



National Council
For *Adoption*

2011
ANNUAL REPORT

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**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION
2011 ANNUAL REPORT
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Dear Friend of NCFA,

It has been my privilege to serve as Chair of the National Council For Adoption Board of Directors since April 2008. During the nearly four years I have served as Chair, I have been honored to take a proactive role in the mission and growth of this organization.

My time as Chair coincided with critical years for NCFA. During my Chairmanship I was fortunate to participate in NCFA's 30th Anniversary celebration in 2010 and the release of the Adoption Factbook V in 2011. I am proud that, despite the economic downturn that has challenged so many of our nation's nonprofit organizations in recent years, NCFA's Board and staff has managed to not simply maintain, but increase our efforts on behalf of the many thousands of children worldwide in need of permanent, loving families.

While I will miss serving as Chair after my term ends in April 2012, I am gratified to be leaving NCFA stronger than it was when I began, and I know that our advocacy on behalf of children, birthparents, and adoptive families will, as it must, continue. The problems facing America's foster care system, the decline in the number of intercountry adoptions, the need to support birthparents and adoptive families both before and after adoption, and the importance of providing accurate, positive information about adoption to women facing unintended pregnancy make NCFA's principled adoption advocacy and leadership more important, more necessary, than it has ever been before.

In April 2012, NCFA will welcome a new Chairman, Kevin Wrege. NCFA has already benefited from Kevin's commitment to adoption, as he has served on the Board of Directors since 2009, and as Chair-elect since April 2011. Kevin and I have worked closely throughout this year to execute a smooth and successful transition, and I am excited for all that NCFA will gain from his leadership. He is surrounded by an excellent team of board members and a wonderful staff in whom I have every confidence. NCFA is in good hands!

Going forward I'm anxious to continue working alongside you, my friends and fellow adoption advocates, on behalf of those we serve. Thank you for the many gifts that you have so freely shared with me and with NCFA.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stan Swim". The signature is fluid and cursive.

*Stan Swim
Chairman of the Board*

Dear Friend of NCFA,

I am happy to report that 2011 has been a year of great achievement for the National Council For Adoption. As you are aware, our commitment to the cause of adoption and the needs of children, birthparents, and adoptive families has made NCFA the leading adoption advocacy organization in the country, respected and consulted by policymakers, child welfare advocates, and adoption officials in the U.S. and around the world.

NCFA is a strong voice for children, birthparents, and adoptive families on Capitol Hill, maintaining and forging relationships with Members of Congress as well as the current Administration to promote our adoption policy priorities. NCFA is also the point organization for members of the media who seek our expertise on issues related to adoption; recent citations in 2011 include People Magazine, NPR, the Associated Press, USA Today, CBS News, Good Morning America, Fox News, and dozens more. The Adoption Advocate, our monthly policy publication, has become one of the most highly regarded and widely disseminated child welfare publications in the country, influencing sound adoption policies and promoting best practices. Our educational programs and seminars lead the field in infant adoption awareness and intercountry adoption training, and our Families For All awareness campaign and website serve to educate the public about the needs of children in foster care.

Many exciting new opportunities and challenges await us in 2012. Although we have experienced some economic hardship, we have come through it thanks to the generosity of our supporters and our continual efforts to be earnest, responsible stewards of the gifts entrusted to us. Through our services to our members, our professional publications, our awareness campaigns and educational resources, our legislative policy priorities, our media outreach, and our partnerships with fellow advocates, we will continue to work together to achieve our shared goal of helping every child find a loving, permanent family.

As we reflect upon the successes of 2011 and plan for the upcoming year, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Board for its conviction. Time and again, through your leadership and your support, you have shown your dedication to adoption and all those touched by it. On behalf of the NCFA staff, I can assure you that we share your determination to build upon our achievements of this year, expand our services and our advocacy, and make 2012 NCFA's strongest year yet. All of us on staff, just like all of you, have our own personal connections to adoption; we have, among us, adoptive parents and grandparents, a birthmother, adopted individuals, and a sibling through adoption. While our viewpoints are unique, we all share a passion for adoption advocacy and a strong sense of commitment to children in need of families. It is our privilege to continue to work at your side on their behalf.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Chuck Johnson
President and CEO*

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Since its establishment in 1980, the National Council For Adoption has become one of America's leading child welfare advocacy organizations and the authoritative voice for adoption. For over 30 years, we have educated policymakers and officials at the highest level of the government about policies and practices that benefit children and offer the best support to both birthparents and adoptive families. Our advocacy has led to many important federal laws and reforms, including the Adoption Tax Credit, the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Intercountry Adoption Act, the Infant Adoption Awareness Act, and the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act. NCFA's Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program (IAATP) has trained approximately 20,000 participants since 2001, and our Intercountry Adoption Journey online training for adoptive parents and agency professionals – updated in 2011 to include all ten hours of intercountry adoption education required by the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption – has now trained over 11,000 individuals. We continue to work tirelessly to provide the best, most up-to-date adoption news, information, policies, and professional practices to our members as well as the wider adoption community through our annual conference, trainings and webinars, *Adoption Factbook* series, and *Adoption Advocate* publications. From member services and trainings to education and research, all of NCFA's work stems from our deep conviction that every child deserves a safe, loving, and permanent family.

2011 was a year of great growth and change for the staff of NCFA, which continued under the leadership of president and CEO Chuck Johnson. Lauren Koch became our new Director of Communications, and Stacey Crooks was hired as our Director of Development. Adria Anderson is now Program Associate, and Megan Lindsey, now Assistant Director of Policy, took over direction of the Infant Adoption Training Initiative, assisted by Training Coordinator Rebekah Kitterman. In May, Nicole Callahan rejoined the staff on a part-time basis as Director of Publications and editor of the *Adoption Advocate*. In June, Wayne and Vicki Allgaier began an 18-month appointment as NCFA's new Constituent Services fellows. Even the building NCFA calls home has undergone changes this year: extensive renovations to the property at 225 N. Washington Street in Alexandria were completed in May; including repairs to the roof, new windows, new flooring, fresh interior and exterior paint, and updated restrooms and kitchenette.

