



CELEBRATING
40 YEARS
of family

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION

Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report

May 1, 2019 - April 30, 2020



JULY 2020

Letter from the President

Dear friends,

I have been thinking a good deal lately – as I suspect we all have – of the meaning of family and home, of the vital importance of stability and safety.

As for so many others, this year at National Council For Adoption has not been quite what we expected. We entered our 2020 fiscal year excited to celebrate our 40th anniversary – to spend time looking back on four decades of progress in the field of adoption.

Instead, we have found ourselves in an all-hands, all-out effort to help NCFI member agencies and adoption professionals throughout the world navigate a time of unprecedented crisis, while continuing to support adoptive families and adoption awareness. And it is thanks to the loyal and generous support of so many friends that NCFI has been able to meet those challenges.

We don't know what the future holds for our nation and world, but we do know this – the stability and support offered by a loving family are a child's greatest guarantee of well-being. Accordingly, whatever the future brings, NCFI will continue to work toward a world where *every child, everywhere* is safe within a nurturing, permanent family.

It is my great pleasure and privilege to share with you our annual report for NCFI's 2020 fiscal year (May 1, 2019–April 30, 2020), detailing the progress we have made toward that vision. Thank you for all that you have done to make it possible.

Warm regards,

President & CEO

*Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, **National Council For Adoption's** mission is to meet the diverse needs of children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and all those touched by adoption through global advocacy, education, research, legislative action, and collaboration.*



Global Advocacy

NCFA continues to serve as the adoption community's voice with the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and numerous other federal agencies and departments, as well as foreign governments to advance policies that help orphaned and unparented children around the world find permanent families, combat fraud and promote best practices throughout the intercountry adoption process, while encouraging all countries party to the process to adhere to strict adoption policies and standards.

During this past year, we have been pleased to host delegations from China, Kenya, Kazakhstan, and Nigeria, in order to expand and smooth pathways to international adoption for U.S. families. NCFA president Chuck Johnson also traveled to China in May 2019 for meetings with the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the China Center for Child Welfare and Adoption.

***Pictured below:
NCFA hosts a delegation from the CCCWA, bringing together U.S. and Chinese child welfare leaders.***

COVID-19 Response

When the coronavirus pandemic took hold in the U.S. in March, among our biggest concerns were families pursuing intercountry adoption, who had already left the U.S. to bring their children home from around the world.

As country after country instituted travel bans, at least 60 families were trapped behind international borders. While U.S. citizens were not banned from traveling home, parents were unwilling to leave behind their adopted children whose citizenship has not yet been established, especially in institutions where they may have been vulnerable to illness.

NCFA staff went to work leveraging all possible contacts within the federal government to advocate for a pathway home for these families. Throughout the spring, we were in regular contact with the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and Office of the Vice President, urging them to offer immigrant visas or humanitarian parole allowing these families to return home quickly and safely.



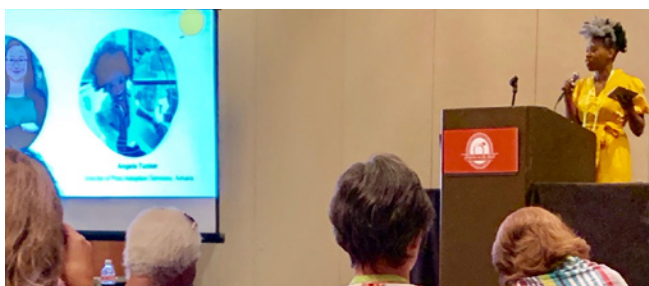


Education

— National Adoption Conference —

The centerpiece of NCFAs work to provide training and education in adoption best practices is the National Adoption Conference, which brought 360 adoption social workers and child welfare professionals – an NCFAs record – from 36 states and seven countries to Atlanta in June 2019.

The three-day conference included more than 40 panels, presentations, and plenaries with experts from the fields of social work, psychiatry, medicine, and law, with a healthy mix of perspectives from adopted individuals, adoptive parents, and birth parents.



