



OPEN ADOPTION & FAMILY SERVICES 2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT

Lyra, open adoptee.

*"The big, beautiful
one-of-a-kind family
I have been so blessed
with has always
made me feel seen,
safe and loved."*

- Adoptee Brianna, 22

Open Adoption THE FAMILY YOU CHOOSE.

Making room for adoption.

by Shari Levine

The traditional family of a mom, dad, two kids and a dog is now the minority in the US. Our collective culture recognizes that families come in all shapes and sizes. This is regularly depicted in the media and widely accepted.

Families are messy and complicated and a source of great joy and love. Since half of all marriages end in divorce, it's extremely likely that those parents will re-marry or re-partner, and the children will have step-parents. Perhaps as a culture, we've normalized these relationships out of necessity because they're so common. There's even Hallmark cards for step-parents.

Due to economic pressures, multi-generational families are now living together and everyone pitches in. We've never been more keenly aware that it takes a village.

I'm an adoptive mom and a step-mom in a big extended family, and I couldn't be happier. So let's talk about that word "adoption". As our culture has opened its arms to embrace all kinds of families, why has adoption been left out in the cold? Why do adoptive parents still hear, "You let the birthparents visit? Isn't that confusing to the child?" And birthparents are still met with shame and judgment if they are actively involved in the adoptive



family's life. These negative assumptions of adoption prevail, despite the collective voice of adoptees asserting how valuable it is to have their birth families welcomed into their lives from the beginning.

When we become partners with someone, we readily embrace our partner's extended family and friends. We could never imagine a world in which we'd say "you're my partner now, so I want you to cut off all ties with your family and friends". We already know how to be hospitious with someone new to us, but dear to someone we love. We do it all the time, and we're good at it. Why is this notion met with so much resistance in adoption?

Recently an OA&FS adoptive mom Meghan said, **"We really want our child to feel his adoptive family and his birth family are all his family. There doesn't need to be a distinction between the real family, or the not real family, or the less important family. There's so many different types of families—and there's no other family type where someone is asked to disappear."**

Wow, I'd never heard this sentiment expressed with such simplicity and clarity. This made complete sense to me. I wanted to hear the reaction and thoughts of other adoptive parents, birthparents and open adoptees in our community, so we asked for their feedback. We found that our community is bursting with insights and revelations!

“There’s so many different types of families —
and there’s no other family type where
someone is asked to disappear”.

How does this idea play out in
your open adoption?

Meaghan McCracken
BIRTHMOTHER

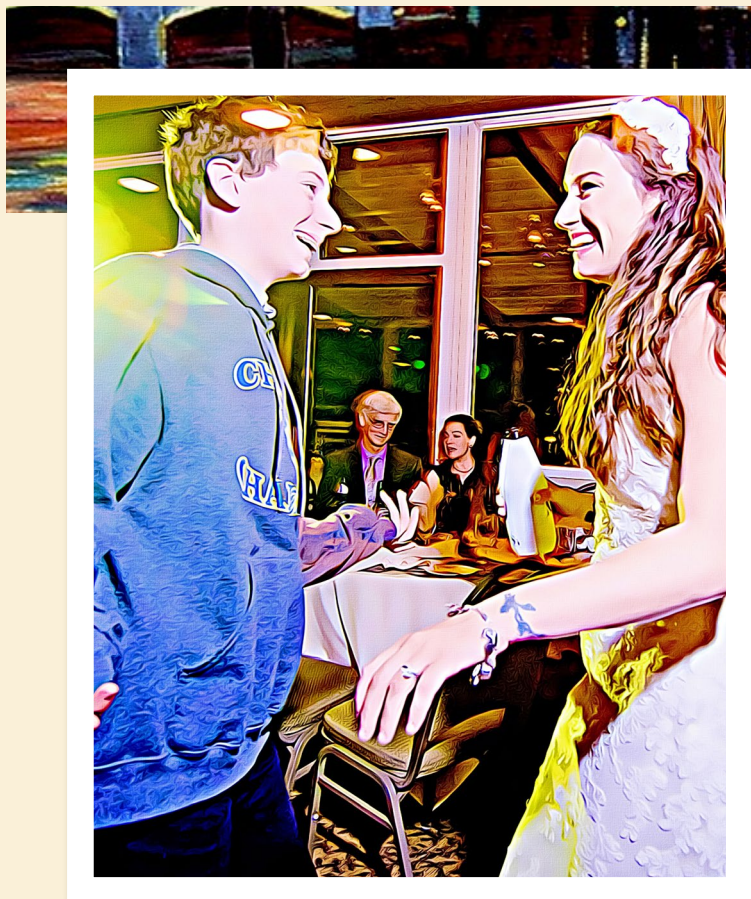
“It is as though the pain of placement, or infertility, or motherhood, or loneliness, or loss was something to compare and divide women. It is easier to stay silent than to reach to each other with that pain. It is that pain that makes women want to disappear.