As our programs and our staff have expanded, so has our collaboration with other advocacy organizations. The theme of NCFA's 2011 National Adoption Conference was "Age to Engage for Adoption," and the need for cooperation and coalition building to better serve children, birthparents, and adoptive families is a call that NCFA takes very seriously. This year we have maintained and expanded a diverse coalition of stakeholder groups to advance causes that include strengthening intercountry adoption to address the needs of millions of orphaned and vulnerable children worldwide, and encouraging permanency for children in foster care through education, advocacy, and needed reforms. Chuck Johnson has been invited to join Council on Accreditation (COA)'s Board of Trustees, beginning in January 2012, and also serves on the executive committee of the Families for Orphans Coalition. In addition, NCFA has

continued its collaboration with the Joint Council on International Children's Services (JCICS), which in 2011 presented the Maureen Evans Award to Chuck Johnson for his work on behalf of orphaned Russian children. Thanks to our strong history and record, our longstanding relationships with policymakers and government officials, and our positive collaboration with other groups, NCFCA is an organization that others are eager to consult with and engage.

We are thankful that our membership continues to grow as well, as our Member Agencies benefit NCFCA in so many ways through their leadership, professional expertise, and commitment to children in need of families. In 2011, we welcomed Holt International as one of our newest Member Agencies, and also established a new non-agency category of membership for individuals and families. Our expanding membership allows us broader reach and greater influence among adoption and child welfare advocates and those who can most benefit from our education and support.

As we take the opportunity at the close of 2011 to celebrate this past year's growth and accomplishments, it is important to remain focused on the future of NCFCA and adoption. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the responsible stewardship of our organization and its leadership, NCFCA has weathered periods of economic difficulty in 2011. Yet there remains a need to build up sufficient funds in reserve to meet future financial challenges that may arise. Strengthening the financial position of the organization in an uncertain economy must be one of many priorities in 2012, to ensure that NCFCA has the resources we need to support existing programs and projects in addition to exciting new plans.

Our plans for 2012 include our annual Kids at Heart celebration and fundraiser, which will be held in March in Washington, DC. Two new membership categories, one for adoption attorneys and another for non-adoption service providers, will roll out in 2012. Plans are in the works to update our iChooseAdoption public awareness campaign and issue new television and radio PSAs, print ads, and ways to share all the campaign information via social media. Our National Adoption Conference – which participants tell us keeps getting better every year – is scheduled for June 13-16, and will focus on ways in which we can work together to get back to the "Heart of the Matter": children who need families. Pending approval, further building renovations will increase the value of the NCFCA property in Alexandria as well as the funds NCFCA receives from its current and future tenants. We will also be introducing the first major redesign of the *Adoption Advocate* since its initial publication in 2005.

NCFCA has much work to do to meet the challenges facing adoption today, advance the best policies and practices, and strengthen adoption on behalf of children, birthparents, and adoptive families. From transparency in intercountry adoption to the reform of the foster care system, from birthmother counseling and post-adoption services to adoption financing and the adoption tax credit, NCFCA has consistently made the difference through our service to the adoption community and our advocacy for a wider culture of adoption. As the nation's foremost adoption advocacy organization and an outspoken voice for children in need of families, we look forward to all of the important work that awaits us in 2012, and we are eager to begin.

AGENCY AND CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Currently NCFA has 60 Member Agencies, representing 350 separate offices throughout the country. This year, NCFA expanded the services provided to our Member Agencies, as well as to others seeking adoption information or assistance.

Member Types and Listservs

Building upon the success of our Members-only listserv, which has been active for several years, NCFA created six additional topic-specific listservs for our member agencies: Intercountry, China, Russia, Ethiopia, Foster Care, and Domestic Adoption. We have seen a significant increase in listserv activity since launching the new listservs.

In addition to membership for adoption agencies, NCFA has launched a new membership category for individuals and families interested in adoption, including adopted individuals, birthparents, adoptive parents, friends of adoptive families, those hoping to adopt, and anyone else interested in adoption. NCFA has provided our new Adoption Advocates with their own listserv, which allows them to share their questions, concerns, advice, and experiences with one another.

In 2012, we will launch new NCFA membership categories for Adoption Attorneys and Adoption Professionals.

Constituent Services Fellows

In June, LDS Family Services (LDSFS) provided NCFA with two fellows, Vicki and Wayne Allgaier, who are in the NCFA office 3-4 days per week. Vicki, who brings with her 13 years of experience working in the Maryland agency of LDSFS, has been managing and updating NCFA's membership records, responding to calls from birthparents and prospective adoptive parents, and assisting with other activities in the office. Her husband Wayne, with some guidance from Chuck, has taken responsibility for the many email inquiries that NCFA receives on a daily basis, answering questions about intercountry and domestic adoption, statistics, adoption financing, and all other matters related to adoption.

In August, Wayne and Vicki completed a Member Agency survey, and the responses provided NCFA with many ideas and suggestions for the further expansion of our services to members. The Allgaiers have also represented NCFA at conferences and other meetings. Their 18-month fellowship at NCFA will conclude at the end of 2012.

E-Newsletter for Members

At the suggestion of several 2011 National Adoption Conference participants, NCFA has launched a monthly e-newsletter for our Member Agencies, *This Month in Adoption*. While our members clearly feel that our listservs are useful and important for sending out items of an

especially critical or time-sensitive nature, several also noted that a monthly list of less pressing – but still important – news and information would be valuable as well.