Angela Tucker (The Adopted Life Blog) speaks at the 2019 National Adoption Conference.



Selected Panels and Sessions

- Sibling Relationships and Adoption: Creating Belonging
- Birth Parents' Voices: Lessons Learned From Bravery and Love
- Life in Limbo: What Does It Feel Like to Be in Foster Care?
- The Impact of Trauma and Neglect on the Developing Child
- Establishing Post-Adoption Support as a Pre-Placement Norm
- The Inclusive Family Support Model: Facilitating Openness for Post-Adoptive Families

— Training for Families and Professionals —

National Council For Adoption offers an extensive range of online training to meet the needs of both professionals and families. Webinars for adoption professionals cover topics from family support and medical issues to ethics and regulation covering adoption.

Our interactive, 10-hour Intercountry Adoption Journey program prepares hundreds of families each year to meet the special cultural challenges and needs of children adopted internationally, while fulfilling training requirements for countries that are party to the Hague Adoption Convention.

New this year, NCFAs offers a first-of-its-kind online training program for foreign supervised providers that partner with accredited U.S. agencies to offer intercountry adoption services, with a focus on the legal, regulatory, and ethical requirements of providing adoption services overseas.

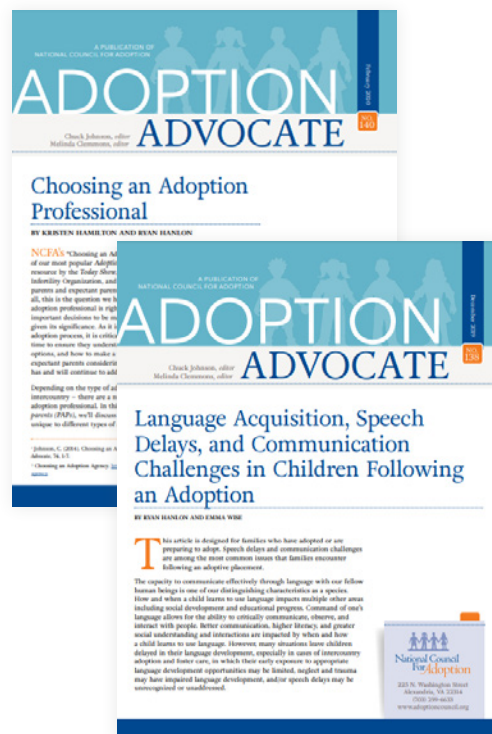
Finally, NCFAs has continued to help lead a team of experts working on a U.S. Health and Human Services grant to create a national curriculum that will prepare and support foster and adoptive parents before they begin and throughout the process.

Publications

One of NCFA's most important tools to reach diverse audiences is the *Adoption Advocate*, published monthly and distributed through a variety of channels to an audience of nearly 25,000. The *Advocate* offers evidence-based advice and practical tools, commentary on current trends and issues in the field of adoption, and NCFA's prescriptions for creating a more adoption-friendly world.

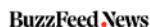
Over the past year, the *Advocate* has covered the following selected topics:

- How adoption agencies can best support families when their children are experiencing medical and mental health issues
- What questions prospective adoptive families should consider when choosing an adoption professional
- How parents whose adoptive children experience speech delays and disorders can go about finding resources and support
- How parents can go about telling their child their adoption story in a spirit of openness and honesty
- What questions and principles should guide a person's search for and reunion with their birth family
- What strategies adoption agencies should employ to promote openness and secure positive psychological and emotional outcomes for birth parents
- An in-depth explanation of NCFA's current legislative priorities and how they effectively support our key stakeholders



Media & Press

NCFA serves as an effective voice for all those impacted by adoption, working with the media to clear up myths and misunderstandings about adoption, advocate for the needs of children and families, and promote adoption as a positive option. Last year, expert commentary from the NCFA team was featured dozens of times in local, national, international, and special-interest media.