But we are women and we are mothers and we need each other. It’s in the soft ways we welcome each other, lift each other up and deeply listen, that birthmothers will reappear and we will find our adopted family; our chosen family, is so much bigger than we thought.

I think of the poem “our children are not our children they are the sum of life’s longing itself”. Birthmothers are trying to help this child flourish and fly. People fear that birth parents are going to play tug of war with the child, but instead we’re trying to join the adoptive parents in holding a net under this child as big as possible, so he can have a wider ability to be in this world.”



Adoptee Rowan (center left) with adoptive parents Meghan and Levi, birth sibling Soren, Meaghan’s husband Jeff and birthmother Meaghan (l-r).



Adoptee Zac with birthmother Katelyn.

Katelyn Berry BIRTHMOTHER

"To me this quote means Truth. I loved the idea of open adoption because it doesn't make birth parents out to be "bad guys" or not good enough. It leaves the door open for honesty, love and acceptance. It creates a larger family to love the child. It keeps us all accountable in our relationship with each other and the child, it puts the child first.

I placed almost 17 years ago, and have never regretted it. This fall, my husband and I will be welcoming our own child into this large, loving family. Zac told me on Mother's Day that he is so excited and I am going to be a great mom. That means the world coming from the child you placed with an amazing family. That he knows that I did and still do everything out of love is magical."



Molly Hayden ADOPTIVE PARENT

"My daughter has one big family that is made up of the families of me, my husband, her birth mother, and her birth father. Each of those families is made up of a bunch of different kinds of people, so if you look at all of us together, you find dancers, animal-lovers, swimmers and readers. There are people I adore, people I admire, people who have helped me. Sure, there are a few people I'd rather not spend that much time with, but again, those people show up in *all* families. The boundaries of surnames and blood have no actual effect on love and friendship and support. You can find family anywhere."



"This is a photo of my daughter, me and her grandmother (on her birth father's side), who all just happen to like red cowgirl boots."



Adoptee Willa with grandmother Karen, birthmom Elizabeth and adoptive mom Marla, (l-r)

Elizabeth Morelli **BIRTHMOTHER**

"For my child, we have always looked at it as "Team Willa." Our primary focus is what is best for her. During the early years, probably until she was roughly five or so, when she was able to start taking a more active role in the relationship, the focus was mostly on my developing a foundation with her parents and their families. It feels like this helped greatly in my relationship with my daughter, as she could see the trust and friendship between her parents and me."

Brianna Johnson **OPEN ADOPTEE**

"Open adoption has brought me clarity on what "real family" means. My familial connections go so much deeper than blood; my family was not just born to each other, we chose each other. I hit the "real family" jackpot. Our bonds are built on the things I think family is supposed to be about: love, trust, and care. The big, beautiful, one-of-a-kind family I have been so blessed with, has always made me feel seen. They have made me feel safe. They have made me feel loved. These are the things I think about when I picture family. My adoption didn't strip me of a "real family", it brought my real family together."



Adoptee Brianna with birth grandfather Barry.



Birthmother Kayla.

Kayla Mathers BIRTHMOTHER

"I think the child benefits greatly from birthparents and adoptive parents being open and staying close. I can tell you that my daughter's parents mean the absolute world to me!

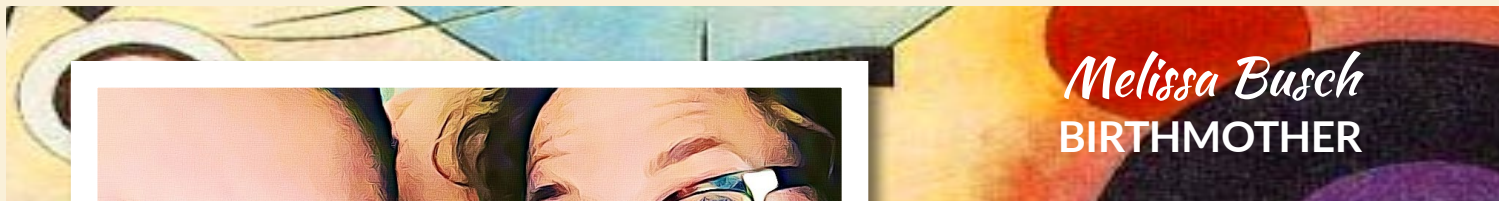
Through the years, we have made an effort to cultivate our own relationship; independent of our daughter. (Especially as she got older and "too cool" to hang with us!) I most definitely consider them my family and wouldn't trade it for anything. I hope that others get to experience the wonder of this type of special relationship."

Sage Carter BIRTHMOTHER

"I met The Moms the day Mateo was born. It wasn't planned that way; I'd gone into labor early. I needed them to be there to hold him first and they needed to catch a flight from the east coast to Portland to make it in time. The beauty of this beginning is that we had two weeks in Portland together to get to know one another and build the foundation of our new family. The thing that sticks with me to this day is the very wise words Jen had about ownership. Not one of us "owned" this child. We were each there to help create a space for him to grow and thrive in love. It made complete sense to me at the time and still rings true for us now. What also struck me during those weeks was how sincerely open The Moms were to my input and offerings. I could not be more proud of how we started our family, with honesty, humility and love."