The first monthly e-newsletter was published in August 2011, and feedback from members has been extremely positive. Items in every newsletter include NCFA publications and media citations, upcoming events or conferences, legislative updates, and adoption news and information. NCFA and Member Agency staff can submit items or news links for inclusion in the newsletter, which is compiled and sent out via email mid-month.

NCFA Member Agencies

The following is a list of NCFA Member Agencies as of December 20, 2011.

A Act of Love
A Helping Hand Adoption Agency
AAC Adoption & Family Network
ABC Adoption Services AKA Carolina Adoption Services
Adopt A Child, Inc.
Adopt International
Adoption Associates, Inc.
Adoption by Shepherd Care
Adoption From the Heart
America World Adoption Association
Bethany Christian Services
Buckner Children & Family Services, Inc.
Building Blocks Adoption Service, Inc.
Carolina Adoption Services
Catholic Charities Diocese of Arlington, Inc.
Catholic Guardian Society and Home Bureau
Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Charlotte, N.C., Inc.
Children's Home of Lubbock
Children's Home Society of West Virginia
Chinese Children Adoption International
Christian Child Placement Services/N.M. Children's Home
Christian World Adoption, Inc.
Community Maternity Services
Cradle of Hope Adoption Center
Creative Adoptions, Inc.
Dove Adoptions International
Embraced by Grace
European Adoption Consultants, Inc.
Florida Baptist Children's Homes
Generations Adoptions
Gladney Center
Great Wall China Adoption/Children Of All Nations

Harvest of Hope Family Services Network, Inc.
Holston United Methodist Home for Children
Holt International*
Home At Last Adoption Agency
Hope's Promise
International Assistance Group
International Christian Adoptions
LDS Family Services
LaVida International
Life Adoption Services
Lifeline Children's Services, Inc.
Lutheran Social Services of the South, Inc.
Nebraska Children's Home Society
New Beginnings International Children's & Family Services, Inc.
New Horizons Adoption Agency, Inc.
New Mexico Christian Children's Home/Christian Child Placement Services
Nightlight Christian Adoptions
Open Arms Adoption Network/JFCS of Greater Philadelphia*
Small World, Inc.
Smithlawn Home Maternity and Adoption Services
Sunny Ridge Family Center, Inc.
St. Andre Home, Inc.
St. Elizabeth Foundation
St. Mary's Services
Wide Horizons For Children, Inc.
World Links International Adoption Agency
WACAP (World Association for Children and Parents)

* *Joined NCFA in 2011*

China Center for Child Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA) Delegation

In October, NCFA hosted a 15-member delegation from the China Center for Child Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA). NCFA and CCCWA participated in a 17-day itinerary designed to educate the Chinese officials about America and its culture of adoption. NCFA previously hosted similar delegations in 2009 and 2010. The Chinese delegates learned more about how adoption agencies prepare and support families planning to adopt children with special needs, and also had the opportunity to check on the progress of several children adopted from China who were placed through the *Waiting Child* program.

The visit was spearheaded by Chuck Johnson, who led a series of presentations, lectures, and roundtable discussions concerning the history, culture, laws, regulations, practices, and processes regarding the adoption of Chinese-born children by American parents. This year's delegation traveled to DC, Birmingham, Orlando, Atlanta, Grand Rapids, and New York City to meet with representatives of leading adoption advocacy organizations and

adoption agencies, Members of Congress and their staffers, and U.S. government officials, as well as adopted children and adoptive families. In Birmingham, the delegation visited an international pediatric clinic affiliated with UAB Hospital and Children’s Hospital, and had the opportunity to meet with children adopted from China that had received surgical treatments such as a cochlear implant, cleft lip/palate repair, liver transplant, and tumor removal. The delegation also visited children at Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital in Grand Rapids.



CCCWA Delegation at the US Capitol
October 2011

At the conclusion of the visit, Ms. Xiaoying Chu, head of the CCCWA delegation and its Deputy Director-General, reaffirmed China’s commitment to intercountry adoption. “We are pleased and encouraged by Ms. Chu’s commitment to orphans and believe that, by working together, more children will find the loving, permanent families they have been waiting for,” said Chuck Johnson.

Joining NCFCA during training sessions and roundtable discussions were representatives from the U.S. Department of State, Sen. Mary Landrieu and her staff, Sen. Orrin Hatch’s staff, Children’s Hospital, Chick-fil-A’s Winshape Foundation, and Amway.

COMMUNICATIONS

In August 2011, Lauren Koch was named Director of Communications. Lauren previously served as NCFCA’s Director of Development. This strategic appointment divided the development and communications departments, allowing greater focus within each. Ms. Koch’s focus will be on media and public relations, new public service announcement campaign development and production, social media outreach, webinars, and NCFCA publications. NCFCA’s development efforts are now overseen by Director of Development Stacey Crooks, hired in August 2011.

Websites

With an average of almost 4,000 unique visits per month, NCFCA’s main website, www.adoptioncouncil.org, remains a valuable resource for anyone interested in adoption. In addition to our main website, NCFCA maintains three other websites that correspond to our core areas of focus: domestic infant adoption, adoption



out of foster care, and intercountry adoption. Women facing unintended pregnancy can freely explore the positive option of adoption at www.iChooseAdoption.org; people interested in learning more about mentoring, fostering, or adopting a child out of foster care can visit www.FamiliesForAll.org; and prospective adoptive parents can attain required intercountry adoption education at www.HagueAdoption.org.

Social Media

NCFA focused on increasing its social media presence and activity during 2011. We can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/adoptioncouncil and on Twitter at @adoptioncouncil. NCFA posts on adoption-related topics only, and has received much positive feedback on its social media content. NCFA currently has 1,776 followers on Facebook and 778 followers on Twitter.



