent made us sure that when our time came to be chosen again that it was a fully informed decision made freely.

Why do you choose to donate to OA&FS?

We want to support the outreach OA&FS does and help them spread their visibility. Our daughter's birth family specifically wanted to place her with a same-sex couple, an option that was not legal under their state's laws at the time. Having OA&FS as an option meant that they got an outcome more in line with their desires than local agencies would have been able to offer. We also believe strongly that women facing an unplanned pregnancy and unsure what to do deserve to have all their options placed in front of them in a nonjudgmental manner, and we trust OA&FS to do that.



WHY DO YOU GIVE TO OA&FS?

How has your open adoption experience changed your family's life?

On a practical level, having access to our children's medical histories and to genetic relatives saved them from the prospect of a few unpleasant-at-best medical procedures (you haven't lived until you've sent a text to a woman you've known less than three months asking her to measure her head circumference), but that's just the surface. Open

adoption to us is another expression of our belief that it's up to each of us to choose what relationships are most meaningful, and to embrace those possibilities even when they're unexpected. Our children are learning—we're learning too—that family is what you make it. ■

Your donations make agency projects possible.

[Please support OA&FS!](#)



Zachary and Cordelia's family album.



Clockwise from top left: Zachary, birthparents Zoe and Tim with Matt, Ben and newborn Cordelia, Cordelia, Ben, Zachary and Cordelia.

Service statistics: the numbers behind the mission.

July 2010 through June 2015

Open Adoption & Family Services (OA&FS) is a pro-choice, nonprofit adoption agency with offices in Oregon and Washington. We provide free, all-options pregnancy counseling for pregnant women and couples, plan open adoptions at no cost to birthparents and offer lifelong services for our clients. We've completed more than 1,350 open adoptions since the agency was founded in 1985.

Placements

- Average number of placements per year: 41.
- 26% of placements were with gay or lesbian families; 4% were with single parents.
- 23% of placements were "last minute"-when adoption planning begins at birth.
- Adoptive parents waited an average of 15 months between entering the waiting families pool and placement.

Children Placed

- 93% of children placed were newborns; 5% were under three months, 2% were between three and six months.
- Most of the children had little to no prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol. 36% had no exposure; 26% had mild; 19% had moderate; and 18% had severe exposure.
- Of the children placed, 64% were full Caucasian; 13% had Hispanic heritage; 4% had Asian heritage; 7% had African American heritage; 1% had Native American heritage; 6% were of other ethnicities.

Expectant Parents

- In fiscal year 2014-15, 329 expectant parents contacted us to inquire about our services.

Birthparents

- Birthparents received an average of 8.5 weeks of counseling prior to adoption planning.
- 55% of placements had pregnancy-related expenses at an average of \$1,882.
- Open Adoption Agreements had an average of three visits per year.
- Birthfathers signed consents to adoption in 53% of placements.
- The average age of birthmothers was 25 years old, 28 for consenting birthfathers and 38 for adoptive parents.

In FY 2013-14 OA&FS staff has ...

- Hosted events attended by 414 members of the open adoption community including a birthmothers' retreat and our first birthfathers' gathering.
- Delivered 52 presentations about open adoption to 599 service providers and 195 students, (high school and college).
- Fulfilled 220 organization requests for marketing materials. We also mailed materials to 993 service providers during our spring outreach campaign. ■

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Love our volunteers!

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who contributed their time, talents and expertise to support the agency's mission last year. Thanks to all the OA&FS community members who donated their photographs in this year's annual report, the agency website and other publications. If you would like to volunteer or donate photographs, please contact us at info@openadopt.org.

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OA&FS adoptee Tristan.

5200 SW Macadam Avenue, Suite

1-800-772-1115

Para Español 1-800-985-6763

www.openadopt.org