Adoptee Teo with birthmom Sage (top) and adoptive parents Erin and Jen, (l-r).



Melissa Busch BIRTHMOTHER

"In open adoption, we have the opportunity, unlike any other, to choose the family we will be connected to for the rest of our lives. It is in the choosing of the shared values and commitment to one another that we make a family, and I can say whole-heartedly that those are the things that have been the driving force in my open adoption. As a birthmother and a parenting mother, I know all families come with their own unique qualities and challenges, but it is not biology or genetic ties that make

one family any more authentic than the next. It is the embracing and acceptance of each other, the valuing of each person's contribution that really makes a family. No matter how a family comes to be or what a family looks like, family is family."

Adoptee Brianna with birthmother Melissa, (l-r).



"We have all seen how open adoption opens the door to countless ways to build a "real family." None of us is more or less important than the other. Most importantly, our children share a profound confidence that they have always been loved. Open adoption is a path to the unexpected. It is a path to choosing a way forward, for birth families and adoptive families. Open adoption gives all of us the power to be family, and the choice to define it, simply, as family."



Adoptee Brianna as a baby with adoptive parents Greg and Jan, brother Alex and birthfather Steve (l-r)



Adoptees Carter and Trenton (left) with adoptive parents Tonya and Jamie, birthmother Angela and birth sibling Keirsten with husband Mark and daughter.

Angela Joy BIRTHMOTHER

"When I think of this statement I think of us as a uniquely woven rope made with special and unbreakable strands coming together as one, never to be broken."

David Stitzhal ADOPTIVE PARENT

"When I was first wading into the world of open adoption, I had what was for me an epiphany. I am no more (or less) related to my spouse than I would be to the child I would parent through adoption. And I realized that I deeply love my spouse, more than anyone, so of course I would have the capacity to deeply love my child.

Akin to this thought (pun intended), I realized as an adult that when I was a kid, some of my favorite aunts and uncles - people to whom I felt incredibly close - turned out to be married to the person that was biologically related to me. When I later understood I wasn't biologically related to a given person, that didn't change my love for them, or my sense of them as family, or my desire to grow up and be just like them. (I love you, Aunt Vera.) The human capacity for love is huge, but social constructions that put emphasis on biology can get in the way of letting the love flow. Open adoption helps us dismantle those constructs and the mental barriers they support, and lets love and connection follow its own path."



Adoptee Kaya with adoptive parent David.



Allie Phillips ADOPTIVE PARENT

"Seeing Ethan with his birth mother Megan, I cannot imagine a world where he didn't get the chance to have a relationship with her. He's so fascinated by her, and she's so generous with her affection and warmth every time she is around him. We are so lucky Megan is a part of our lives."

Adoptee Ethan with birthmother Megan.

A CLOSING THOUGHT ...

In the words of Sage Carter, our new Board president, "At OA&FS and in our family we are all respected as an integral part of raising a child. As a birthmom, I am no less important, I just play a different role and OA&FS taught us how to boldly make space for everyone". So let's venture boldly into our wider communities and teach by example that open adoption families are just as valid and real as any other. Let's normalize open adoption relationships and make room for their inherent complexities and profound love. ■



Why DO YOU GIVE TO OA&FS?



Adoptee Liam at his high school graduation with adoptive mom Karen, girlfriend Joanna and adoptive dad Tom, (l-r).

We are so appreciative of all of our donors, and are especially grateful for long-time donors like Tom and Karen Jantzen. Here are some insights into why and how they support OA&FS.

When did you first hear about OA&FS?

We first heard about OA&FS from friends living in Eugene who had friends who had adopted through OA&FS. We began our California family home study in January 1998 and attended your two-day seminar in March 1998.

What attracted you to the agency?

We felt that an open adoption would be best for the child, as well as for the birthparents and our whole family. Everyone we dealt with at your agency gave the impression that an open adoption is a child-centered endeavor.

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

Having several friends and acquaintances who were adopted but knew little or nothing of their birthparents, we appreciate the honesty and inclusive experience of open adoption. Initially,

we attended a couple summer picnics both before and after our adoption. It was helpful and heartwarming to be with other families sharing this exciting experience.

Why do you choose to donate to OA&FS?

We whole-heartedly support your successful 34 years of facilitating open adoptions as well as all your outreach efforts.

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

We are so glad we chose an open adoption, and we feel the relationship with our son's birth family has enabled him to know his story and feel loved and appreciated by all involved. ■



The YEAR IN REVIEW.

Building the model for America's next era of adoption.

I'm so proud of this agency in so many ways.