Research

Throughout the U.S., more than half of new foster families drop out within their first year. This further limits the already-too-small pool of potential homes for children in foster care, contributes to instability in the lives of foster youth, and increases strain on the resources of child welfare agencies. It also shrinks the pool of potential adoptive families, further decreasing a child's chances of achieving permanency.

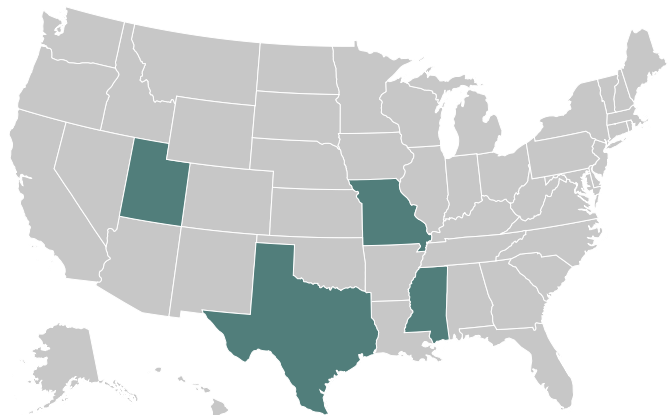
In answer to this crisis, NCFA continues to press forward on our Families For All Parent Recruitment and Retention Project, a multi-year research project working to discover why so many new foster families drop out of the system and stop fostering.

NCFA has collected data from more than one thousand families, and working from their responses, we have begun providing preliminary recommendations to our partners in several states, including:

- **Recruit through existing foster parents.** Personal relationships and connections to foster care were the primary way foster parents entered their service. Work with existing foster parents to contact their network and recruit from the communities they are involved in.
- **Invest in professional agency staff.** The relationship foster parents describe with their agency workers is directly related to their satisfaction with being a foster parent. States must ensure that they have an adequately staffed and trained team of professionals to support and respond to the needs of foster parents and children.
- **Include foster parents as part of the child welfare team.** States need to build specific, actionable plans to ensure foster parents are included in decision-making about the children they care for.

- **Provide more ongoing training opportunities.** Foster parents want flexible training opportunities after licensure, including the use of online platforms and in-person night and weekend options.
- **Invest in organized mentorship and support groups for foster parents.** Foster parents learn from and feel supported by others who have experience fostering. Building a community for existing families supports both new and long-term foster parents.

NCFA's research team is continuing this work, including ongoing survey data collection and focus groups. This past year, we added a new private agency in Texas as a research partner, providing a significant new data set to round out our research. We are also working with several states to assess their current training curricula for foster families or provide other input on strengthening recruitment and retention for foster parents, and look forward to providing a set of national best practice recommendations.



The Families For All Parent Recruitment and Retention Project, in partnership with Northeastern University, includes data from Utah, Texas, Missouri, and Mississippi.



Legislative Action

Each year, NCFAs assesses the most critical needs in adoption and sets out strategic priorities for legislative action that will support a culture of adoption in the U.S. and abroad, which this year included:

The Adoption Tax Credit Refundability Act

The adoption tax credit helps more families afford the high cost of adopting domestically and internationally. In tax years 2010 and 2011, the credit was refundable (families were eligible to receive the full refund regardless of their tax liability) but in 2012, the adoption tax credit returned to non-refundable status. NCFAs called for returning the adoption tax credit from its current nonrefundable status to full refundability, increasing its value to families and providing an incentive for foster families to adopt children in their care.

The Adoptee Citizenship Act

Under the sometimes-confusing implementation of the Child Citizen Act of 2000, some internationally adopted children became U.S. citizens upon touching U.S. soil, while for others their parents were required to take extra steps to complete the citizenship process. Unfortunately, those steps were not completed for thousands of adoptees who are now adults without citizenship through no fault of their own. The ACA would provide a technical fix to open the door to citizenship for this group.



NCFAs Vice President Ryan Hanlon and Board Chair Heidi Cox attend a House Judiciary Committee meeting.