Public Awareness Campaigns

NCFA raises public awareness about the positive option of adoption through our public service announcements, media coverage, and keynote presentations throughout the United States. Families For All, a public awareness campaign designed to inspire Americans to consider becoming involved in the life of a foster child, was launched in 2008. This November, National Adoption Month, Walmart TV ran a brand-new Families For All PSA featuring country music artist Rodney Atkins at 588 of its locations. In 2011, we began work on a new, updated iChooseAdoption public service announcement campaign, to help even more women consider the option of adoption without fear, bias, or misunderstanding. The new iChooseAdoption campaign, to be released in 2012, will include a full redesign of www.iChooseAdoption.org, new social media outreach, brand-new television and radio PSAs, and a print campaign that will include the distribution of posters to high schools across the United States. The goal of the new iChooseAdoption campaign is to help women consider adoption without fear, bias, or misunderstanding.

Regional and National Press Release Distribution

NCFA's press releases update members of the media and any other interested parties on current adoption issues. The following is a list of press releases distributed during 2011:

- March 9 – NCFA Issues Statement Regarding Ethiopia Adoptions
- March 22 – National Council For Adoption Rings the NASDAQ Stock Market opening Bell
- March 11 – UPDATE – NCFA Issues Statement Regarding Ethiopia Adoptions
- March 9 – NCFA Issues Statement Regarding Ethiopia Adoptions
- May 27 – Psychologist and Child Welfare Advocate Says Government Could Save More than a Billion Per Year Helping Children in Foster Care Find Families

- May 24 – *Adoption Factbook* Reveals New Domestic Adoption Study; Leads Discussion on Current State of Adoption
- June 22 – National Council For Adoption Presents 2011 National Adoption Conference, “Age to Engage for Adoption”
- July 22 – 2011 National Adoption Conference Concludes
- August 17 – NCFA’s Response to the Guatemalan Adoption Controversy
- August 23 – Step Forward for Orphans March to Advocate for a Child’s Right to a Permanent Family
- August 24 – NCFA Names Stacey Crooks Director of Development; Names Lauren Koch Director of Communications
- October 24 – “Working Together, Stronger for Children” Banquet to Raise Awareness for Children Who Need Families
- November 1 – NCFA Announces National Adoption Month PSA featuring Award-winning Country Music Artist Rodney Atkins

NCFA in the Media – Notable Citations

The following is a list of notable media citations during 2011:

- **Associated Press** (1/22) – “Despite hurdles, families pursue Nepal adoptions”
- **NPR News** (3/29) – Chuck Johnson was interviewed story regarding the state of adoption from Russia, a year after the case of Torry Hansen sending her adopt child back to Moscow.
- **MSN Money** (3/22) – “National Council For Adoption Rang the NASDAQ Stock Market Opening Bell”
- **Associated Press** (3/10) – “Ethiopia moves to sharply reduce foreign adoptions”
- **Associated Press** (3/11) – “Ethiopia restricts adoptions”
- **Citizen Link** (5/10) – “Good News: Record Number of Foster Kids Find Adoptive Families”
- **Breaking Christian News** (5/16) – “Good News on the Adoption Front- Record Number of Foster Kids Find Forever Homes”
- **World Magazine** (5/24) – “Gay Adoption”
- **Expecting** (5/26) – Chuck Johnson quoted in article
- **MSNBC.com** (6/8) – “Picking your parents: Adult adoption creates new bond”
- **WRVA Radio** (6/8) – Chuck Johnson interviewed on msnbc.com article on adult adoptions and the economic effects on child adoptions
- **NY Daily News** (6/9) – “Adult adoptions are on the rise in the U.S.: People choose new families, rather than biological ones”
- **The Washington Times** (7/11) – “ U.S., Russia close to pact to restart adoptions”
- **The Voice of Russia Radio** (7/12) – “Adoption agreement to be signed this week”
- **The Wall Street Journal Russia News** (7/12) – “U.S., Kremlin Reach Deal to Monitor Adoptions”
- **Associated Press** (7/13) – Chuck Johnson interviewed on U.S. and Russia Adoption Treaty

- **MSNBC.com** (7/13) – “US, Russia end rift on adoptions, agree to safeguards”
- **Yahoo! News** (7/13) – “US, Russia agree on rules for safer adoptions”
- **Perspicacious.com** (7/13) – “New rules for US-Russia adoptions”
- **ELLE Magazine** (7/13) – Chuck Johnson interviewed for October 2011 issue
- **Arkansas Online** (7/13) – “US, Russia agree on rules for safer adoptions”
- **ANGOP International** (7/14) – “US and Russia agree on rules to make adoptions safer”
- **NPR (7/15)**– Chuck did radio interview about U.S. and Russian adoption policy
- **World Magazine** (7/30) – “Life or Death”
- **Miami Herald** (8/6) – “Guatemala Mother Searched 5 Years For Adopted Girl”
- **Huffington Post Latino Voices** – “Guatemala Mother Searched 5 Years For Adopted Girl”
- **Knoxnews.com** (Knoxville, TN) – “Guatemala Mother Searched 5 Years For Adopted Girl”
- **Deseret News** (8/13) – “As adoption rates drop, support and acceptance needed”; also went to print in LDS Church News
- **The Washington Times** (8/16) – “Step Forward for Orphans March: American families to protest U.S. policies
- **CNBC (and syndicated nationally)** (8/23) – “Step Forward for Orphans March to Tell Story of Children Blocked from Joining Families Both Ends Burning, key adoption leaders and organizations to launch a social movement”
- **Al Jazeera News** (8/26) – Interviewed Chuck on U.S. adoption statistics from *Adoption Factbook V*
- **The Guardian Newspaper (and syndicated internationally)** (8/30) – “US caught up in legal battle over Guatemalan child”
- **Deseret News** (9/7) – “Gay adoption set for national stage
- **Associated Press** (9/16 and nationally syndicated) – “PA couple cite self-abuse in Russian son’s death”
- **Associated Press** (9/16 and nationally syndicated) – “PA parents guilty in death of adopted Russian boy”
- **PEOPLE Magazine** (September 26 Issue) – “One Mom’s Mission: Help Others Adopt”
- **Associated Press, USA Today, and others** (10/13 and nationally syndicated) – “Rodney Atkins reunites with his birth mother”
- **The Grio (MSNBC)** (10/24) – “Black parents who adopt white children confront myths”
- **WFMJ.com (Ohio NBC Affiliate)** (10/28) – “Niles couple struggle to bring their adopted daughter home”
- **Adoptive Families Magazine** (October 2011 Issue) – “Adoption Option May Be Decreasing in the U.S.”
- **USA Today** (11/3) – “National Adoption Month’ is time to think of kids”
- **Associated Press** (11/16) – “Foreign adoptions by Americans plunge again”
- **Associated Press** (11/16) – “Americans adopted 15 percent fewer foreign children last year”