I'm proud of the families we bring together in which everyone is honored and included; our hard-working staff and board who pour their heart and soul into our innovative services; and the far-reaching impact we've had locally and nationally as we've envisioned and realized a truly progressive model that has transformed the field of open adoption.

At OA&FS we have never asked birthparents to be "invisible" or to 'disappear', in fact we seek their wisdom and perspective as we continue to evolve. At OA&FS, the value we place on the experiences of birthparents is evident in the leadership roles they hold on our board of directors.

We've reached an important milestone.

I'm absolutely brimming with pride to announce that we're the only adoption agency in the U.S. with a birthmom as our Board President!

OA&FS birthmom, Sage Carter is our board president, birthmom Melissa Busch is our vice-president, and birthfather Garret Garfield is the first birthfather on our board. We want to ensure that our programs reflect their insights, in fact all of our board members are living open adoptions.

Sage Carter is the executive assistant to the head of the Oregon Episcopal School. She has a Master's in Education with a focus in public policy.

At OA&FS we trust women to make their own reproductive decisions, and we trust birthparents to have leadership roles on our board. That means our services and



Shari Levine

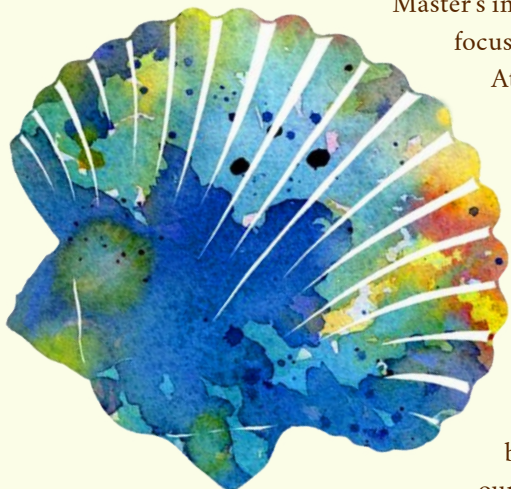
programs are shaped and endorsed by birthparents. We are proud to have Sage Carter at the helm.

Our work tells the story.

I invite you to read about all of the projects we've launched this past year. They are a heartfelt reflection of the values we hold dear: inclusion of all people; compassion for the needs of others; and a deep respect for humanity.

Warm Regards,

**Shari Levine
Executive Director**



Child Welfare Council

In June, OA&FS Executive Director Shari Levine presented to attorneys, judges, Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) caseworkers, Oregon Department of Justice (Oregon DOJ) workers and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) workers at the Child Welfare Council meeting. Through this opportunity we were able to reach this influential group of child welfare decision-makers for the first time. Our Open Adoption Alternative to State Adoption initiative sparked an in-depth discussion around when and how child welfare professionals can provide information to at-risk moms before their child is removed and placed in state custody. We believe at-risk moms deserve access to transparent information about all of their options: reunification with their child, a state adoption, or a truly open adoption where the birthparents are an integral part of their child's life.

To support DHS in having a frank discussion with at-risk parents, we developed a training including key questions that caseworkers can ask pregnant or parenting moms to start a conversation. These are: How do you feel about parenting at this time? What do you think about meeting the reunification requirements? What do you want to know about alternatives to parenting, foster care or state adoption?



Senator Sara Gelser

Oregon Legislative Initiatives

Shari has been working closely with Oregon State Senator Sara Gelser regarding our Open Adoption as an Alternative to State Adoption initiative. We were thrilled when in March, Senator Gelser created Senate Bill 814, which includes our request that

at-risk pregnant women are provided with information about all of their options before their baby is removed at the hospital. On March 7, this bill received a public hearing with the Senate Human Services committee in Salem. Shari presented on open adoption, and testified in favor of the bill. Birthmom Angela Joy, who accessed our open adoption as an alternative to state adoption pathway 10 years ago to ensure her twins didn't enter foster care, shared her story. Birthmom and OA&FS Board Vice President Melissa Busch spoke about the importance of moms being able to choose the family, form a close friendship with them and be actively involved in their child's life. Sage Carter, OA&FS Board President, submitted written testimony.



Melissa Busch

Senator Gelser is a rare compassionate, diplomatic and conscientious legislator. And importantly she is also an adoptive mother. Senator Gelser provided testimony in which she said: "I've often wondered what would happen if we had a more flexible idea of family. In the state system moms are either a parent to a child or not a parent at all. There's an iron wall that drops." She compared her two daughters' adoption experiences: one is open and the other is not. Her second daughter craved information and connection; when she turned 18, she gained access and the door opened. Senator Gelser said, "I have a deep and abiding interest in making those connections happen. We can have as much love



as we want.... If we could start rethinking the voice the birthparents have even when they go through the DHS process, that would be a really great thing."