National Putative Father Registry

One of the biggest challenges with finalizing adoptions is identifying biological fathers and timely adjudication of their parental rights. A “putative father registry” (also known as “responsible father registry”), in which a potential father registers so that he can receive notice of legal proceedings related to the child and choose whether to participate in that proceeding, exists in most states to address this challenge. NCFAs has advocated for a *national* registry, closing gaps in the current state-level registry system, and helping to avoid disruptions so that the parental rights can be appropriately adjudicated and the child can achieve permanency without undue delay.

In support of this agenda, during the FY2020 fiscal year the NCFAs staff met personally with 40 freshman Members of Congress to educate them on adoption issues and seek their support, while also taking dozens of meetings with Members of Congress, their staff, key committees, and executive branch agencies. NCFAs president Chuck Johnson spoke at a Department of State symposium last fall, while NCFAs staff joined several meetings and private calls with Administration and White House staff, in order to provide expert insight on the needs and challenges faced by adoption agencies and the families and children they serve.



Collaboration

NCFA serves as the hub of a nationwide and international network of adoption professionals. Our current membership includes more than 100 adoption agencies, with more than 300 locations throughout the U.S., Canada, and South Africa, serving tens of thousands of individuals and families each year.

COVID-19 Response

From the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic crisis, NCFA was in daily contact with our member agencies, fielding urgent questions from social workers and child welfare professionals and providing innovative solutions and emergency advocacy. Agencies faced many challenges: How could they continue to provide counseling and support for families without risking anyone’s health? What about home visits or court dates that keep the adoption process moving and allow them to meet required reporting deadlines?

NCFA moved quickly to help meet these needs, advocating with federal authorities to allow flexibility that would ensure continuity of services to clients and to identify creative solutions and safeguards on management questions like reporting deadlines and financial management – so that agency staff could focus their time and energy on serving children and families throughout the crisis.

NCFA staff have also worked to develop a suite of resources to provide long-term support that will make it possible for adoption agencies to weather this crisis – webinars, tip sheets, and individualized counsel tailored to the unique needs of adoption and child welfare professionals, and ongoing media outreach that helps build public awareness of the critical importance of strong, steady support for adoption at a time when permanent, nurturing families are more important than ever for vulnerable and orphaned children.

Award Recipients

Each year, NCFA honors leaders across many different fields of influence who are making a difference in adoption and foster care. Last year’s awardees included:

Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award

- Rob Scheer, founder, Comfort Cases
- Jimmy Wayne, recording artist

Adoption Hall of Fame

- Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA)
- Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI)
- Lola Reinsch, philanthropist

Excellence in Adoption Media

- FOSTER (2018 documentary)



Jimmy Wayne receives the Babineaux Award from Chuck Johnson at a live telecast at the Opry House in Nashville, TN.

Photo courtesy Grand Ole Opry®
Chris Hollo photographer



Congressman Langevin is inducted into the Adoption Hall of Fame by NCFA Board Chair Heidi Cox.

Tom Williams photographer



Filmmaker Deborah Oppenheimer is honored for her film FOSTER, presented by Mendell Thompson.

Tom Williams photographer



Financials

Income	Actual
Contributions and grants	\$652,900
In-kind contributions	\$573,129
Rental income	\$408,680
Membership dues	\$122,237
Training revenue	\$60,087
Total Income	\$1,817,033

Expenses	Actual
Program services	\$1,406,025
Management and general	\$211,242
Fundraising	\$65,687
Total Expenses	\$1,682,954

In fiscal year 2020, NCFA devoted *84 cents of every dollar* to delivering services and support to families, member agencies, and others in the adoption community.

NCFA consistently earns Guidestar's Gold rating for transparency as well as certification from Independent Charities of America as one of America's Best Charities.