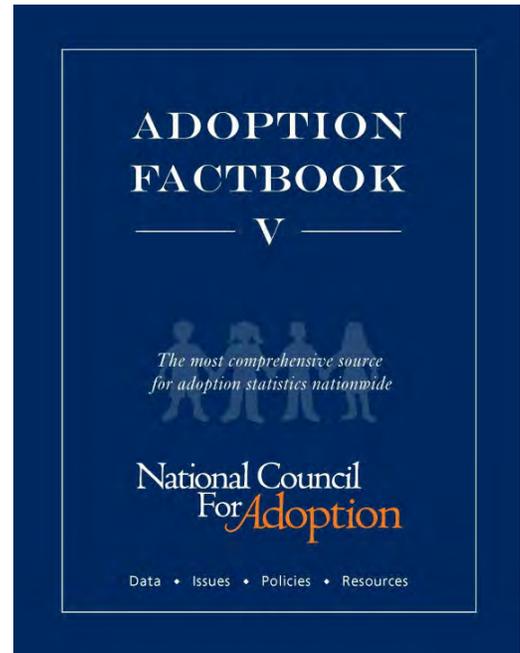
- **Daily Iowan** (11/17) – “Iowa City adoptive parents experience prejudice”
- **NPR** (11/17) – “Fewer babies available for adoption by U.S. parents”
- **CBNNews.com** (11/22) – “Couple’s Adoption Scam Story Lesson for Others”
- **PEOPLE Magazine** (December 2011 Issue) – “Finding My Birth Family”

Adoption Factbook V

NCFA’s *Adoption Factbook V* was released in May 2011. It included Dr. Paul Placek’s updated national adoption study with state-by-state data, as well as other articles and studies providing in-depth information and analysis for birthparents, adoptive parents, researchers, and policymakers on the following topics:

- Adoption of children with special needs
- Transracial and transcultural adoption
- Putative father registries and related legislation
- The adoption tax credit and other important policy priorities
- Strategies for promoting permanency and needed reforms in foster care
- The current state of intercountry adoption
- Decision-making tools for prospective birthmothers
- Medical issues related to adoption
- Advice for birthparents and adoptive families

A complimentary copy of *Adoption Advocate V* was distributed to all Members of Congress and NCFA members. Although NCFA still offers the hard copy for a fee, we now offer a downloadable PDF version for a discounted price on our website as well.



Adoption Advocate

NCFA’s *Adoption Advocate* continues to gain recognition as a valuable resource for adoption advocates, policymakers, researchers, and professionals. It has become a highly respected and widely disseminated publication, and its regular distribution list includes all NCFA members, adoption professionals and advocates, and adoptive families across the country. Issues of the *Adoption Advocate* published in 2011:

- January 2011, Issue No. 31: “Foster Care and Adoption-Related Legislation in the 111th Congress,” by Rebecca Hampton
- February 2011, Issue No. 32: “Adopted Children with Special Health Care Needs: National Survey Findings,” by Amy McClindon, Kate Welti, Sharon Vandivere, and Karin Malm

- March 2011, Issue No. 33: “Equalizing the Treatment of Foreign-Born Adopted Children,” by Joseph D’Agostino
- April 2011, Issue No. 34: “An Overview of the *Adoption Quarterly* Special Issue Presenting Findings from the National Survey of Adoptive Parents (NSAP),” by Elisa Rosman
- May 2011, Issue No. 35: “Better Prospects, Lower Cost: The Case for Increasing Foster Care Adoption,” by Dr. Nicholas Zill
- June 2011, Issue No. 36: “Avoiding Adoption Scams,” by Hal Kaufman
- July 2011, Issue No. 37: “Fathers, Families, and Friends: Involving and Prioritizing a Pregnant Client’s Support System,” by Ashley Morris
- August 2011, Issue No. 38: “Race and Identity in Transracial Adoption: Suggestions for Adoptive Parents,” by Nicole M. Callahan
- September 2011, Issue No. 39: “Engaging the Private Sector to Increase Positive Permanency Outcomes for Children in Foster Care,” by Kristina Beer with Heidi Bruegel Cox
- October 2011, Issue No. 40: “Protecting the Rights of Intercountry Adoptees: Steps to Ensure the Right of Citizenship for Every Adopted Individual,” by Jean Nelson Erichsen
- November 2011, Issue No. 41: “My Perspective on Open Adoption and Recommendations for Birthparents,” by Amy Hutton
- December 2011, Issue No. 42: “Talking to Your Child About Adoption: Recommendations for Parents,” by Nicole M. Callahan

Several 2011 issues of the *Advocate* have been republished and distributed via NCFAs Member Agencies, partner organizations, adoption blogs, and agency newsletters and Facebook pages, among other sources. *Adoption Advocate* Nos. 38, 41, and 42 have been included in the Child Welfare Information Gateway Library and circulated via its e-newsletter. Issue Nos. 33 and 38 will be included in a forthcoming book on adoption policy, aimed at younger readers and compiled by editor Christine Watkins. The Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO) also distributed *Advocate* Nos. 38 and 39 to its listserv, which includes tens of thousands of contacts nationwide. The monthly writing and publication of the *Adoption Advocate* is overseen by Director of Publications and *Adoption Advocate* editor Nicole Callahan, under the direction of Lauren Koch and Chuck Johnson.