SB 814 is very ambitious and far-reaching. It would create an "exit ramp" that moms could

access at any point in the system, giving them a path to planning an open adoption through a private agency. As written, DHS had concerns about the bill as it would admittedly alter their process. After the committee heard testimony, Senator Gelser was concerned that there wasn't enough time to rewrite the bill to everyone's satisfaction and still meet deadline. So Shari edited

the bill, simplifying it to focus on DHS providing open adoption information to moms prior to removing a child under the age of three, and gave that revision to Senator Gelser. Our hope is that this new version of SB 814 will be reconsidered by state lawmakers at their next legislative session.

The State of Foster Care

DHS is tasked with, and struggling to, provide care to the children in the state's foster care system, as outlined in [this audit](#). In this past year, DHS has resorted to sending some of Oregon's most vulnerable children out of state to for-profit residential agencies that are run like correctional facilities, in which children are commonly physically and medically restrained. This option is not only heartbreaking and further traumatizing to these children, it's extremely expensive.

To correct course, Senator Gelser introduced a bill to prohibit DHS from placing kids out of state, and to bring all children



back to Oregon. She stated, "If I treated my child this way, would DHS come and get my child from me? We wouldn't tolerate this. We have taken these children from their families." On April 16, [a class-action lawsuit was filed](#) that details

stories of foster children being neglected or harmed while under DHS care. Ten foster children representing approximately 8,000 children in state care are the plaintiffs. They sued DHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht, Director of Child Welfare Marilyn Jones and Governor Kate Brown. [As of June 2019 Marilyn Jones is no longer employed by DHS.](#)

Outreach

Fortunately, we've created a solid and trusting referral network among service providers who serve at-risk moms and their children. We haven't been able to change the child welfare system, but by providing moms with access to our services before DHS involvement, we're making a real difference in their lives and the lives of their children. To spread the word about our progressive services, last year we presented to over 90 community organizations, and reached over a 1,300 service providers.



Empower pregnant women to make informed decisions.

Set up a free training at your work site and get continuing education for nurses and social workers. [4.5 CEU contact hours available!](#)

Understanding Infant Adoption Training

We were approved to be trainers for Understanding Infant Adoption (UIA), a program that's funded by a federal grant.

The UIA curriculum was developed to present to hospital social workers and nurses. The program's goals are to help hospitals improve basic counseling skills and provide neutral, factual information and non-directive counseling on each of the options and referral on any option the woman chooses. The trainings were customized in length to 3 or 4.5 hours, for which participants earn continuing education credits. We sent packets to introduce UIA training to 144 hospitals in Oregon and Washington, and have delivered seven presentations to 70 participants. We also customized the PowerPoint presentation initially created by the UIA program organizers to better meet the needs of our attendees.



2018 Appeal

Our 2018 appeal letter focused on redefining family with a lead story that featured [the open adoption constellation of young adult adoptee Kaya Stitzhal](#). The long-term relationship between her birth and adoptive families is inspiring! We extended the reach of this annual appeal with a Giving Tuesday

social media campaign. Tiles emphasizing each of the four tenets of our mission were produced and posted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr. This campaign was followed by an email and Facebook fundraiser that deployed on Giving Tuesday.



Contributions helped with projects such as webinar creation, presentation material production, website platform updates and boosting our presence in Google search results. We very much appreciate all the support that was given!

Outreach Mailings

In October we deployed a fall email to our outreach contacts. This featured our newest video "[The Power of Choice in Adoption](#)". For our spring outreach mailing in May, the focus was on birthmother advocates and activists and featured OA&FS birthmoms Melissa, Sage and Angela. We emphasized their testimony at the Oregon Senate Human Resources Committee, and shared their stories via direct mail, video and email with 1,845 service providers.



materials in stock at the [Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and the Hawaiian Islands](#) (PPGNHI) affiliates. Planned Parenthood is utilizing our [full-size birthmothers'](#)

[brochure](#) in addition to our two mini-brochures, "[Pregnant? You Have Choices](#)" and "[Open Adoption: An Alternative to State Adoption](#)".

Pool Parties

We reworked our Waiting Family Gatherings to make them even more engaging, worthwhile and accessible. First, input was gathered via an online survey sent to our adoptive families. The result?

"Waiting Family Gatherings" have become "Pool Parties"! Key changes include: a two-year schedule of non-repeating topics, all offices offer the same monthly topic, nights and times have been standardized by office, we send a monthly email reminder plus publish announcements with dates and topics in our monthly Adoptive Parent Bulletins. Finally, all information, including a topic schedule, is now available on our website.



OA&FS in the Media

Adoptive mom Allie Phillips was featured in an amazing podcast about her adoption experience through OA&FS. [Listen to "Infertility, Adoption and a New Perspective"](#) an Art of Joy podcast. It's so gratifying to hear her describe our philosophy and process in her own insightful words. Knowing that our open adoption aspirations have been meaningful to her and her family is deeply inspiring to us. When our clients define us in new ways it further legitimizes us in the public's eyes. We featured this podcast in our Adoptive Parent Bulletin and posted it on our website.