FAMILIES FOR ALL GALA

A Celebration of Adoption

The board and staff of National Council For Adoption had looked forward to marking four decades of service to children, families, and birth parents at our 40th anniversary gala, Families For All: A Celebration of Adoption, originally scheduled for April 30, 2020. Public health regulations and related logistical challenges required us to postpone the event, but NCFA would like to thank the following generous sponsors of the gala, and we look forward to fully honoring and celebrating their commitment to our work at a later date:

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NCFA Staff

To contact our staff, visit
AdoptionCouncil.org/Staff

Charles “Chuck” Johnson *President & CEO*

Chuck Johnson is a nationally-regarded advocate for children, birth parents, and adoptive families, and is a frequent writer, speaker, and commentator on adoption policy and practice. Prior to joining NCFA, Chuck served 17 years with a licensed child-placing agency in Alabama, including eight years as its executive director. Chuck is a graduate of Auburn University with a degree in Social Work and holds a Master’s degree from Birmingham Theological Seminary.

Ryan Hanlon *Vice President of Education, Research, and Constituent Services*

Ryan oversees NCFA’s educational projects and research initiatives. Before coming to NCFA, he served as the Executive Director of a Hague-accredited agency focused on both domestic and intercountry adoption, and he has previous experience as a foster care caseworker and with child protective services. Ryan holds a B.A. from Virginia Tech, Catholic University of America, M.A. and M.S. degrees, a Master of Social Work, and a PhD in social work from the Catholic University of America.

Kristen Hamilton *Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communication*

Kristen leads NCFA’s marketing and communications efforts, identifying and implementing strategic initiatives and growing external constituency partners. Kristen comes to NCFA with a background in nonprofit leadership encompassing advocacy, marketing, and communication. She received a B.A. in Public Communication from Cedarville University and a M.A. in Rhetoric from Kansas State University.

Lauren Koch *Director of Development*

Lauren is responsible for developing and implementing NCFA’s comprehensive fundraising plan, including campaigns and events, donor

development and management, and liaising with board members in service of strategic fundraising goals. Since joining NCFA in May 2007, Lauren has also served as development associate, assistant director of development, and director of communications. Lauren earned a B.S. in Governmental Administration from Christopher Newport University. Her previous experience includes health care lobbying and serving on staff with the late U.S. Representative Jo Ann Davis.

Amy Wolfe *Director of Operations*

Amy oversees the day-to-day operations of the NCFA office, planning for the National Adoption Conference, and the agency membership and internship programs. She originally came to NCFA in 2013 as the development manager after spending five years as the customer management and email-marketing manager at the American Enterprise Institute, and one year as a middle school teacher in Springfield, VA. Amy earned her B.A. in theology from the University of Saint Thomas in Houston in 2005 and her M.A. in theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville in 2007.

Megan Judt *Development Manager*

Megan oversees NFCA’s foundation and corporate giving and collaborates on donor communications and development events. She previously was vice president of communications at A.C. Fitzgerald & Associates. Before that, she served as grants manager and development writer for the Franklin News Foundation. She holds a bachelor’s degree in history and political science from Seton Hill University.

Stacey Bromberg *Office Assistant*

Stacey holds a B.S in Elementary Education from SUNY Plattsburgh and an M.Ed in Leadership from George Mason University, and previously worked as an elementary school teacher and a professional organizer.

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF FAMILY

1980



Meryl Streep at NCFA's Kids at Heart event with her brother Dana. From the beginning, NCFA sought to bring together ordinary families with influential individuals to build a strong culture of adoption. Many celebrities joined us over the years for PSA campaigns or our family fun carnival, Kids at Heart.



First Lady Barbara Bush at NCFA's 1990 Gala. In order to expand adoption options, NCFA has worked with six presidents and their families, establishing adoption as the most truly bipartisan issue and securing landmark legislation like the adoption tax credit and the Child Citizenship Act.



Director Alejandro Gómez Monteverde and actor Eduardo Verastegui at a screening of the film *Bella*. As the digital age dawned, NCFA sought to grow the audience for pro-adoption messages through online media, blogs, film, and more, while amplifying and celebrating diverse voices and stories.



Pro golfer Bubba Watson with wife Angie and their children. A new era for NCFA's PSA campaigns brought new faces into our movement and reached millions of people with positive messages that affirmed all individuals connected to adoption, including both adoptive and birth parents.

2020

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