NASDAQ Opening

On Tuesday, March 22, at 9:15 am EST, NCFAs rang the opening bell for the NASDAQ Stock Market in Times Square. Donna Downing Conway, a member of the Board of Directors, represented NCFAs at the opening ceremony. “While the global markets may rise and fall,” she said at the start of the opening ceremony, “one thing remains the same: no child deserves to grow up without a loving, permanent family.”



NCFAs Board Member Donna Conway and supporters ring NASDAQ Stock Market Opening Bell

EDUCATION

Infant Adoption Training Initiative (IATI)

On September 30, 2006, NCFA was awarded the Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program (IAATP) grant for Health Region III, which includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. NCFA president and CEO Chuck Johnson has served as the project director since its inception. In February 2010, Megan Lindsey was hired as Training Manager for the Infant Adoption Training Initiative (IATI), and Rebekah Kitterman currently serves as the program's Training Coordinator. Other NCFA staff are loaned to the project on an as-needed basis. Additionally, 20 contracted Master Trainers conduct trainings throughout the region. Dr. Joan Rycraft at the University of Texas at Arlington serves as the project's lead evaluator, along with her evaluation team.

NCFA's five-year grant ended on September 29, 2011. Responsible financial management left remaining funds, which are being used to provide continued training and resources to pregnancy counselors to benefit expectant parents considering the option of adoption. A comprehensive report to be released in 2012 will summarize the Infant Adoption Training Initiative's success during this five-year grant period, during which NCFA trained over 3,662 professionals in half-, one-, and two-day live trainings featuring our *Consider the Possibilities* curriculum. Over 188 individuals were also trained via IATI's new online birthparent counseling training in 2011. Training evaluation showed that NCFA's trainings consistently provided a statistically significant increase in knowledge to 94% or more of participants during the five-year grant cycle. Since its inception in 2001, NCFA's IATI trainings have trained approximately 20,000 participants.

Because IATI has a separate grant year from the NCFA fiscal year, IATI files its own annual report. Most recently, a ten-page annual report was filed after the completion of the most recent year's work on the grant. The report is filed as "Program Narrative and Year-End Progress Report: September 30, 2010 – September 29, 2011 Infant Adoption Training Initiative by National Council For Adoption – Award #90CG2662." The report was submitted on October 28, 2011.

In 2011, NCFA applied for and was awarded a new Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program grant from the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This seventeen-month grant lasts from September 30, 2011 until February 28, 2013. It provides the opportunity for NCFA to continue to provide adoption awareness training, with a focus on curriculum improvement and building relationships to ensure the sustainability of this training resource beyond the federal funding life of this program. NCFA continues to train in Health Region III (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia). In addition, in collaboration with Harmony Adoptions, the Region IV grantee, NCFA will provide trainings in Alabama and Mississippi. Harmony will also manage trainings in Southern Virginia. In Alabama and Mississippi, Lifeline Children's Services and New Beginnings

International Child and Family Services, both NCFA Member Agencies, will partner with NCFA to implement trainings.

During the fall of 2011, NCFA has focused especially on updating the *Consider the Possibilities* curriculum. Revisions reflect statistical updates, changes in state and federal laws, changing trends in best practices, and recommendations from both NCFA and Children's Bureau evaluation processes.

Sustainability of this training is a top priority for NCFA. In August 2011, a "Train the Trainer" event was held to train adoption professionals from across the nation to use the *Consider the Possibilities* curriculum to reach professionals in their communities. Federal funds for IATI may not always be available, and it is important to NCFA that we continue to provide training and resources to appropriate healthcare and social work professionals to raise adoption awareness. NCFA believes this is the best way to ensure that accurate and helpful information is given to women facing unintended pregnancy, allowing them the opportunity to make a fully informed pregnancy decision.

Intercountry Adoption Journey (IAJ) Online Training Program

The Intercountry Adoption Journey, NCFA's Hague-compliant online training program (www.hagueadoption.org), has become a well-known and highly successful training tool for prospective adoptive parents and professionals. It meets the training requirements for parents adopting through a Hague intercountry adoption process, and also provides information for those parents adopting from a non-Hague participating country.

In 2011, NCFA added two additional hours to the IAJ training, which allows adoptive parents and adoption professionals to receive all ten hours of training required by the Hague Convention. Many adoption agencies in the U.S. require their adoptive families to take NCFA's Intercountry Adoption Journey online, giving NCFA thousands of referrals to our training each year.

IAJ trained 1,669 married parents, 93 single parents, and 45 professionals, resulting in a total of 1,807 individuals trained in 2011. Since its inception in 2008, IAJ has trained approximately 11,250 individuals. The program continues to improve year after year, providing a quality educational experience to adoptive parents as well as significant revenue for NCFA to continue to invest in the cause of adoption.