Shari was interviewed at length for Abbie Goldberg's new book, "[Open Adoption and Diverse Families: Complex Relationships in the Digital Age](#)". It features the stories behind Abbie's research study, "[Transition to Adoptive Parenthood Project](#)" (TAPP), which includes OA&FS families. This is another great avenue to get our message out!

OA&FS birthmom, Meghan McCracken has fully embraced the role of being a proud advocate for openness and for truly choice-driven processes for birthmoms. She, her husband and the adoptive parents have a very open adoption that is reflected



in her words in a podcast for Real Life Adoption, "It Was so Easy to Say Yes," which dropped in March.

National Pro-Choice Adoption Collaborative (NPAC)

In July 2018 we relaunched the [NPAC website](#) with an updated design and functionality. The primary purpose of NPAC's website is to provide our national

partners with one online destination they can link to when directing their visitors to pro-choice adoption services. Once there, visitors can "sort" themselves by choosing OA&FS or our partner agency Friends in Adoption as they become more intentional about making that call. The largest of these partnerships is with [Planned Parenthood Federation of America](#), who liberally links to NPAC throughout [their adoption pages](#). In this way, expectant parents exploring adoption have the option of choosing an agency headquartered on the left or right coasts, (who both serve the entire country).

Welcome to the National Pro-Choice Adoption Collaborative, (NPAC).

We offer expectant parents:

- All Options Pro-Choice Pregnancy Counseling**
 You'll explore all your pregnancy options: parenting, abortion and adoption.
- A Safe Space**
 You can freely explore your options without pressure or judgment.
- Empathetic Counselors**
 Our counselors are highly qualified, experienced and compassionate.
- Absolute Equality is Given to All Three Pregnancy Options**
 We're here to support you no matter what decision you make. Our focus is on personal choice.

COUNSELING AND ADOPTION PROCESS
 ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS
 CONTACT AN ADOPTION AGENCY

Social Media

Private Facebook Groups were set up for waiting and adoptive families in the OA&FS community, in addition to our existing adoptee and birthparent groups. All groups include members



from all locations and are a space for sharing and support. A new OA&FS social media milestone was reached when birth grandfather Barry Busch held a Facebook Fundraiser on his page. Said

Barry, "For my birthday this year, I'm asking for donations to Open Adoption & Family Services. I've chosen this nonprofit because my first granddaughter lives and thrives in an open adoption world. It has been an unexpected blessing in my life. The mission means a lot to me, and I hope you'll consider contributing as a way to celebrate with me. Every little bit will help me reach my goal." Barry's daughter is birthmom Melissa Busch, whose heartfelt open adoption has profoundly impacted the lives of everyone involved. Visit OA&FS' social media homes on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Tumblr](#).

Birthmother Retreats

Retreats were held in Eugene, Seattle and Portland in April. Birthmoms were sent invites via mail and email. The counseling staff did a wonderful job putting together events filled with fun activities, bonding and meaningful discussions about their open adoptions.



Communications

Expectant Parent Fliers.

As our primary expectant parent audience transitions from millennials to Gen Zer's, keeping our materials fresh enables us to connect with them using a look and language they feel most comfortable with. To accomplish this, we updated the designs for all expectant parent introduction book fliers. These now have contemporary photos and use layouts inspired by our social media tiles. We also redesigned the cover and added two new fliers to the packet – one that outlines our [open adoption alternative to state adoption](#)

OPEN ADOPTION & FAMILY SERVICES

AN EMOTIONALLY SAFE PLACE TO TALK ABOUT ALL PREGNANCY OPTIONS.

We're here to empower you with the info you need to make the choice that feels best to you.

We support you no matter what decision you make, and will treat you with dignity and respect as you consider each of your choices:

- Parenting
- Abortion
- Adoption

You have choices. Call us to get started at 1-800-772-1115.

Our counselors can talk with you any time, 24/7. We can meet via phone, in person or video call. If you live in the Northwest and want to get together we have offices in Portland, Eugene and Seattle. Or a counselor can come to you!

We help pregnant women and couples anywhere in U.S. And we set up translation services for non-English speakers.

SEE BACK FOR RESOURCES

You'll explore questions like ...

- How would each choice affect my everyday life?
- How do each of the choices fit with my values and beliefs?
- What would each choice mean to the people closest to me?
- Who can I count on to support me through this process?
- What are my plans for the future?

and another for expectant parents who live outside of Oregon and Washington.

Expectant Parents Bill of Rights Poster.

A cornerstone of our high-integrity program is recognizing that all persons who are exploring their pregnancy options, planning an adoption, or supporting those who are experiencing these situations are entitled to specific rights.

These important beliefs are featured on our website: see the “Bill of Rights” for expectant parents, birthparents, adoptive parents, open adoptees and service providers. We’ve also created a poster and tile to spread the word of these important concepts in service provider offices and social media streams.

This joins our “Exploring Adoption: Know Where to Go” tips as

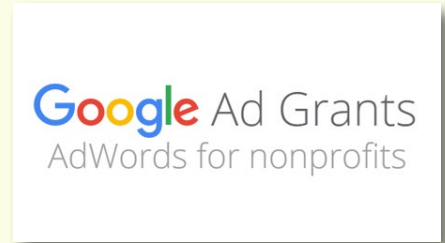


adoption. Her situation is unique in that her birthmother is also an adoptee – from South Korea. Our own adoptees want to contribute their stories to the body of knowledge about open adoption, and deepen what it looks like.

Nationwide Services. In addition to creating a flier about our services for expectant parents nationwide, we also updated that section of our website. For this we created new graphics, refined “Reasons to Choose OA&FS” and added birthmother Sage’s story. Sage placed her son Teo with an adoptive family who lives in North Carolina.



Google Ad Grants. We applied and were approved for a Google Ads Grants account for non-profit organizations. This gives us access to \$10K every month for text ads that appear alongside relevant keyword search results in Google. This account is separate from our paid Google Ads account, and we’ll continue using paid ads since Grants places many restrictions on bid levels and keywords.



Adoptive Parent Bulletin. We redesigned our monthly email newsletter and transitioned from Constant Contact to the Mail Chimp platform. This is deployed to waiting families plus those who have adopted through OA&FS within the last two years. ■



another way that OA&FS continues to be a thought leader in open adoption.

Carly’s Story Video.

Adoptee Carly, an eighth grader at the Arbor School, asked OA&FS Communications Director Sally Shuey to be her Graduation Project Mentor.

For this project Carly produced a video about her open



Thank you FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OPEN ADOPTION & FAMILY SERVICES!

Gifts of \$1,000 +

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Seattle Foundation, at the
Direction of Matthew Wiley
& Janet Buttenwieser
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Sage Carter
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program
Kennedy Jenks
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Matching Program
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Chris & Priscilla Williams
Jake & Cristin VanderPlas

Gifts of \$300-\$499

Adam Baker & Chris Chandler
Shelley & Rick Clough
Serin Hale
Shari Levine
Diane Tosh & Jan Vlcek

Gifts of \$200-\$299

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Melissa Busch & Jason Resch
Alice Dale & Frank Evans
Mary & Todd Friedmar

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Schechter
Jeri Krier & Wally Roghair
Merrie & Seth McGaw
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Anonymous
Amazon Smile Program
Mary & Hoyt Bonar
John Etter
Diane Dickoff
Ronen Elad & Emma
Timmins-Schiffman
Sarah Felstiner & Scobie Puchtler
Garrett Garfield
Intellectual Ventures
Charity Trust on
behalf of Rita Rogers
Mary Jane Karp
Chelsea Kearns & Nick Patterson
Bill & Shirley Kengla
Lisa & Doug Klink
Kroger/Fred Meyer
shopping program
Jan Jamieson
Cynthia Lee
Denise Luk & Jeff Wishnie
Christy McMannis &
Ron Renschler

Neill Family Charitable Fund

Kathryn Olson & Jeff Petee
Deary Panek
Jennifer Patterson in honor
of Kismet Patterson
Price Waterhouse in honor
of Rachael Groark
Anne Roberts
Wendy & Michael Russo
Dennis & Judith Samer in
gratitude for Nathan Samer
Peter Samson
Elaine Sobel
Matt Spaur
Tonia Stevens
Joann & John Terranova
Suzanne & Evan Williams

Gifts Up to \$99

Mike Banker & Michelle Greco
Jeremy Brown & Kara Schnoes
Benny & Wright Burnett Smith
Mary Ellen Bushnell
Lee Catalano
Shiqian Chen
Lara Colvin
Arthur Donnelly
Joan Dunbar & Bill Starbuck
in honor of Louise
DeKluyver's 70th birthday
Tom Dwyer Automotive
Referral Program
Peter Fallow & Brady Howe
Lori Gaffney in honor of
Kismet Patterson
Scott Hidingier in honor of
Kismet Patterson
Lauren Hudspeth
Jacci Johnson in honor of
Kismet Paterson

Jennifer & Larry Johnson

Yuliya Kuznetsova
Karen Kwiecien & Tom Roick
Erika Larson
Anna Laughlin
Lyn Levine
Norm Levine
Katie Lightner
Angie & Nick Lunde
Lori Maas
Natalie McNabb
Melissa Mullaly
Jason Plowman
Sari Prevost
Susan Rose in honor of
Kismet Patterson
Ally Simone
Kim Thompson
Truist employee giving
through Costco
Jen & Jeremy Wheat
Lisa & Dean Williams
Ginny & Andy Woo ■



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.

Service statistics: the numbers behind the mission.

July 2016 through June 2019

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 1,500 open adoptions since the agency was founded in 1985.

Placements

- We complete an average of 39 placements per year.
- 27% of placements were with gay or lesbian families; 4% were with single parents.
- 35% of placements were "last minute"—when adoption planning begins at birth.
- Adoptive parents waited an average of 16 months between entering the waiting families pool and placement.