Webinars

In 2010, NCFA began to offer online webinars to provide best-practice training and recommendations for adoption professionals. In February 2011, NCFA hosted *The Mystery of Risk: Medical Risk Assessment and Intervention Techniques for Internationally Adopted Children* with Dr. Ira Chasnoff. NCFA webinars offer live participation, and many are recorded and

archived for those unable to participate in the live presentation. The following recorded webinars are currently available for review at www.ncfaeducation.org:

- *The Mystery of Risk: Medical Risk Assessment and Intervention Techniques for Internationally Adopted Children*, presented by Dr. Ira Chasnoff (2.5 hours)
- *Risk and Promise: The Brain, Biology, and the Adopted Child*, presented by Dr. Ira Chasnoff (2.5 hours)
- *Navigating Adoption Ethics*, presented by Heidi Bruegel Cox and William P. Rose III (3 hours)
- *Assessing and Preparing Foster Adoptive Parents for the Journey Ahead*, presented by Jayne Schooler (5 hours)

EVENTS

National Adoption Conference: “Age to Engage for Adoption”

At this year’s National Adoption Conference, leading adoption researchers, government officials, and agency professionals presented and moderated sessions that focused on engaging and encouraging collaboration between adoption advocates. The conference sessions focused on a wide range of issues in adoption, including the current state of intercountry adoption, transracial and transcultural adoption, adoption out of foster care, medical issues related to adopted children, social networking, and media relations.

This year NCFA was excited to partner with RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association to invite prospective adoptive parents, those in the process of adopting, and those considering adoption to attend the second half of the conference. This half included sessions on the latest adoption research, what to expect when adopting, and resources and support available to families both pre- and post-adoption.

The first day of the conference was devoted to the status of intercountry adoption and the challenges it currently faces, as presenters and conference participants discussed ways in which principled advocacy can bring about the reforms and solutions necessary to promote greater transparency in intercountry adoption and benefit children and families in all nations and regions. Sessions from Day 1 included the following:

- “Updates on the Status of Intercountry Adoption in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America,” presented by Vladimir L. Kabanov, Chair of the Databank Registry of Children Without Parent Supervision, Ministry of Education and Science for the Russian



Federation; Snow Wu, President and CEO, Great Wall China Adoption; Ryan Hanlon, Chief Operating Officer, America World Adoption; and Herbert Newell, Executive Director, Lifeline Children's Services, Inc.

- “Engaging the Audience: Discussion Group Summary,” moderated by Heidi Cox, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, The Gladney Center for Adoption, Member of the National Council For Adoption Board of Directors
- Keynote Address, delivered by Bryan Samuels, Commissioner, HHS Administration on Children, Youth and Families
- “Engaging U.S. Government Adoption Officials Forum,” presented by Tiffany Murphy, U.S. Department of State, Office of Children’s Issues, Adoptions Division; Whitney Reitz, Branch Chief, International Operations Division, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security; Carrie Rankin, U.S Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; Donna Campagnolo, Assistant Center Director, National Benefits Center, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Department of Homeland Security; and Richard Klarberg, President and CEO, Council on Accreditation (COA)

The second day of sessions focused on trends, policies, and practices related to all three types of adoption: domestic, intercountry, and adoption out of foster care. Sessions from Day 2 included the following:

- “Cultural Socialization Practices in Domestic and International Transracial Adoption,” presented by Dr. Betsy Vonk, Professor and Director of the MSW Program at the University of Georgia
- “Ethics in Adoption: A Decision-Making Model,” presented by Amy Curtis, Program Manager, LDS Family Services and David McConkie, Esq., Kirton & McConkie
- “Engaging the Legislative System for Change,” presented by Becky Weichhand, Director of Policy, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI); Mike Roush, President, Roush Governmental Affairs; and Lillie Petit Gallagher, Former Executive Director, St. Elizabeth Foundation
- “Engaging Adoptive Families via Social Media,” presented by Herbert Newell, Executive Director, Lifeline Children's Services, Inc. and Lauren Koch, Director of Communications and Development, National Council For Adoption
- “So What About Dad?: Creating Space for Birthfathers in Adoptive Stories,” presented by Dr. Jeannine Zoppi, Licensed Clinical Psychologist
- “Engaging and Responding to Media Inquiries,” presented by Jeff Rosenberg, President, Rosenberg Communications, a division of Levick Strategic Communications
- “Starting Public-Private Partnerships for Foster Care,” presented by Herbert Newell, Executive Director, Lifeline Children's Services, Inc.
- “Engaging Adolescents with the Positive Option of Adoption,” presented by Teri James Casso, Executive Director, St. Elizabeth Foundation; Carolyn Morris, Administrative Assistant, St. Elizabeth Foundation; Chrystal Matthews, Special Education Teacher, Ascension Parish Alternative School; and Jerry Elie, Principal, Ascension Parish Alternative School

- “The Disrupted Transition to Parenthood: Supporting Birthparents,” presented by Merilee Meacham, Children’s Services Manager, LDS Family Services and Ann Broadbent, Children’s Services Manager, LDS Family Services
- “Engaging Your Faith-Based Community,” presented by Jedd Medefind, President, Christian Alliance for Orphans
- “Compassion for the Compassionate,” presented by Fr. Gerald Francik, Roman Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore

The third day of the conference was split into two tracks: one for adoption professionals, and the other for individuals and families interested in learning more about adoptive parenting. At times, the professionals and parents came together in plenary sessions applicable to both. Sessions from Day 3 included the following:

- “Asking the Right Questions: How Agencies and Parents Can Work Together for Healthy Families,” a plenary session on addressing medical issues, presented by Dr. Patrick Mason, M.D., Ph.D., Founder and former Director, International Adoption Center, Inova Fairfax Hospital for Children
- “Adoption for Infertility Patients,” a plenary session presented by Jane Castanias, Board of Directors, RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association
- Keynote Address, delivered by Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA)
- “Trauma Competent Healing Parents: Preparing Families for the Journey Ahead,” a plenary session presented by Jayne Schooler, Individual & Family Services Consultant and Contractor and author of *Wounded Children, Healing Homes: How Traumatized Children Impact Adoptive and Foster Families* and *Whole Life Adoption: Realistic Advice for Building a Healthy Adoptive Family* (co-authored with NCFA)
- “Preventing Disruption,” in sessions separately presented to parents and professionals, by Paula St. John, The Gladney Center for Adoption
- “What to Do if a Disruption is Inevitable,” a plenary session presented by Laura Beauvais-Godwin, Director, Nightlight Christian Adoptions South Carolina office, and co-author of *The Complete Adoption Book*
- “What to Expect When Adopting Internationally,” individual breakout sessions for parents, presented by Ryan Hanlon, Chief Operating Officer, America World Adoption; Larisa Mason, Executive Director, International Assistance Group and member of the National Council For Adoption Board of Directors; Herbert Newell, Executive Director, Lifeline Children's Services, Inc.; and Snow Wu, President and CEO, Great Wall China Adoption

On the final day of the conference, solely dedicated to educating prospective adoptive parents, a variety of presentations relevant to understanding the adoption process were offered, with time allowed for attendees to meet one-on-one and ask questions of NCFA Member Agency staff. Sessions from Day 4 included the following:

- “Agency Selection and Understanding the Screening Process,” presented by Dave Wood, International Director, Lifeline Children’s Services and Karla Thrasher, International Social Worker, Lifeline Children’s Services
- “Adoption Financing Options,” presented by Melissa Westergard, CPA, MPAcc, President, Melissa Westergard, Inc.
- “What to Expect and Demand from Your Agency or Attorney,” presented by Heidi Bruegel Cox, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, The Gladney Center for Adoption, and Adoption Attorney, American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA)
- “Degrees of Openness,” presented by Tamara DeCosmo Christ, District Supervisor, Adoptions From the Heart
- “Adoption and Orphans: Grief and Loss,” presented by Kris Faasse, National Director of Adoption Services, Bethany Christian Services
- “Working with the Foster Care System,” presented by Frances James, Director of Training and Staff Development, Foundations for Home and Community

Working Together, Stronger for Children Banquet – Nashville, TN

On October 27, 2011, the National Council For Adoption and New Beginnings Adoption and Family Services, an NCFA Member Agency, joined forces to host a regional event in Nashville, TN. The purpose of the *“Working Together, Stronger For Children”* banquet was to raise awareness for the positive option of adoption, both for women facing unintended pregnancy and as a wonderful way to bring hope and healing to a child waiting to be adopted out of foster care. Lauren Kitchens, a national motivational speaker and adoptive mother, was the keynote speaker, and several adopted individuals, birthmothers, and adoptive families shared their personal adoption stories and journeys with all in attendance. Media coverage included a radio interview on Mid South Spot Light, WAYM 88.7 FM, and a televised interview on Fox-17 WZTV of Nashville, TN.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

At the end of 2010, too late to be included in last year’s annual report, several pieces of legislation supported by NCFA were passed, including the Help Haiti Act, the International Adoption Simplification Act, and the extension of the adoption tax credit through 2012.

NCFA’s work to establish and build good working relationships with Members of Congress, the Administration, child welfare officials at the highest levels of the U.S. and foreign governments, and other key stakeholder organizations plays an enormously important role in our objective to be the authoritative voice for adoption. Throughout 2011, we have continued to collaborate with policymakers and like-minded organizations in order to advocate for the best interests of children, birthparents, and adoptive families.

In 2011, NCFA met on over 20 separate occasions with Members of Congress, including Speaker of the House John Boehner, and Senators Landrieu, Blumenthal, Kerry, Hatch, Hagan, Toomey, and Burr, and the Senate Caucus on Foster Care. We continued our collaboration with

officials from the U.S. Department of State, attended several stakeholder meetings and meetings on specific issues in intercountry adoption, and met with Ambassador Susan Jacobs. In December, NCFa attended discretionary grantee meetings with the Department of Health and Human Services, regarding the Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program. On November 28, Chuck Johnson presented on domestic adoption at a National Adoption Month event at the White House.

NCFa has stakeholder status with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and is a sponsoring organization of the Council on Accreditation (COA). Chuck Johnson has been invited to join COA's Board of Trustees, beginning in January 2012. NCFa has also continued its partnership with the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI), attending and participating in several CCAI events on the Hill, including the Foster Youth Intern Briefing, the Angels in Adoption Advocacy Fair, and The Way Forward Project Summit on Family-Based Care in Africa, with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

NCFa hosted international child welfare delegations from Bulgaria (March), Kazakhstan (May), Ukraine (July), El Salvador (August), and China (October). The delegation from China included 15 officials from the China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA), who traveled to several states with NCFa to learn more about the American adoption process and meet with children who were adopted from China. In March, Ambassador Susan Jacobs invited Chuck Johnson to Hanoi, where he trained U.S. Consular staff in Southeast Asia adoption procedures and practices. While there, he met with Bill Weisman, the Consular General for Vietnam, as well as other officials from the Department of State and the USCIS Consulate.

In 2011, NCFa also gave the following presentations at conferences and other events across the country:

- May 11-14: Christian Alliance for Orphans Conference, Kentucky
- August 12-14: Families Supporting Adoption Conference, Utah
- August 29-31: National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit, Washington, DC
- September 17: EAC Latin American Symposium; Chuck presented on "The Implementation of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption," Cleveland, OH
- October 13: Meeting with officials from the China Center for Child Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA); Chuck presented on "The History and Culture of Adoption in the United States," Alexandria, VA
- October 26: Luncheon for CCCWA delegation hosted by Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, MI
- October 27: "Working Together, Stronger for Children" Banquet, co-hosted with New Beginnings International (aired on Fox 17 Television; radio interview aired on Mid-South Spotlight), Nashville, TN
- October 29-30: Adoption Across Borders Conference; along with representatives from the Department of State, Chuck presented on "Trends in Intercountry Adoption," Austin, TX
- October 31: Constituent Services Fellows Wayne and Vicki Allgaier presented at the Maryland branch session for LDS Family Services

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