Children Placed

- 98% of children placed were newborns; 1% were between 12-18 months, and 1% were between 24-36 months.
- 22% had no prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol. 30% had mild exposure; 28% had moderate; and 20% had severe exposure.
- 64% of the children placed were white; 18% had Black or African American heritage; 14% had Hispanic or Latino heritage; 11% had Native American heritage; 10% had Asian heritage; 2% had Pacific Islander heritage (Percentages don't equal 100, as a child can have multiple racial backgrounds.)

Expectant Parents

- Each year, an average of 337 contact OA&FS to inquire about our services.

Birthparents

- Birthparents received an average of six weeks of counseling prior to adoption planning.
- 76% of placements had pregnancy-related expenses at an average of \$1,750.
- Open Adoption Agreements had an average of three visits per year.
- Birthfathers signed consents to adoption in 46% of placements.
- The average age of birthmothers was 27 years old, 29 for consenting birthfathers and 39 for adoptive parents.

In fiscal year 2018-19 our staff has:

- Hosted events attended by 297 members of our open adoption community, including 22 birthmothers who attended the Birthmother's Retreat.
- Delivered 77 presentations about open adoption to 1,100 service providers, 59 college students and 422 teens.
- Sent promotional mailings and materials to over 2,000 service providers. Of these 254 requested additional materials. ■

Board of Directors, 2018-2019

Heather Allmain

Adoptive Parent,
Communications Services
Manager at Clark Public Utilities

Vice-President Melissa Busch

Birthmother, Parent and Nurse

President Sage Carter

Birthparent, Executive Assistant to
Head of School at
Oregon Episcopal School

Garrett Garfield

Birthfather, Partner at Holland &
Knight Law Firm

Secretary Michele Greco

Adoptive Parent, Personal Coach
and Consultant

Brady Howe

Adoptive Parent, President at
Cutting Edge Credit Union

Jennifer Johnson

Adoptive Parent

Shari Levine

Adoptive Parent, Executive
Director at OA&FS

Allie Phillips

Adoptive Parent,
Business Owner

Mark Spaur

Adoptive Parent, Vice
President at Kennedy Jenks

Steve Stegeman

Adoptive Parent, CPA
at Davis and Graves

David Tilchin

OA&FS Adoptee,
Computer Programmer

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.

Heather Allmain
Jaimie Arcand
Justin Armintrout
Josh Bellish
Erik Bergman
Kerriane Bernstein
Melissa Busch
Chris Brown
Sage Carter
Suzanne Cordes
Kelsey Cribbs
Mike Delaney
Cindy Delaney

KerryAnn Foley
Garrett Garfield
Carly Greco
Michelle Greco
Cathy Harmon
Molly Hayden
Brady Howe
Mallory Iwagoshi
Jennifer Johnson
Cirihn Malpocher
Meaghan McKracken
Dean Martin

Susan O'Callaghan
Jen Patterson
Allie Phillips
Rita Rogers
Kelly Saunders
Alex Smith
Mark Spaur
Steve Stegeman
David Tilchin
Jen Wheat
Katelyn White
Carrie Wilton ■



We appreciate OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS.

To educate others about open adoption and services available at our agency, OA&FS staff conduct outreach presentations and free trainings throughout the region year-round. In doing this, they form important relationships that benefit all who receive services from OA&FS. These logos represent all of the organizations we did presentations and/or trainings with in this fiscal year!



Adventist Health
Portland

Birthingway
College of
Midwifery



Child Welfare Council



COMMUNITY
HEALTH
Care
Hilltop Clinic

CONNECT PROGRAM



Portland
Rescue Mission

Family Relief Nursery
Cottage Grove



Astoria Self-Sufficiency
Hood River
Klamath Falls
Klamath Falls Self
Sufficiency
La Grande
Medford Self
Sufficiency
St. Helens Self-Sufficiency
Tillamook Self-Sufficiency

Direction
Service



Family Building Blocks
Keeping Children Safe and Families Together



PUBLIC HEALTH
PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

HARBORVIEW
MEDICAL CENTER
UW Medicine

CHI Franciscan
Health
Our best care. Your best health.SM
Harrison Medical Center



Joseph High School

KAISER
PERMANENTE®
East Interstate Clinic

LA CLINICA
AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

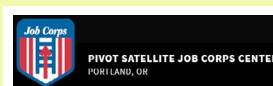
Lane County Parole
and Probation



Leota Middle
School
Home of the Lions



Linn-Benton Juvenile
Detention School Program



Shoulder to Shoulder
Conference



Siuslaw Outreach Services



University
of Portland
SCHOOL OF
NURSING





*Adoptee Emma with adoptive
parents Megan and Jon.*



OPEN ADOPTION & FAMILY SERVICES

OPENADOPT.ORG 1-800-772-1115 INFO@OPENADOPT.ORG